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Failed states and puppet states under the stateness paradigm

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Introduction

In international politics there are many phenomena which could require a bigger focus.
This thesis places particular attention on two distinct but somehow connected phenomena: puppet
states and failed states. The goal I intend to reach through this thesis is to explore these elements
through the stateness paradigm, that is, determining whether they can be considered as properly
working states.

To do this, I will first start by providing a definition of state as complete as possible, taking into account the
dynamicity of the term. Later, we will deal with the nature of the two phenomena analyzed, then using case
studies that are exemplary to evaluate them.

Stateness:

The concept of stateness is central to the thesis I intend to propose and to the study of politics, international
relations, and the development of societies. Essentially, the concept of stateness refers to all those qualities
and distinctive traits that decisively differentiate a state from other political entities.

The fundamental historical event for the birth of modern states, and therefore of the concept of stateness, is
the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, which ended the Thirty Years' War and the religious wars in Europe.
This particular treaty is widely credited for being instrumental in laying foundation required for modern
states, as the international order we have today emerged as a direct outcome from it.

It institutionalized the concept called state sovereignty, based on which supreme authority over territorial
boundaries and populations was acknowledged as an exclusive autonomy enjoyed by independent political
entities known as states.
Prior to this transformative leap, political authority was usually fragmented among different states, empires
and kingdoms; many of which exhibited tendencies that did not align strictly with key principles such as
territoriality, sovereignty, or non - intervention. These principles, however form an integral part within
contemporary nations.

The concept of "stateness" has transitioned from its historical origins to its current understanding.
It is now widely acknowledged as a paradigm that indicates a states' power or capacity. Simply put it, it
refers to the states' ability to effectively perform its basic duties.
These duties include tax collection, policy implementation, maintenance of order, provision of public goods
and services, etc.

The theoretical framework of "stateness" places significant emphasis on a states' administrative, bureaucratic, infrastructural, and coercive institutions and systems.

Within this framework, matters such as maintaining functional infrastructure, efficient tax collection, effective territorial control, and efficient bureaucracy are examined.

Additionally, "stateness" examines how well a nation state can defend its borders upholding the rule of law and maintain authority over its territories and citizens. There is a positive correlation between high levels of "stateness" and stability, the capability to uphold an agreement between the state and its citizens. A low level of "stateness" often indicates a state characterized by corruption, dwindling public trust, political instability, and failure to provide essential public services. States with higher degrees of "stateness" commonly possess strong institutions that promote orderly policy execution, respect for the rule of law and efficient resource management. On the contrary, nations with low levels in "stateness" encounter difficulties including weak governance , lack of proper resources, inefficient bureaucracy, and unstable institutions.

Statehood:

The concepts of stateness and statehood are intertwined, but their different perspectives help us understand states as political and social entities.

The perspective of statehood is focused on establishing recognition and legitimacy for a state among both its national population as well as in the eyes of nations worldwide. Along with physical presence within territories this concept encompasses legal elements as well as diplomatic components. Establishing itself as an accepted participant in global affairs requires not only recognition from other states, but also inclusion within international organizations such as the United Nations.

Acknowledgment from both external actors and domestic citizens is necessary for classifying an entity as a proper sovereign nation. This acknowledgement is often codified through social contracts wherein individuals consent to be governed while expecting specific commodities or services from their government. The degree to which this country possesses sovereignty will impact its ability to define national identity, maintain societal order and promote unity among its citizens.

The paradigm of statehood then places significant emphasis on the relationships between governments and their constituents as well as interactions between governments and the international community.

This approach is focused on understanding the way states present themselves to others, their relationship with other countries, and their adherence with global norms and principles.

In summary, while the stateness model prioritizes internal capacity and operation of states, the statehood perspective emphasizes external recognition and legitimacy. Both perspectives play integral roles in

comprehending complex nature of modern states within a global political framework, due to their interdependence.

Two concepts merged:

Theoretically, it is possible for a state to exhibit significant stateness – involving the execution of laws, tax collection, provision of public amenities – without fully achieving statehood. This typically occurs under autocratic regimes or within regions under military occupation, where governments successfully assert authority over territories, but lack essential internal legitimacy or international recognition.

While these states may proficiently administer their territories, they remain vulnerable to internal conflicts arising from perceived illegitimacy or external conflicts due to inadequate international recognition.

Instead, statehood could be achieved even without having high levels of stateness, as it is linked almost exclusively to the legitimacy guaranteed by international and domestic politics.

A similar condition is observed in states recently created as a result of social unrest or revolutions, although they may enjoy greater or lesser recognition by the international community, they do not possess the necessary infrastructure and capabilities to ensure a successful administration and provide primary public goods. Their condition depends mainly on how much help they receive from foreign states, while problems such as weak rule of law, corruption, and state and bureaucratic inefficiency are widespread.

Both statehood and stateness influence a country's long-term stability and strength. The ability to guarantee citizens their own needs strengthens their allegiance and thus strengthens the level of internal statehood, which in turn enhances the sense of social cohesion and citizens' cooperation in helping a state perform its characteristic functions. As is intuitive, therefore, although possible the existence of only one of the elements, the lack or weakness of one causes considerable complications for the state itself.

What is a state?:

In political science and international affairs, a state is defined as a political entity with a centralized government that holds supreme authority over a specific geographical area. It is recognized globally as an independent nation and possesses the power to establish legal commitments. Moreover, it has full control over both domestic and foreign policies.

The designated territory of a state, regardless of its size, must have well defined borders, this can range from the small Vatican City to the vast expanse of Russia.

For a state to exist, it requires a population residing within its borders who may be referred to as citizens. This population can either be homogenous, sharing the same culture or ethnicity, or diverse, comprising individuals from various cultural backgrounds. Sovereignty in the context of a state denotes its ability to exercise absolute power within its own borders without any external interference.

It is essential for achieving statehood that a sovereign entity is able to manage internal affairs, while committing to establishing bilateral relations with foreign states.

Another key element is a well-functioning government structure, capable of creating enforceable legislation and implementing appropriate policies to safeguard public order and protect borders and territorial sovereignty.

Furthermore, if a state commits to recognizing the authority of larger international entities within global law, this will increase its reputability in this field, making the legitimacy of its self-determination stronger.

It's worth to notice that while certain characteristics accurately define this notion ideologically, multiple variables like political orientations, economic systems vision, different sociocultural patterns play a leading role in creating different profiles among different types of states within the global landscape, thereby contributing to the respective distinctiveness of each state.

To fully grasp the intricacies of the state construct, it is imperative to carefully consider the ideas put forth by well-respected intellectual experts who have a deep understanding of this subject. By critically analyzing the collective endeavors of these experts, including their counterparts in other fields, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the profound implications that shape the critical evolution of this field over time.

Max Weber's renowned formulation, stated in his book "Politics as a Vocation," draws attention to the specific authority enjoyed by governments when it comes to maintaining order and defending individuals, distinguishing them from other possible power-holding entities.

Charles Tilly expands on this issue in his book "Coercion, Capital, And European States AD 990 1990," emphasizing how governments begin and grow largely via access to crucial resources required to support armies during periods of war.

Notably, Tilly highlights the critical significance of governments in safeguarding their boundaries and retaining exclusive use of force.

In his book "Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World," political scientist Robert Jackson underlines the importance of a state's capacity to achieve worldwide recognition as a method of building legitimacy.

Jackson believes that acknowledgment from other states is one of the most important aspects of statehood. Together, these distinguished researchers contribute to a more nuanced understanding of nations by shedding light on critical traits such as sovereignty, monopoly on the use of force, territoriality, and international recognition.

These essential elements create the underlying framework of contemporary statehood. However, in our increasingly linked and complicated world, wrestling with what it genuinely means to be a state presents various obstacles.

Globalization, which has encouraged economic interconnection and transnational flows of products and people, is one key impediment in this respect, eventually dissolving conventional state borders. Because of the growth of supranational bodies, traditional ideas of sovereignty and territoriality have been eroded. Additionally, the rise of non-state actors further complicates matters as multinational corporations, international organizations, terrorist networks gain significant influence, their growth poses a threat to conventional control that nations have within their boundaries.

Another challenge arises from failed nations or ungoverned zones resulting from war, corruption, and poor governance.

In these areas state authority is severely undermined or even nonexistent altogether, this creates breeding grounds for unlawful activities that present substantial security risks for the international community. Furthermore, differences rooted in ethnicity, religion or language within states often contribute to secessionist movements seeking increased autonomy or complete independence. These movements raise important questions about established nations' territorial integrity and authority, urging us to reflect upon what truly defines statehood itself.

Chapter 1 : Failed states, case study: Somalia

The term "failed state," coined by Madeleine Bright, is used to describe a state that raises concerns about its legitimacy due to deficiencies in the various domains that define it. According to Weber, a state is considered to exist when it holds a monopoly on force within its borders. However when this monopoly is challenged doubts arise about the very existence of the state, leading to its classification as a "failed state" - one that cannot fulfill its obligations towards its citizens.

In 2008 Jack Goldstone defined a failed state as one that has lost both efficiency and legitimacy. He also identified five potential processes that can lead to state failure: escalation of ethnic/religious conflict (as seen in Rwanda and Yugoslavia) state depredation (corruption or controls over resources benefiting certain groups at the expense of others; for example Panama) regional rebellion or guerrilla warfare democratic collapse resulting in civil war or coup (such as experienced by Nigeria) and succession crisis or reform in authoritarian states.

The Fund for Peace employs twelve indicators to assess a nations' vulnerability in this regard - four related to the social realm, two linked to the economic realm, and six associated with the political realm.

Foreign Policy magazine annually publishes a ranking based on the combination of these factors; it should be noted that only sovereign states which are members of the United Nations are included in this list.

As of 2023, Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, and Haiti are classified as failing states.

Throughout history, failed states have been a recurring phenomenon marked by the collapse of political authority, social cohesion, and economic stability. These states are unable to provide essential services to their citizens, maintain law and order or exert sovereign control over their territories.

As a result, they have had significant impacts on global security, regional stability and human welfare.

In terms of historical context, the first recorded instance of a failed state dates back to the collapse of Bronze Age civilizations around 1200 BCE. Various civilizations, including the Mycenaean kingdoms in Greece, the Hittite Empire in Anatolia and the New Kingdom of Egypt disintegrated as a consequence of this catastrophe. Continued scholarly debates revolve around determining the causes of this collapse, with climate change, drought, and invasions by the enigmatic Sea Peoples all being taken into account.

Failed states can be observed by looking at the decline and fall of medieval empires and kingdoms such as the Western Roman Empire, the Abbasid Caliphate, and the Khwarezmian Empire. The fragmentation and dissolution of these political entities were ultimately brought about by internal strife, economic crises, and external invasions. The foundation for modern failed states was established during the colonial period when European powers pursued resources and geopolitical influence.

They drew arbitrary borders in Africa, Asia, and the Americas without considering ethnic, religious or linguistic differences, this disregard contributed to conflict and instability in many post-colonial countries.

After World War II, competition between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War had an exacerbating effect on this situation as both superpowers provided military assistance regardless of human rights records or administrative capacities.

Factors that have given rise to failed states throughout history include historical grievances, colonial legacies, and external interference. It is essential for the international community to understand these root causes in order to effectively address the challenges presented by these states. In working towards a more stable and prosperous world, efforts must be directed towards preventing state failure as well as promoting sound governance, economic development, and social cohesion.

An exemplary instance of a state that has encountered failure can be observed in Somalia, a country situated in the Horn of Africa. This nation has been plagued by prolonged conflict and instability, a predicament that has persisted since the early 90s.

To comprehend the current situation in Somalia, it is crucial to delve into its intricate historical background. In 1960, British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland joined forces to form what we now recognize as Somalia's present-day state. However, the establishment of a unified identity was met with numerous complications due to fierce competition among clans for control over valuable resources.

Siad Barre's authoritarian regime from 1969 until 1991 only worsened these tensions through division and conquest.

The downfall of Barre in 1991 marked a significant turning point in Somali history, triggering an era characterized by internal conflict and a breakdown of law and order.

Interventions by both the United Nations and the United States were made in order to restore stability and peace within the region.

Such efforts, however, achieved limited success before their eventual withdrawal.

From that moment, the nation was destabilized even further, given the lack of a central authority and the thriving of various warlords and extremist factions like Al Shabaab.

1.1 Somalia Failure

The occurrence of state failure in Somalia can be attributed to several factors encompassing political, economic, and social domains.

The absence of a functional central government has created a power vacuum that fosters rampant corruption due to the lack of strong regulatory structures; corruption has become deeply ingrained within Somali society as a result.

Furthermore, neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya have contributed to Somalia's instability through their interference. These nations often prioritize their own interests at the expense of stabilizing Somalia. It is widely recognized that foreign actors can exacerbate existing tensions while undermining peace initiatives.

In addition to these challenges on the political front, Somalia faces environmental obstacles that hinder its development.

Prolonged droughts, extensive deforestation, and soil degradation are just a few of these challenges. These factors exacerbate resource scarcity and contribute to conflicts over water and fertile land among different communities.

Despite these difficulties, there is still hope for Somalia's recovery.

The establishment of the Federal Government in 2012 was a crucial step towards progress. In order to continue this positive momentum and effectively tackle ongoing challenges, it is essential for Somalia to actively pursue inclusive governance, strengthen its institutions, and undertake efforts to disarm and reintegrate militants. Additionally, promoting economic development with international support and fostering regional cooperation are key factors for success. Although the road to recovery is challenging, focusing on these fundamental aspects will establish solid foundations for a stable future that brings prosperity not only to Somalia, but also to the wider Horn of Africa region.

1.2 Separatism in Somalia

The erosion of state legitimacy is happening due to the government's failures throughout successive administrations in the past years since independence. They consistently failed to address these pressing societal issues successfully enough. Their inability sparked alternative forms of governance being advocated by extremist factions or regional governing bodies, both gaining immense support from the population. One of these regions is Somaliland, officially recognized as the Republic of Somaliland since 1991, when it declared itself a sovereign state following Siad Barre's regime collapse and the devastating civil war in Somalia that followed. Despite not having international recognition, Somaliland has managed to establish a relatively stable and functioning government system.

Several factors have contributed to the stability and prosperity of Somaliland. First, historical differences between the British colonial administration in Somaliland compared to the Italian colonial administration in southern Somalia emphasized varying political and administrative experiences between both regions, forming unique identities and fostering strong national consciousness within present-day Somaliland. Secondly, unlike other parts of our great country, Somaliland exhibits a relatively homogenous clan structure, which has contributed to political stability as well as consensus-building processes thanks to its concentrated Isaaq clan members, who represent the majority of its population. The strength held in numbers within this demographic group contributes to establishing a political terrain that is more unified and coexistence-encompassing.

The success of Somaliland lies in its implementation of effective governance through a functional government that operates under an innovative hybrid political system, melding traditional clan-based governance with modern democratic institutions. Thanks to this progressive approach, the region excels in maintaining political stability while providing essential services and ensuring security measures are upheld.

The Economist

1.3 Federalism in Somalia

Somalia has not only Somaliland but also Puntland as notable autonomous regions. Puntland, founded in 1998, is an autonomous region located in northeastern Somalia. To safeguard its territory and population from the rampant violence and turmoil affecting the rest of the country, Puntland declared itself an autonomous state. However, this region does not strive for complete independence like Somaliland; rather, it sees itself as part of a federal Somalia. As a result, it has developed its own administrative system, security

forces, and political framework with the primary objective of promoting collaboration among Somali regions and the Federal Government of Somalia to achieve stability and unity within the nation.

Somalia also encompasses additional regional administrations, including Galmudug, Hirshabelle, South West State, and Jubaland. All these entities have been established in accordance with Somalia's federal structure, contributing to the overall governance framework of the country, they are integral components within Somalia's federal structure designed to disperse the authority and encourage grassroots administration.

Galmudug, established in 2006, is a federal member state located in central Somalia. This entity was formed through a successful reconciliation process that united various clans and subclans within the region. The administrative headquarters of Galmudug is in Dhusamareb, and its jurisdiction includes Mudug and Galgaduud regions.

Hirshabelle, founded in 2016, is a federal member state situated in the south-central region of Somalia. It came into existence through deliberations and agreements between local factions and the Federal Government of Somalia. Jowhar serves as the capital city of Hirshabelle, which governs Hiraan and Middle Shabelle regions.

South West State, established in 2014, is a federal member state located in southwestern Somalia. Baidoa serves as the capital city of South West State, which encompasses Bay, Bakool, and Lower Shabelle regions.

Jubaland was formed as a federal member state in 1998, encompassing the Gedo, Lower Juba, and Middle Juba regions. It emerged as a result of negotiations and agreements between local clans and the Federal Government of Somalia.

To summarize, Somalia has experienced state failure and ongoing challenges due to various factors such as historical grievances, colonial legacies, external interference, and internal conflicts. To address these challenges and work towards a stable and prosperous Somalia, efforts must be directed towards inclusive governance, strengthening institutions, disarmament and reintegration of militants, economic development, and regional cooperation. Additionally, the success of regions like Somaliland and Puntland highlights the importance of effective governance systems, grassroots peacebuilding efforts, and the ability to address local needs and aspirations.

1.4 Clans in Somalia
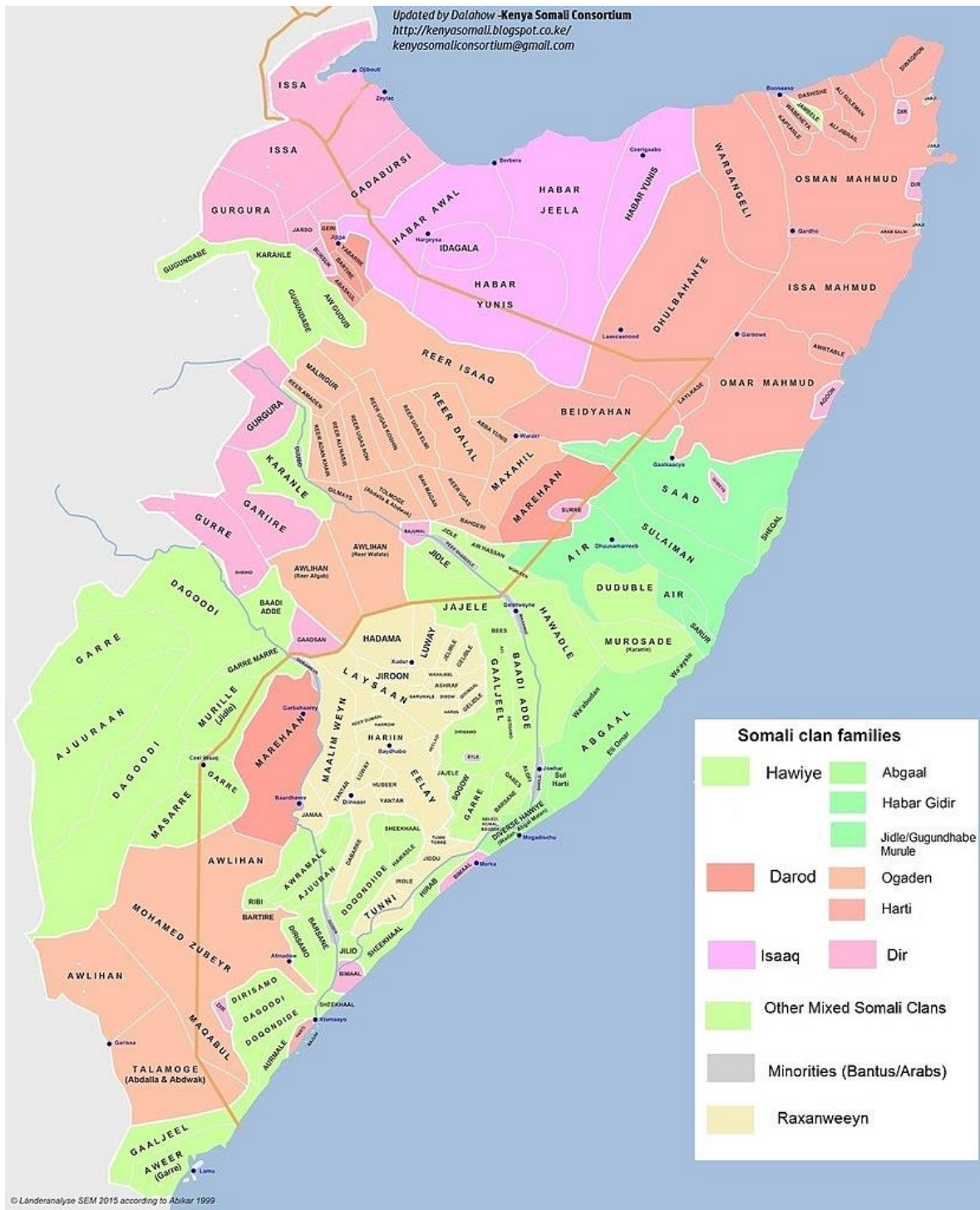
Because Somalia's population was not divided into many tribes like other African nations were, Somalia's culture stood alone from the rest of the continent for centuries.

Somalis have learned to depend on the sustaining link of clanship to thrive in a society that is always changing.

The primary underlying cause of Somalia's instability and war was the competition among several clan federations. From 1991 to 2000, the Somali clans were involved in a gruesome civil war; over 400,000 people have perished in Somalia's civil conflict since 1991; 600,000 more people have perished from illnesses and famine. Not everyone agrees that Somalia's clans are completely at fault, despite how the

outside world perceives them. A well-known Somali woman and former leader of the human rights organization Africa Watch, Raquia Omar, asserts that "we are wrong to see clans as only negative." Clans provide a strong group of individuals that have a common history and passion, they adhere to the same faith and speak the same language, and they provide clan members a feeling of social stability in a setting where they can relate to one another.

Unfortunately, clans also invite splintering and political domination. Clans were not seen as a rising issue in Somalia during the early to mid-19th century British and Italian occupation. Clans were used by the British and Italians to their advantage in order to maintain national stability. The British brought democracy to Somalia in the middle of the nineteenth century, which led to the emergence of several political parties there. The weak democratic political parties in Somalia would thereafter engage in a protracted dispute for control of the country for several years. General Mohammed Siad Barre was able to finally overthrow Somalia's flimsy democratic political parties thanks to the country's unrest, taking office as president of Somalia in 1969 and establishing the country as a socialist state. The Siad Barre dictatorship used economic, diplomatic, and military power to promote the government, which ultimately fell into the hands of the militant clans. This converted the clan politics of divide and rule into a slaughter.

Barre set up a war zone in Somalia by using his own militant clans to slaughter thousands of members of other clans as they fought for dominance and control.

According to Frank Kredller, a former U.S. ambassador to Somalia, "We supported him primarily for strategic reasons at that time because it was valuable to have backup access to military facilities if it became necessary". President Siad Barre's rule lasted for more than two decades; sensing a weakening of the Barre administration, rival clans banded together to remove the brutal ruler in 1991, opening the door for a civil war in a nation with no effective central authority.

Islamic extremists were able to undertake their activities in Somalia because of the country's weak government and the breakdown of its clan-based society. Al-Qaeda has developed partnerships with Al-Shabaab, which have made it clear that they oppose the involvement of foreign troops in the Civil War.

64 people were murdered in the twin suicide bombings in the Ugandan capital in July 2010 as they watched the World Cup Final, and the attack is thought to have been carried out by Al-Shabaab. The international community has become aware of Somalian pirates operating in the nearby waterways.

NATO has taken the initiative to address this issue, since Somali pirates pose a serious danger to regional international commerce.

The creation of a clan-based parliament to govern Somalia was the top aim of the former Transitional Federal Government (2004-2012), which was headed by President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed. Elder clan members long awaited the formation of a government in Somalia that would put an end to the country's troubles. The TFG was relatively successful; as of now, Somalia can be defined as a clan-based federal republic, clan elders play a significant role in the selection of members of parliament, with seats allocated based on clan representation quotas.

1.5 Recovery

The Somali civil war is now in its final phase, the federal government has managed to pacify the major clan and agree with the local militias to break the real common enemy, the Islamist extremists united between ISIS, Al-Shabaab, and Al-Qaeda.

The path to real recovery and rebirth of Somalia seems paved, but much will depend on the strength of the country's democratic apparatus and the peaceful coexistence between different clans.

If only one of these elements were missing, the country would be at risk of collapsing again in its darkest moments.

Chapter 2 : Case study: Yugoslavia

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, once a strong and prosperous nation, disintegrated into five successor states within a mere three years.

This dissolution was brought about by several factors, including the rise of ethnic nationalism, numerous political disputes, and Greater Serbian expansions.

These successor states were Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (later known as Serbia and Montenegro).

Originally established in 1943 during World War II, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was a federation comprising six socialist republics.

It enjoyed regional influence and economic success from 1960 until 1980, however, following the death of influential leader Tito in 1980, power-hungry politicians like Slobodan Milosevic exploited the weakened state by fueling Serbian ultra-nationalism across neighboring nations. This toxic blend of circumstances led to Slovenia and Croatia independently opting for secession in 1991, as nationalism gained momentum.

Bosnia also sought independence through a referendum held on February 29 and March 1 1992.

An overwhelming "yes" vote by 99.7% of voters ultimately resulted in their declaration of independence on March 3.

Given four years of violent ethnic cleansing, genocides and crimes against humanity, it was nevertheless challenging for Bosnia to achieve stability; notably, during this period the effort for independence by the country was boycotted by Bosnian Serb political leaders.

Ultimately, this effort was successful because of the Dayton Agreement, which brought some semblance of stability to the region.

2.1 The War

The Yugoslavia War, hailed as Europe's most devastating conflict since World War II, is infamous for its heinous war crimes, including rape, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing. Despite the proclamations of independence by the Yugoslav state component republics, these conflicts only added to the turmoil. It is worth noting that while these republics were recognized internationally, the challenges surrounding ethnic minorities in these newly formed nations remained unresolved.

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former_Yugoslavia_wartime.png)

To address these crimes, the United Nations established the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). According to estimates by the International Centre for Transitional Justice, approximately 140,000 lives were lost due to this war.

Upon its establishment in the aftermath of World War I, Yugoslavia predominantly consisted of South Slavic Christians but also had a significant Muslim minority.

This nation existed from 1918 until 1941, when it was invaded by Axis forces during World War II. The Axis powers sponsored two distinct groups within Yugoslavia: Usta'e (formed in 1929), which carried out genocidal acts against Serbs, Jews and Roma populations within the country, and Chetniks, who favored restoring the Serbian monarchy.

Under Josip Broz Titos' leadership in 1943, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) emerged, maintaining neutrality during Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union.

However, friction amongst the six SFRY republics escalated during the 1980s; Serbia sought greater federal power, while Slovenia and Croatia desired more autonomy within the Yugoslav confederation.

Eventually, Slovenia and Croatia began moving towards separation as it became evident that no mutually satisfactory solution could be reached.

The tensions in Yugoslavia had been increasing since the early 1980s, but it was in 1990 that a significant turning point occurred.

During this time, Yugoslavia was grappling with a rise in nationalism among its various ethnic groups, as well as economic difficulties, and by the early 1990s there was a lack of functional authority at the federal level.

The communist leadership was divided; supporters of Slobodan Milosevic took the place of delegates from Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro. This imbalance allowed Serbia to gain four out of eight votes for the federal president and exert significant influence over federal decisions.

 Under Milosevic's leadership, Serbia advocated for further centralization within the federation and sought to establish its dominance; on the other hand, Slovenia and Croatia desired a multi-party system.

During the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990, Milosevic used his influence as head of the Serbian Party branch to block and reject all proposals put forth by Croatian and Slovene party delegates. The assembly mainly consisted of Serbians who had already agreed to abolish single-party rule; as a result, Croatian and Slovene delegations left the congress, symbolizing an end to "brotherhood and unity" and ultimately leading to the dissolution of the party. After Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in 1991, there were efforts by the Yugoslav federal government under Prime Minister Ante Marković to forcibly prevent further division within the country.

Marković deemed these secessions illegal and a violation of Yugoslavia's constitution, and expressed support for preserving the integral unity of Yugoslavia through reliance on the Yugoslav Peoples Army.

2.2 Slovenian War Phase

Following the fall of communist leadership in both Slovenia and Croatia in the late 1980s, both countries conducted open multi-party elections.

These marked significant changes within their political landscapes; the right-wing party known as the "Croatian Democratic Union" emerged victorious in the election held in Croatia.

This success, however, sparked concerns among the Serb minority within Yugoslavia, who believed that the CDU aimed to resurrect the anti-Serb sentiments of the Second World War. These worries were fueled by actions taken by the CDU, such as displacing Serbs from positions of authority and employment.

As a result, a cycle of violence and terrorism unfolded between Croatian Serbs and Croats, centered around the crucial Knin region, which played an essential role in Croatia's struggling tourism sector.

Both sides engaged in labeling accusations, with Serbs being presented as Chetniks just like their Croat counterparts.

Moreover, due to widespread anxieties regarding Serbian dominance and Milosevic's activities in Kosovo, Slovenia conducted a successful independence referendum. Following this development, both Slovenia and Croatia began equipping local troops and paramilitary forces.

It was on June 25th 1991, that Slovenia officially declared its independence; in order to prevent Yugoslavia from disintegrating into smaller nations, Serbia exerted its control by dispatching the JNA (Yugoslavia's Army).

Slovenia sought independence not only to distance itself from Milosevic's vision of Greater Serbia, but also to depart from the Yugoslav ideal as a whole.

However, Slovenian hopes for a peaceful resolution were shattered when JNA seized control, leaving them with no other choice but to fight for their independence.

Thanks to their strategic planning and retention of weapons after JNA disarmament operations in Slovenia and Croatia occurred, they anticipated a brief conflict assuming that JNA would soon be involved in other battles elsewhere. Ultimately within ten days time frame, without sufficient presence of the Serbian population required for continued support of the JNA for the secessionist fight, Yugoslav military might crumbled away entirely.

2.3 Croatian War Phase

The conflict between Serbs and Croatians escalated further when Croatia likewise declared its independence on June 25th 1991, following a Serb takeover of the Yugoslav presidency.

Milosevic and JNA utilized this as justification for the invasion of Croatia, claiming that they were acting to "defend the rights of the Serbs"

By assuring Milosevic that the United States would not recognize Slovenia and Croatia, the US Secretary of State inadvertently encouraged his behavior, making him believe he had unrestricted control.

This led to a brief conflict in which approximately one-third of Croatia was occupied. In response, the UN intervened by offering UNPROFOR foreign troops in an attempt to stop the fighting and bring about peace and demilitarization in the disputed areas.

The Serbs accepted this offer as they had already expelled other ethnic groups and achieved their territorial objectives. They intended to use the peace agreement as an opportunity to focus on other regions. However, Despite UN protection, certain territories remained occupied by Serb forces when international recognition of Croatia's independence came in 1992.

The war in Yugoslavia escalated due to Serbia's and Croatia's competing interests in dividing up Bosnia between them. Thanks to US training assistance and the involvement of mercenaries, Croatia's government successfully regained control over western Slavonia and central Croatia from the Serbs during Operation Storm in 1995.

This military operation resulted in counter-ethnic cleansing measures and forced many Serb civilians to flee from those areas.

Under intense international pressure, Slobodan Milosevic was compelled to cede eastern Slavonia and withdraw his forces from it by 1996.

Consequently, Croatia reclaimed this territory completely by 1998 with additional support from international efforts, and until 2002 UN peacekeepers were stationed there.

2.4 Bosnian War Phase

The Bosnian War originated after World War II when, Yugoslavia annexed the "Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina", a region inhabited by Serbs, Croats, and Muslims (acknowledged as an ethnic group since 1971). Following the collapse of communism in Yugoslavia, a census conducted revealed that roughly 44% of its population was Muslim, approximately 32% were Serbs while only less than 1% identified as Croats. As a result of free elections held during that period, a three-way coalition of nationalist parties emerged.

The Bosnian Serb party, with backing from Serbia and the former Yugoslavian military, pushed for greater autonomy and established "Serb Autonomous Regions" in 1991, along with a dedicated national parliament exclusively for Bosnian Serbs under Milosevics' influence. As a response to these circumstances, the Bosnian Croats proceeded to create their own power blocs. Notably carried out after Croatia had been recognized as an independent entity on the international stage, Bosnia initiated its very own referendum process; despite existing tensions within Bosnian society alongside relations with Serbs residing there, a substantial majority voiced their support for independence which was formally proclaimed on March 3rd 1992.

Consequentially though, it emerged that a sizeable Serbian minority was feeling left behind, motivated primarily by Milosevic's continuous dissemination of propaganda, effectively exacerbating their desire to join Serbia.

Fuelled and armed by Milosevic, they made it apparent that they would not back down without a fight.

This led to escalating tensions and, ultimately, the outbreak of the Bosnian War in April 1992. The Serbian minority, backed by the Yugoslav People's Army, engaged in a brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing against Bosniaks and Croats, further deepening the divide between different ethnic groups in Bosnia.

The result was widespread violence and atrocities committed against civilians, including mass killings, rape, and the displacement of millions of people. The international community intervened through NATO airstrikes and eventually brokered a peace agreement in 1995, but the scars of the war continue to affect Bosnia and its people to this day.

2.5 Kosovo War

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) intervened in the Kosovo war (1998–1999) between ethnic Albanians and ethnic Serbs, which attracted worldwide attention. The ethnic Albanian leader of the Serbian province of Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova, staged a nonviolent rebellion against the country's then-president Slobodan Milosevic, who had revoked the region's constitutional autonomy.

The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) first appeared in 1996, and during the following two years, it rapidly increased its occasional assaults against Serbian police and politicians; its efforts by 1998 can be considered as proper armed insurrection, on the other hand, the Yugoslav military forces and Serbian special police tried to regain control of the area.

Following the atrocities perpetrated during the conflict, more than 500,000 people fled the country. Several countries (including the US, UK, Italy, Russia) formed the Contact Group, calling for a ceasefire, the withdrawal of Serbian troops, and the unconditional entry of international observers.

Milosevic formally agreed to most of the requests, but didn't effectively fulfil them. During the cease-fire, the KLA reorganized, rearmed, and resumed its offensive. In retaliation, the Yugoslav and Serbian troops launched a brutal counteroffensive and began an ethnic cleansing campaign.

NATO's bombing campaign, which lasted 11 weeks and finally reached Belgrade, severely damaged Serbia's infrastructure. NATO and Yugoslavia signed a peace agreement in June that included army withdrawal, the repatriation of 500,000 ethnic Albanians who had been internally displaced, as well as the return of roughly one million ethnic Albanians. The majority of Serbs fled the area, while those who stayed sometimes faced retaliation.

Whereas in Kosovo, UN peacekeeping soldiers were stationed from 1999 until 2008.

The conflict in Kosovo can be considered as the last step of the dissolution of Yugoslavia, understood as the ambition of Milosevic to preserve Yugoslavia in the dimension of Greater Serbia.

2.6 Reasons for dissolution

At first glance, the prominent cause of the collapse of Yugoslavia is due to the coexistence of different ethnic groups among them.

These ethnic groups have kept hidden for decades historical tensions and deep resentments, which have become stronger at the time when Titus's unifying iron fist was missing; a sequence of violence and territorial wars was triggered by nationalist politicians riding this rejuvenated spirit of ethnic pride.

The fatal collapse of Yugoslavia serves as a warning about the destructive and overthrowing power of ethnic nationalism, and the fundamental importance of inclusive governance and peaceful coexistence.

(https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Yugoslavia_ethnic_map.jpg)

But arguably, the seminal issue leading to the fall of Yugoslavia was actually the lack of proper sovereignty, while many other theories about its dissolution were made.

And what exactly is sovereignty? In practice, it is a nation's capacity to govern itself; citizens make decisions about establishing a government, institutions and selecting state representatives. Josip Broz Tito ruled the state of Yugoslavia, which was made up of various republics, none of which had total sovereignty.

Since there were so many factors at play, it is exceedingly hard to pick out one key factor that significantly contributed to Yugoslavia's demise. As a result, various individuals have varied perspectives on this matter on the factor that may have had the most impact. The grounds for Yugoslavia's dissolution range from cultural to religious to oppressive rights amongst various communities inside the country, and so forth.

Alan Thornett asserts that Slobodan Milosevic sought to increase the size of Serbia following the murder of Tito by bringing together all Serb-populated territories, in order to create a larger Serbia. This would imply that Serbia would be in a stronger position than everyone else, while Bosnia and Herzegovina and other

republics fighting to retain their independence would have little to no autonomy. According to Thornett, Serbia was the main cause of the dissolution of Yugoslavia because it sought to dominate the other republics by governing according to its own interests and expanding its territory.

Since they would lose all of their traditions and customs and, more importantly, a portion of their territory that would be recognised and represented as a part of Greater Serbia, other republics like Bosnia and Herzegovina preferred independence to fusion with Serbia. Metta Spencer offers a different point of view, contending that although foreign intervention did not effectively aid Yugoslavia's collapse, it did expedite the process. According to her, the world community shouldn't acknowledge any unilateral secession until all factions from all states have defined their goals and agreed to the conditions of their new alliances.

I personally disagree with Metta Spencer since there was not enough time to wait and inquire about the objectives, goals, and demands of all the groups. Human rights were being abused in Bosnia at the time, and the situation was exceedingly difficult, necessitating international action. I agree with Alan Thornett that following Tito's death, Serbia under Slobodan Milosevic's leadership was the cause of the problematic situation in Yugoslavia, since Serbia intended to increase its territory and annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, I believe that Serbia started the dissolution of Yugoslavia and accelerated the process.

Whatever the case, Yugoslavia would have split even without Serbia's intervention since the republics would have wanted total independence to build their own nations. As a result, the loss of absolute sovereignty was the primary cause of this breakup of republics. Due to Tito's strong leadership, the Republics first seemed to be extremely well organized and operating as one nation without any issues. However, republics were unable to establish their own institutions, become established economically, or advance in any other way, republics would develop if they had total autonomy.

In conclusion, the Republics of ex-Yugoslavia needed their own rights and independence to establish their own institutions to develop and have a better future. Since inequality and citizen discontent will always exist under the leadership of someone else, like Tito, and in a society where many different republics participate, there can never be peace. Even yet, Yugoslavia would have fallen apart regardless of the loss of "absolute sovereignty," although more gradually and later in time. So, if it weren't for Serbia and Slobodan Milosevic's efforts to consolidate their own area into a larger Serbia, Yugoslavia would have disintegrated a few years later.

Chapter 3 : Puppet states, case study: WWII

The phrase puppet state refers to a type of government that, while ostensibly belonging to the culture of the governed people, is actually controlled, supported, and defended by a more powerful foreign body.

This form of rule is more burdensome than a satellite state or protectorate, but less so than military occupation or annexation.

When the victor is not militarily strong enough to impose full rule over the defeated or does not have enough population to occupy the newly acquired regions, a vassal may be established.

Collaborationist behavior, i.e., cooperation with the dominant state, is common in puppet states; nevertheless, an attitude of collaboration does not always indicate formal subordination and may simply be due to military or political considerations.

A puppet state is one that has the following characteristics: the vital centers of the territory are militarily occupied by the hegemonic power; the territory is organized through a local state legally distinct from that of the hegemonic power; the local government has an indigenous head of state who is formally appointed according to internal legal procedures, but who was actually appointed by diplomatic and/or military pressure from the hegemon.

3.1 Manchukuo

Among the major events triggering the Second World War, was the Japanese invasion of Manchuria.

Japan had long sought to conquer the region because of its potential resources to be exploited, including coal, iron, and land suitable for food cultivation.

This latter aspect was of primary importance given the rapid industrialization and demographic growth of the Meiji period, which led the country to have an increasingly precarious food supply.

The casus belli for the invasion was an incident planned by the Japanese at Mukden in September 1931.

The subsequent prepared invasion of the territory was so impetuous that it lasted a few days; the formal conclusion of the conflict occurred in February of the following year.

The Japanese created a puppet state in the occupied territories, and to give the latter an appearance of legitimacy, they called to rule Pu Yi, the last emperor of Qing, whose dynasty came from that region.

In 1934 he was crowned Emperor of the Manchukuo Empire; Manchukuo was, in reality, emptied of any authority and placed under strict control by the Kwantung.

The Kwantung was one of the largest and most prestigious army groups of the Japanese army, with time it also became an alternative power pole over the imperial central government; in fact, it is significant that the

Kwantung conquered Manchuria independently from the government, which recognized Manchukuo only six months later.

3.2 Role of Manchukuo in the Second Sino-Japanese War

The objectives of Manchuria and its role in the Second Sino-Japanese War are not very clear. According to Itoh, Manchukuo served as a northern foothold for the Japanese expansion in China; thus, he considers that Japan used Manchukuo as a strategic point to invade the whole of China.

In fact, Manchukuo was an easy target to subdue as there wasn't any strong authority there, especially after the fall of the Qing dynasty.

This argument becomes even more relevant considering the aftermath of the creation of the puppet state, it just preceded the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War of 1941.

For this reason, considering the flow of events, it's plausible to say that the Japanese used Manchukuo as a bridgehead to conquer China.

However, as said before, the decisions in Manchukuo were taken according to the Kwantung will without Tokyo's input. This element could negate the idea of considering Manchukuo as the entry of Japanese imperialism in China.

The army didn't care much about spreading imperialism, but was interested in favoring its components and strengthening their power

Another valid response to the primary query is that Manchukuo functioned as a strategic region for the dissemination of Japanese imperialism, without necessarily engaging in war.

Duara speaks of this new type of imperialism, which presents substantial differences from neocolonialism. The main difference of this new type of imperialism is the formation of regional blocks, used to obtain supremacy more through economic development than by war.

The final answer on the nature of Manchukuo probably contains both formulations we have dealt with. The role of this puppet state varies depending on Japan's economic, political, and social interests in China.

The creation of the Empire of Manchukuo helped to bring the highest levels of tension between the two countries before the Second Sino-Japanese War.

The real war was triggered by the accident on the Marco Polo Bridge, near the Manchurian border.

3.3 Vichy France

From the time of France's defeat by the Nazi Germans until its liberation by the Allies in World War II, Marshal Philippe Pétain ruled the country as the French State from July 1940 to September 1944.

In accordance with the Franco-German Armistice of June 22 1940, France was split into two zones: one was to be under German military occupation, while the other was to be left, at least officially, under French complete sovereignty

(https://www.britannica.com/event/Vichy-France)

The day after the armistice was signed, Pierre Laval joined the administration and took the lead in creating the Vichy dictatorship. He convinced the National Assembly, which had been called to Vichy to ratify the armistice, to grant Pétain authority to promulgate a new constitution on July 10 1940, earning him 569 votes in favor, 80 votes against, and 18 abstentions. The next day, Pétain was able to assume in his own name full

legislative and executive powers in the "French State." In actuality, the Vichy regime lasted four years by refusing to adopt a new constitution.

Their strategy evolved in line with the progress of the conflict, when tight cooperation with the Germans became unworkable, a plan against Laval was hatched in Vichy. Laval was deposed in December 1940, and Pierre Étienne Flandin and Admiral Jean Darlan were installed as Laval's successors as premier. Pétain and Darlan began a phase of attentisme ("wait and see") in their ties with Germany, supported by Charles Maurras' Action Française.

 Vichy transformed into, at least on the surface, a corporatist state, the republican motto of "Liberty, equality, and fraternity" was substituted with "Work, family, and fatherland." The passage of a labor charter coincided with the widespread discussion of a Pétainist "national revolution."

Laval retook control in April 1942 and devised a plan to persuade the Germans that they might expect a more active level of cooperation from him.

Greater security was required in Western Europe, as a result of the huge war that Germany was now fighting with the Soviet Union.

But six months later, Vichy's whole posture changed completely, to prevent them from coming into German hands, the major units of the French navy were destroyed at Toulon by their own men.

On November 11, 1942, Germany invaded all of France and dissolved the "armistice army" of Vichy. With the exception of Laval's shrewdness and the Pétain cult of devotion (which continued to keep certain Frenchmen submissive to the armistice), Vichy had no resources left with which to negotiate going forward. By January 1944, it featured radical collaborators like the National Socialist Marcel Déat and had evolved into an instrument of German strategy.

As many young men escaped to the hills and open country to avoid the German forced-labor regulations, the Resistance groups against both Vichy and the Germans quickly gained power and relevance. They disturbed German communications and transport in advance of Allied landings, while living as outlaws in the countryside with assistance from locals and supplies dropped by British planes. France saw a civil war in the six months before the Normandy Invasion between the Resistance and the Gestapo, who were assisted by Vichy militias. Following the Allied invasion of Normandy, the Charles de Gaulle-led provisional government took over France, replacing a fascist dictatorship that was in complete disarray. Following the liberation of Paris in September 1944, the new administration proclaimed Pétain's French State and all of its laws to be dissolved.

3.4 Nature of Vichy France

For France, the Vichy rule raises various questions regarding the nature of this new government and the nature of its cooperation with Nazi Germany.

The Nazis attacked France, and since Germany turned out to be a way stronger force than many had anticipated, the French felt discouraged and surrendered. It is unclear whether this was done out of self-

preservation or readiness to give in to Nazi Germany. Self-preservation is only one of the numerous arguments for or against France's cooperation with the Nazis, many believe that the Vichy regime was established to protect the French people from the brutality of Nazi Germany. The consequences might have been far worse if France had not granted territorial concessions to Germany. When discussing the level of patriotism required for the French people to comprehend the Vichy government, Kedward sums it up best by writing: "They looked for the safety of the countryside, its food and its reassurance, they became dependent on the collective and organic survivalism of society, and they called for leadership and personal attention." French patriotism was mistaken for French survivalism since many of them saw that cooperation was necessary to survive the war.

One of those pledges that France guaranteed to Germany, was to deport all non-French Jews. French Jews were classified as second-class citizens by laws that were established, yet they were nonetheless given more rights than other Jews. However, the Vichy administration only pretended to deport mainly non-French Jews, but in reality, they turned over a sizable portion of the French Jewish population to the German authority for relocation and eventually execution. At the conclusion of 1943, leading Vichy officials and ministers did not object when the Gestapo and German police took direct action against French Jews. This was considered an act of too large submission by the French authorities to Germany; nobody anticipated that the administration would cave to the German dictatorship and cede control of the "occupied zones" despite being somewhat of an ally.

In spite of the fact that Germany only controlled the "occupied zones" in France, propaganda films were shown in many of the country's movie theatres. The films' messages varied in order to satisfy the audience, but they always conveyed the idea that Germany was in charge. In his essay "Newsreels, Ideology, and Public Opinion under Vichy," Brett Bowles discusses how these propaganda films altered how the French people were informed about the Vichy government. Even though the French people's connection with the government was often manipulated, many individuals vehemently opposed the German involvement. The government of Pertain might be justified by French patriotism acting to save itself, but what really reveals the character of the Vichy regime is what transpired following the German takeover.

The latter, according to many historians, is the answer to the issue of whether the French government formed the Vichy regime out of patriotism or out of a desire to work with the Germans to rescue themselves.

There is no getting around how France handled the Nazi occupation, they gave approval to the German government and participated in its atrocities against the Jewish people.

These nations will always bear the consequences of their conduct;the allied powers, such as the United States and Britain, did not see the Vichy administration as legitimate and simply considered them as collaborators with Nazi Germany, as Vichy France descended into full cooperation with them.

3.5 Italian Social Republic

The Italian engagement in World War II, alongside Germany, had begun with great enthusiasm and great hopes of hegemony over the Mediterranean.

After a short time, however, the armed forces collided with all their limits.

The Italian army was among the least performing of the Axis forces, the reasons for this failure are mainly related to the lack of good quality equipment, bad logistics, and lack of leadership by Italian generals.

The Italians failed to break through Greece and were defeated in both East Africa and North Africa. Since the defeat in Greece, the Italian army became virtually subordinate to the German army; in this way, the ambitions of Italy to conduct "parallel" wars from the Germans, and independently cut off a leading role in Europe, were obscured.

The discontent about the war and the fear of the country's fate in the event of defeat, fuelled a silent opposition within the Fascists to Mussolini over time.

The definitive breaking point between a part of the regime's art spheres and the Duce was reached with the invasion of Sicily by the Allies in July 1943; the island fell into the hands of the Anglo-Americans within a month, and the Italian forces put little resistance.

A few days after the start of the invasion, when the defeat seemed already marked, Mussolini was removed from his role by the king.

The dismissal of Mussolini was organized by the fascist hierarch Dino Grandi, with the complicity of elements of the armed forces, the implicit complicity by King Vittorio Emanuele III, and several other Fascist politicians.

In the night between 24 and 25 July, the agenda was approved in the Grand Council of Fascism by 19 votes in favour and 8 against; the following day, Mussolini was arrested by order of the King of Italy.

The new government, which was entrusted to Marshal Badoglio, signed a secret armistice with the Allies, known as the Cassible Armistice, on 3 September.

To prevent the Allies from seizing the entire peninsula, the Germans launched a rushing invasion of Italy on 9 September.

On September 12, a German special commando released Mussolini from his prison on the Gran Sasso, in Abruzzo.

This last act was a great propaganda work of the Germans, who were now masters of the fate of Italian fascism.

Liberated Mussolini, he was installed as head of state and government of the Italian Social Republic, a German puppet state that ruled northern and central Italy in full cooperation and subordination to the German occupying forces.

The village of Salò on Lake Garda was designated as the "capital" of the new State, and ministries were spread among the towns of Veneto and Lombardy.

(Flag of the ISR, https://it.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:War_flag_of_the_Italian_Social_Republic.svg)

Since the occupied Italian territory was already under the control of high commissioners, special advisers, and ambassador Rahn, in his capacity as a "plenipotentiary of the Reich," exercising direct control over the Italian administration, even before the ISR was formed, this new State never attained full autonomy in terms of legislative, economic, or territorial control.

With the aid of several messages sent out by the War Minister, the ISR supported the German police's activities against the Resistance, while also making multiple unsuccessful attempts to recruit soldiers for the army to fight the Allied troops.

As long as it existed, the ISR was a Third Reich satellite state, only Germany and the countries that were occupied by it acknowledged the new state.

The ISR action programme was approved at the Verona congress in November 1943, and included the following points: a return to the socialist and republican roots of fascism, denouncing the betrayal of the monarchy, abandonment of the corporative system and establishment of a National Confederation of Labour, the Republic was conceived as a presidential system with elections every five years, with a single fascist party, recognising Benito Mussolini as leader.

As we have seen, all of these puppet states from WWII were produced only to satisfy the needs of the occupying forces in the invaded territory

Even while some of them had elements related to a long-term view of the state, such as the ISR, or significant elements of legitimacy, such as the Vichy France and Manchukuo, everything ended up being useless since there was a complete lack of sovereignty.

They were established solely to achieve a specific goal; for example, Manchukuo was intended to be a launching pad for the invasion of the proper China and a representation of Japan's emerging economic power. Vichy France was also necessary because a direct occupation by the French would have required the use of excessive resources by the Germans. The ISR, on the other hand, was intended to support the Germans in their efforts to defeat legitimate Italian armies and Allied forces.

Therefore, stateness is entirely absent in these situations since the state's independence is completely invented, and the ruler's dominion is not even remotely up for debate.

Chapter 4 : Russian puppet states

In today's political landscape, there are still many statal entities comparable to puppet states, though with different characteristics than their analogues of the past.

Many of these entities are so closely linked to Russia politically, economically, and militarily, to the point they are called proper Russian puppet states or even Russian republics.

4.1 Abkhazia and South Ossetia

(https://aspeniaonline.it/il-dilemma-della-georgia-tra-mosca-washington-e-bruxelles/)

The Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia are two autonomous republics in the Caucasus region.

Both originate from conflicts between local separatists and Georgia, and both are economically and politically supported by Russia, which also has troops stationed within their borders, namely as peacekeeping forces.

South Ossetia:

Unification with North Ossetia-Alania and independence from Georgia were the goals of the separatist movement that formed in South Ossetia in the late 1980s; Soviet soldiers were sent in 1989 to keep the peace.

Numerous South Ossetians were forced to evacuate their homes as a result of fierce fighting that broke out soon after Georgia won its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The status of the breakaway area was not settled until Russia assisted in arranging a cease-fire in 1992 that included North Ossetia-Alania, South Ossetia, Georgia, and Russia as peacekeeping troops. South Ossetia adopted a constitution in 1993 that designated the territory as a republic, and it chose a president in 1996, despite not being a recognised country.

The crisis was not resolved via further discussions, and flare-ups of violence lasted until the early 21st century.

Even though South Ossetia expressed its desire for independence in an unofficial referendum in late 2006, the international world did not recognise this status, and the region continued to be a part of Georgia legally. When Georgian troops engaged with local separatist fighters as well as with Russian forces who had crossed the border, hostilities between South Ossetia and Georgia—and, more broadly, between Georgia and Russia—rapidly escalated in August 2008.

Russian troops seized Tskhinvali, the South Ossetian capital, in the days that followed, and fighting proceeded to spread to other regions of the nation, including Abkhazia, a second breakaway area situated along the Black Sea coast in northwest Georgia. Russian soldiers were ordered to evacuate when Georgia and Russia negotiated a cease-fire, but hostilities persisted. Georgia and other members of the international community criticised Russia for its later acceptance of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Abkhazia:

To achieve independence for Abkhazia, secessionists launched an armed uprising against the Georgian central authority in 1992. In 1993, the insurgents overcame Georgian soldiers and took control of Abkhazia; in May 1994, a cease-fire was negotiated. Hostilities persisted despite the cease-fire and the subsequent deployment of a mostly Russian peacekeeping force in the area; as a result, the region officially proclaimed its independence in 1999, a decision that was not acknowledged by the international world. Relations between the two countries were strained by Georgia's accusations that Russia supported separatist aspirations in the area, and by criticism of how simple it was for Abkhazian citizens to obtain Russian passports (by 2002, more than half of the country's population had done so). After Mikheil Saakashvili won the presidency of Georgia in 2004, the conflict worsened as a result of his political commitment to Georgian territorial unity and authority over the country's separatist areas, including Abkhazia. The Kodori Gorge in Abkhazia came into Georgia's sovereignty in 2006, while the remainder of the country was still outside its control.

In the years that followed, Russia's influence in Abkhazia grew; in August 2008, fighting broke out in South Ossetia, another breakaway area of Georgia, when Georgian forces battled both local separatist rebels and Russian soldiers who had crossed the border. When fighting first broke out in South Ossetia, it quickly expanded to other regions of Georgia, notably Abkhazia, where Russia gathered more troops. Even though a French-mediated cease-fire demanded that Russian soldiers leave the area, Abkhazia eventually permitted

Russia to seize control of the country's border, trains, and airport as well as to manage and establish military outposts there.

The de facto administration of the area failed to maintain a steady representational government domestically. Even though Georgian, Armenian, or Russian people made up nearly half of the population, those ethnicities continued to be underrepresented in the Abkhaz-dominated administration. Particularly Georgians continued to be alienated and were under pressure to adopt Abkhaz names and identities.

4.2 Possible integration into Russian Federation

Southern Ossetia is predominantly populated by Ossetians (approximately 70%), the dominant ethnic group also in northern Ossetia-Alania, which is a republic that is part of the Russian Federation.

Being heavily dependent on Russia, as well as the fact that North Ossetia already belongs to the Russian Federation, it has been suggested that the two areas be merged under Russian control.

Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, a vote to determine whether South Ossetia should remain a part of Georgia was conducted in 1992. The question of South Ossetia joining Russia was also put to the people in this referendum, and it was overwhelmingly accepted.

Later, throughout the 2010s, prominent South Ossetian political heavyweights Leonid Tibilov and Anatoly Bibilov, both of whom have served as President of South Ossetia, often discussed the prospect of merging both half of Ossetia by a second vote on Russian annexation; these ideas, nevertheless, were never implemented.

Bibilov said in 2022 that legal action was being launched to incorporate South Ossetia into Russia, alluding to the planning of a second vote. This was supported by North Ossetia, and Russian officials said that they respected South Ossetians' wishes. Georgia, on the other hand, argued against this and called it intolerable. Following the 2022 South Ossetian presidential election, in which Bibilov was not re-elected and Alan Gagloev succeeded him, this referendum was scheduled to take place. Gagloev supported the notion of unification with Russia but had less enthusiasm in it than his rival. A vote on South Ossetia's annexation to Russia would be held on July 17, 2022, according to Bibilov, who was still in office at the time. However, a few days later, on May 30, Gagloev declared that the poll would be postponed pending further discussions with Russia.

Because of South Ossetia's aspirations, there has also been discussions of Russia annexing Abkhazia. As Abkhazia is also a partly recognised state that split from Georgia with the assistance of Russia, on whom it also depends, analysts have often addressed both areas together. Abkhazia, on the other hand, has rejected what some have termed South Ossetia's 'Ossetianization' strategy in relation to this nation, being more autonomous from Russia.

Although it has also stated support for South Ossetia's desire to join its northern neighbour, Abkhazia has declared its aim to remain an independent state from Russia.

4.3 Russian republics in Ukraine

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of January 10, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Following the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, which began in 2014, two pro-Russian separatist republics formed in the Donbass region and the Republic of Crimea, annexed by Russia on March 18 2014, was also created.

4.4 War of 2014 and the Republic of Crimea

The Maidan Nezalezhnosti ("Independence Square") in Kyiv was the site of a series of protests, known as the Euromaidan, that took place from November 2013 until late February 2014. The ouster of President Viktor Yanukovych was the result of those demonstrations, which went through numerous separate phases; this in turn sparked a violent separatist movement in the country's eastern regions.

Yanukovych has shown a desire to conclude an association agreement with the European Union as of late November 2013. In exchange, the Europeans wanted him to start constitutional and legal changes, and free opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko from jail. Yanukovych decided not to sign the deal after a meeting in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

It seemed like Ukraine might join the Eurasian Economic Union, a Russian-led EU alternative that would be established on January 1st 2015, and include Kazakhstan and Belarus as members.

After Yanukovych's about-face, demonstrators hit the streets shortly after;on January 16 2014, the parliament passed harsh anti-protest measures that restricted free speech and assembly, blacklisted nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), and essentially formed a dictatorship under Yanukovych. The actions strengthened the demonstrators even if they were reversed just 12 days later, Pro-Euromaidan protesters seized government buildings in Kyiv and throughout Ukraine.

More than 20 individuals were murdered in skirmishes with the police on February 18, but that was just the beginning. The city hub of Kiev turned into a battlefield two days later. At least 80 people were killed and hundreds were injured when government snipers opened fire on protestors from the tops of buildings, but the Maidan demonstrators kept their position despite the mayhem. A delegation of EU foreign ministers came in Kyiv on February 21 to mediate a settlement between Yanukovych and the leaders of the parliamentary opposition. The parties stipulated that a "national unity" administration would be formed within ten days, that the 2004 constitution would be reinstated once constitutional changes had been made, and that fresh presidential elections would be held by December 31. Until such elections were conducted, Yanukovych would continue to serve as president. The plan was accepted by the opposition leaders, and it seemed to have Putin's backing during a phone call with President Obama of the United States. Yanukovych, though, left Kyiv the next day.

In retaliation, the parliament removed him from his position, mandated Tymoshenko's release from prison, and named Oleksandr Turchynov as interim president; on May 25, new presidential elections were scheduled.

Due to the absence of insignia on their uniforms, highly armed soldiers known as "little green men" seized control of Simferopol's parliament and government facilities on February 27 in the Ukrainian autonomous republic of Crimea. The identity of these shooters as Russian soldiers was subsequently proven, despite several unconvincing denials by the Kremlin. They appointed Sergey Aksyonov as the next prime minister, despite his party receiving just approximately 4% of the vote in the most recent elections. With the assistance of 25,000 soldiers and sailors stationed in Sevastopol as part of the Russian Black Sea Fleet,

members of the self-declared Crimean militia gained control of government buildings and military sites, forcing the astonished Ukrainian battalions to submit. A widely panned referendum on March 16, in which it was announced that more than 95% of voters approved joining the Russian Federation, gave the covert invasion and illegitimate annexation of Crimea a veneer of legality.

4.5 War in Donbass: Luhansk and Donetsk People's republics
Throughout the spring, as Russia tightened its grip on Crimea, armed men in small groups seized control of government facilities in the eastern Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv. Separatists staged referendums on May 11 and proclaimed the creation of independent "people's republics" in Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk (LNR), while the separatist movement in Kharkiv mainly died down. Skirmishes between government troops and militias supported by Russia became more intense in the Donets Basin (Donbas), and a fight for control of Donetsk's international airport resulted in the deaths of scores of pro-Russian rebels.

Amid its ongoing invasion of Ukraine, Russia unilaterally annexed territory in and surrounding the four Ukrainian oblasts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia on September 30 2022. Russian authorities claimed that the borders and bounds of the territories to be annexed will be determined later. At the time of the proclamation and ever since, none of the oblasts were entirely under Russian administration. The referendums, which were organised by Russian occupation authorities in areas where hostilities were occurring and a large portion of the population had evacuated, were not recognised by the international community and were conducted days before the annexation.
It happened seven months after the invasion began and less than a month after the Ukrainian Kharkiv counteroffensive.
With the exception of North Korea and Syria, the annexation is not acknowledged by the international community. The referendums and the annexation, according to Ukraine, the European Union, the United States, and the United Nations, had no legal foundation or significance.
Volodymyr Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, responded by announcing that Ukraine will swiftly submit an application to join NATO. On October 19, Russia declared martial rule in the territories it had seized and taken control of. This was accompanied by legislation that forbade public assemblies and imposed other significant limitations on individual freedom.

4.6 Transnistria, background and features

When Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February 2022, some reinforcements were stationed in the Republic of Transnistria.

(https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-18284837)

Transnistria, often known as Trans-Dniester, is a breakaway area occupying a tiny swath of land between the Dniester River and the Ukrainian border. In 1990, Transnistria seceded from Moldova, although the international community does not recognise it as a sovereign entity.

Russia, which is said to have 1,500 troops stationed there, provides financial, political, and military assistance to the de-facto government of Transnistria.

The Soviet Union's program of forced nation-building and demographic shifts in the twentieth century resulted in multiple "frozen conflicts" in Eastern Europe, notably the separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia, and Transnistria in Moldova.

The Popular Front of Moldova was founded in 1988 with the goal of restoring the Latin alphabet and declaring Moldovan to be the sole official language. Radical groups within the movement also called for the deportation of minorities of Slavs (Russians and Ukrainians), who make up the majority of Moldova's Slavic population.

The Popular Front won 27% of the seats in the Moldovan parliament by 1989, constituting the majority in that body. A political struggle erupted as a result, and it later moved to Transnistria and Gagauzia, two additional regions of Moldova where Turkish-speaking people reside. The pro-Romanian language regulations were stopped in 1989 by the formation of the Joint Council of Labour Collectives.
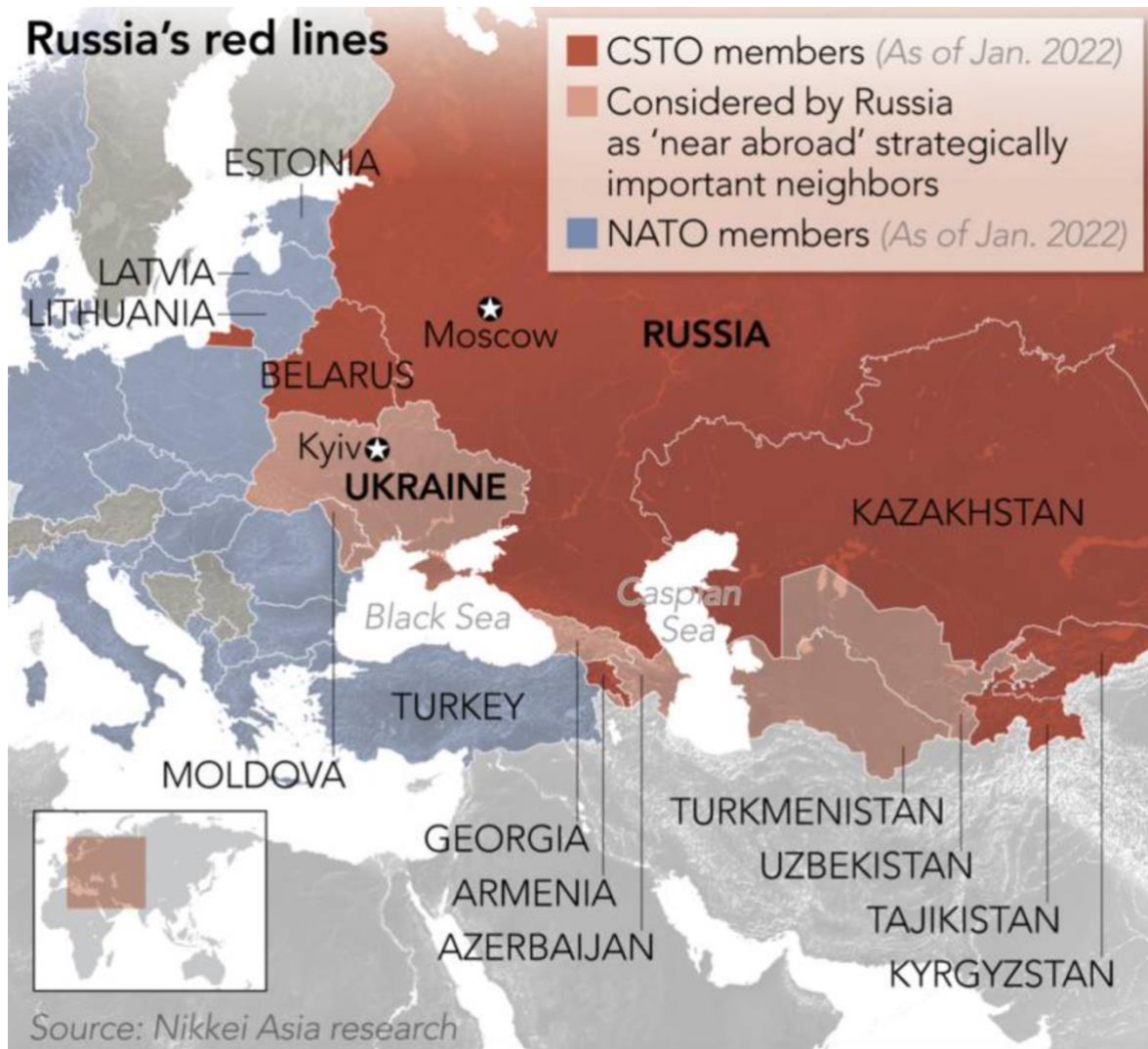
The Pridnestrovian-Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic (PMSSR) was created when Transnistria proclaimed its independence in 1990. When nationalists attacked members of parliament who were of Russian descent, the situation worsened, despite the efforts of the central government to stop it.

After the failed coup attempt in 1991, the Pridnestrovian-Moldavian SSR declared its independence from the Soviet Union. In exchange for changing its name to the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, Transnistria abandoned its socialist philosophy. The Russian 14th Army served as Moscow's primary tool for swaying Moldova, and its assistance in the conflict was crucial to its outcome.

Using Russia and Ukraine as intermediaries, Moldova and Transnistria signed a "memorandum on the principles of normalisation of relations between the Republic of Moldova and Transnistria" in 1997. The purpose of the agreement was to foster the development of formal legal and political relationships between the two parties, ensure their mutual security, and provide Transnistria the freedom to engage in independent international trade. Negotiations were conducted in 2005 using the 5+2 framework, which included Transnistria, Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, and the OSCE. The "Law on Basic Provisions of the Special Legal Status of Localities from the Left Bank of the Dniester" was approved by the Moldovan government in 2005, creating Transnistria as an independent territorial entity inside the Republic of Moldova.

Transnistria is home to the bulk of Moldova's industrial infrastructure, but because to its isolation from the rest of the world, its economic potential is constrained. It has its own parliament, flag, anthem, constitution, and currency. Russia gives financial assistance to the region, and it has denied allegations of money laundering and illicit weapons transactions and a history of organised crime, corruption, and smuggling.

4.7 Russian expansionism

Russia's red lines

Legend:
- CSTO members (As of Jan. 2022)
- Considered by Russia as 'near abroad' strategically important neighbors
- NATO members (As of Jan. 2022)

Source: Nikkei Asia research

(https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Big-Story/Ukraine-crisis-highlights-superpowers-quarrel-over-spheres-of-influence)

All the countries in the Russian orbit that we have addressed in the last sections are very different from each other.

First of all, the Southern Ossetia and the emerging People's Republics in Ukraine are state entities of limited duration.

In my personal view, they came out only to anticipate a formal transition to Russia, already happening with regard to Donetsk and Luhansk, and highly likely in the near future for South Ossetia.

Like Crimea, they have a very strong Russian ethnic component or are in any way related to Russia.

In practice, they are only a vehicle for Russian expansionism, aimed at annexing all those regions with the majority of the population or a significant portion of ethnicity of Russian language.

This thesis is not intended to provide an opinion on the legitimacy of this expansionism, but simply to explain its nature.

On the other hand, Transnistria, Abkhazia, and Belarus (of which we have not talked) are the most closely integrated states in Russia's sphere of influence.

Other countries that are part of the Russian sphere of influence are: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Armenia.

It's important to say how the relationship between Russia and these countries has been changing constantly after the war in Ukraine of 2022, and the last Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

As is evident, they are all states of the former Soviet Union, and some of them are also members of the CSTO, a Eurasian military alliance headed by Russia, opposed to NATO, though with different characteristics and limited capabilities.

Conclusion

Through this thesis, we have explored the concepts of failed states and puppet through many of their facets. It has been observed that the failure of states has some redundant characteristics, such as an insufficiently solid ethnic or social composition, an authoritarian government that manages to survive a difficult coexistence among citizens for a long time thanks to its repressive methods.

As far as puppet states are concerned, we have observed that they are roughly only instruments of expansion of states, keeping in mind the difference between puppet States and states that are part of a sphere of influence in the classical sense of the term.

Under the stateness model, I think there is a substantial difference between failed states and puppet states. States fail mainly because of an over-stretched sovereignty, as can be seen in the cases of Yugoslavia and Somalia.

After the failure, their sovereignty was reduced to the size originally most suitable for the state; in particular, Yugoslavia became Serbia, while Somalia became a Federal Republic with broad autonomy granted to its member states.

For this reason, I do not think it is right to deny the stateness of failed states, rather they should be addressed as states with limited stateness.

The puppet states, on the other hand, although they may possess more or less autonomy and even a greater view of the state that goes beyond the subservience from a foreign power, do not have enough abilities to emancipate themselves enough to have a certain level of stateness, they are virtually completely deprived of it.

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