

GLOBAL.

N E W S L E T T E R

OUR WORLD IS COMPLICATED. YOUR NEWS SHOUDL'NT BE.

Conflict is on the HORIZON.





Nº2.

This week on the GLOBAL. Newsletter there are many discussions on imperialism and military conflict. As our world moves towards 2030, a noticeable increase in violence and military conflict has sprung up in recent years. This level of conflict whether neocolonial, religious, ethnic, or economic is damaging GLOBAL. frameworks of stability and peace that were once hallmarks of 20th century institutions like the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Two organization who in the last decades have seen significant reductions in GLOBAL. soft power.

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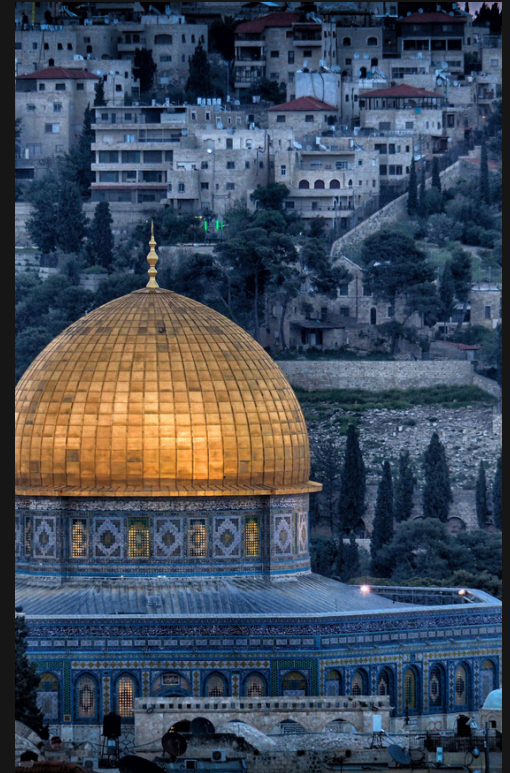
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**FROM BRITISH
HONDURAS TO
BELIZE**

THE CEASEFIRE DEBACLE

BY: GABRIEL JORDAN



I think it is fair to say that the style of debate in the UK Parliament is unique. The cacophony of cheers, jeers, and boos that regularly fills the oldest people's assembly in the world has made it somewhat famous (or infamous...) amongst political enthusiasts. However, even by these standards, the House of Commons on Wednesday 21 February was particularly raucous.

For those who do not follow British politics closely, the Speaker of the House, Sir Lindsay Hoyle, has come under fierce criticism for his handling of a motion calling for an "immediate ceasefire in Gaza and Israel". The motion, originally introduced by the Scottish National Party (SNP), was rather anomalously subject to two separate amendments - one from the Government (Conservative Party) and one from another opposition party (Labour Party).

It was the Speaker's acceptance of this latter amendment which ignited the chaos that characterised the day. Normally, on an SNP "opposition day" (a special day in the parliamentary calendar set aside for a non-governing party to present issues it particularly cares about to fellow MPs[1]), other opposition parties cannot alter the original motion, especially if the Government has proposed its own amendment.[2] What's more, precedent dictates that when a Government amendment is selected, the first question to be considered (the first vote) is to be on the text of the original motion, in this case, the SNP's motion.[3] If the original motion does not carry, then the following question will be on the Government's amendment.

However, in a break with long-established convention (a break that the Speaker had been pre-warned about by the Clerk of the House, Tom Goldsmith, who is the chief adviser on matters of parliamentary procedure[4]), Sir Lindsay Hoyle selected both the Government's and Labour's amendments. He further determined that Labour's amendment would be the first question considered, essentially allowing Labour to hijack the SNP's opposition day and turn it into one of their own.



This rather controversial decision raised a furore amongst both Conservative and SNP members, who widely considered it to be an attempt by the Speaker to help Labour members avoid a difficult political decision – a decision to either rebel against the Labour Party by voting for another party’s motion, or abstain and face severe criticism from their pro-ceasefire constituents. For a number of MPs, the Speaker’s decision to set aside the standard procedures cannot simply be rectified with an apology, and many have called for his resignation.

Importance of Procedures

“Well so what?”, one may ask. “Politics is a game, full of shenanigans, and Labour played the game well; what is one small procedural breach in the grand scheme of things anyway?”

Well, what such a comment fails to appreciate is just how important procedures are. Our societies, and hence our political spheres, are composed of a multitude of different factions, parties, ideologies, religions, and theories. The views contained within our societies range dramatically and, despite often hailing tolerance as a chief virtue, differences in basic and fundamental beliefs continue to generate powerful feelings of contempt, scorn, and even detestation. One need only look to the growing levels of polarisation in liberal-democratic societies, especially the United States, to see this.

Although the sentiments the emanate from disagreement are strong, cooperation is not impossible. Whilst various people may not be able to agree as to what political decisions should be made, they can respect a decision, granted that it was generated according to an agreed upon procedure. In the same way that a shared set of rules can bring even the most rivalrous of sports teams together to play a match, consensus around decision-making processes is what makes political action and resolution possible.

It is hard to overestimate just how important procedures are in our political spheres. If rules are constantly being put into question and changed then it becomes extraordinarily difficult to generate serious political decisions. This can initiate a race to the bottom whereby each faction or party attempts to shape the rules to suit their interests and preferences.

Once political procedures are subject to such naked power struggles, they rapidly lose legitimacy, reducing the onus of other groups within the political order to accept the decisions produced. This can fuel further disagreement and can serve to destabilise institutions.

Conclusion

What we ought to remember is that parliamentary procedures were not created last week. Rather, they are the synthesis of over 700 years of continued use and practice. Much like English Common Law, they have grown organically, developing in response to a host of historical trials and tribulations. They are beyond anything that any individual, regardless of their legal or political experience, could generate; they are the consolidation of centuries of experimentation and tweaking, carried out by a bevy of extraordinarily bright minded people.

This organic development has generated a pervading sense of legitimacy in the UK’s procedures and institutions which is one of the greatest strengths of the British socio-political order. It is thus not surprising that many have taken the recent procedural violation extremely seriously, even if the transgression seems small and insignificant.

UKRAINE STRIKES BACK

BY: LUC HILLION

Last Tuesday, pro-Ukrainian groups composed of Russian volunteers launched a cross-border attack in the Russian regions of Belgorod and Kursk, located on the Northeastern border between Ukraine and Russia. These incursions occurred as Kyiv launched drone attacks and shelling on the city Belgorod, killing two civilians, according to Moscow.[1] Russia quickly responded and claimed it had repelled the three main attack axes led by the Russian volunteers, according to a statement on Friday from Russia's Ministry of Defense. It said, "The enemy was hit by aircraft, rockets, and artillery." [2]

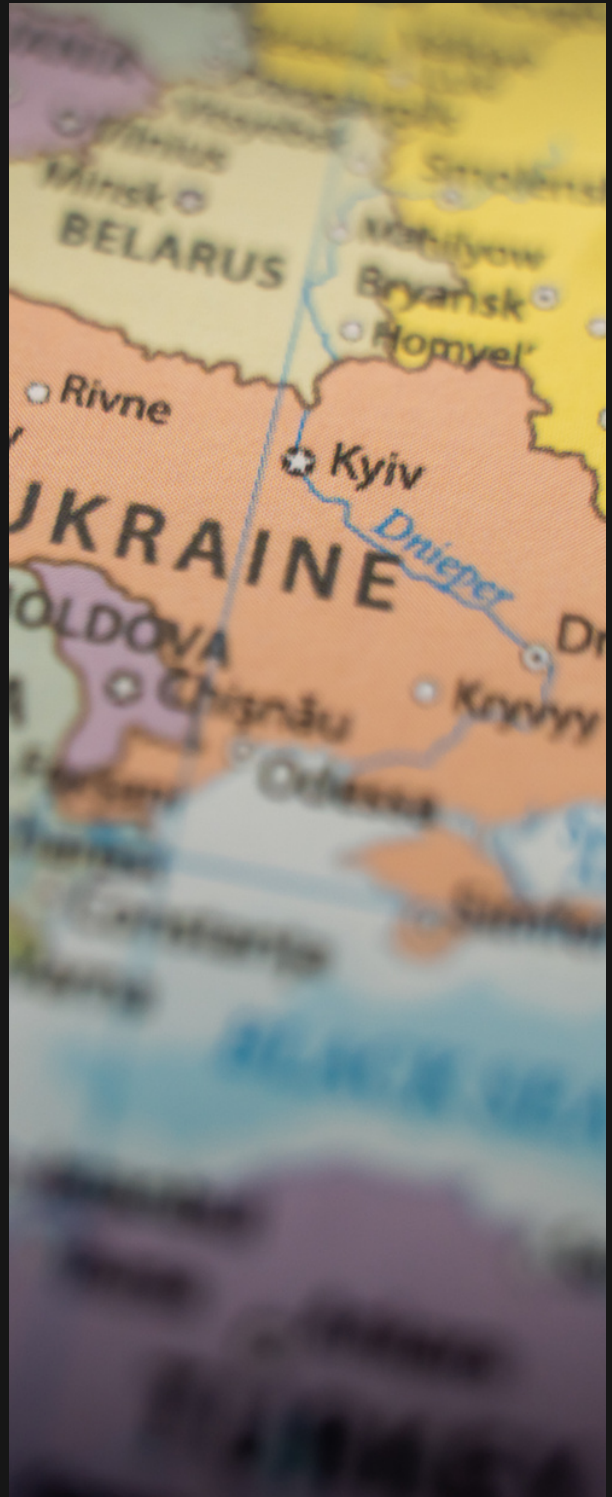
On Telegram, Ilya Ponomarev, a former member of the Russian parliament and the current political head of the Freedom of Russia legion, a Ukrainian-based paramilitary unit of Russian citizens, stated that two all-Russian volunteer units executed the raids: the Russian Volunteer Corps and Siberian Battalion. These groups claim that they do not operate under orders from Kyiv and are not part of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.[3]



The attacks appear deliberately orchestrated to coincide with the Russian presidential elections between March 15 and 17th: “This is not an election at all. It is the next stage of a usurpation of power, the formation of Putin’s dictatorship under the guise of elections,” asserted the spokesman of the political wing of the Freedom of Russia Legion.[4]

Limited attacks in Russian territory, like the most recent ones, also occurred in May and June of 2023, when the Freedom of Russia Legion temporarily took control of several Russian settlements.

Currently, Ukraine is suffering from slow but incremental territorial losses to advancing Russian forces. Last February, it lost the Eastern fortress city of Adiiivka, which Ukraine held for ten years since the start of the Donbas conflict in 2014.[5] These limited raids in Russian territory could be interpreted as an attempt to divert Russian resources and attention away from their recent territorial gains.



NEOCOLONIAL CHINA?

BY: AUSTIN WALLACE



Less than a century ago, Africa was controlled by a handful of European nations, most predominantly the British and French. These two nations occupied the vast majority of the continent's territory, resources, and people. Their rule was brutal and segregationist. However, it was not long for the world, and by the mid to late 50s, independence movements began to change the tide of rule on the continent. The following decades would see Africa gain freedom and independence from European direct rule. However, following direct rule would come decades of European influence on the region until a new power in the 21st century would change the continental geopolitical position.

China is no stranger to colonial rule; it was a victim of imperialism, with two of its most infamous enclaves, Macau and Hong Kong, being Portuguese and British colonies. During colonial rule, most of China was under British and French imperial influence, resulting in a period the Chinese refer to as the "century of humiliation" (Kaufman, 2011). This period of Chinese history has directly affected the motivations of the current Chinese Premier, President Xi Jin Ping. This history has caused a "Grievance-based Nationalism," which has caused a shift toward mass military and political build-up globally (USC, 2024). Along with this comes an ideological factor that has meant China sees its expansion globally and to Taiwan as a birthright. "...there remain several vestiges of that period that, in the minds of many Chinese, must be rectified before China's recovery will be considered complete." (Kaufman, 2011).



This idea of rectifying the wrongdoing in China stemmed from the "Chinese Dream" idea and the belief in undoing the "Century of Humiliation" in China's new external view. This all culminated in a mass expansion into places such as Africa, once the backdrop to mass European colonialism, which is now a resource pile the Chinese government sees as the future of its rapid manufacturing future. "China is now Africa's biggest trading partner, with Sino-African trade topping \$200 billion per year. Over 10,000 Chinese firms are currently operating throughout the African continent, and the value of Chinese business there since 2005 amounts to more than \$2 trillion, with \$300 billion in current investments. Africa has also passed Asia as the largest market for China's overseas construction projects." (FA, 2024). This expansion has laid the groundwork for Chinese officials to pay off corrupt African leaders and even manipulate and work around the African Union. Nothing in Africa happens now without Beijing knowing or getting a say. The Western Bloc once held this type of influence and power but has slowly shifted away since French failures in West Africa, decolonization, and American isolationism. Alongside China, Russia and even the UAE have expanded to the continent, showing a major ideological shift.

However, like colonialism from the last century, modern-day Chinese Neo-colonial practices victimize the civilian populations of many African countries who now work in horrendous conditions in Chinese-owned mines like in the DRC. "Witnesses will provide testimony about the malign presence of Chinese companies in cobalt supply chains, the extent of child and forced labor in those supply chains originating in the DRC, the PRC's contribution to environmental degradation of the region, and recommendations for U.S. action." (CECC, 2024). These human rights violations have begun to shed light on the rapid and sometimes deadly Chinese expansion on the continent. Much like the movements that resisted European rule, African movements have sprung up against foreign investment and involvement threatening African economies and independence. However, in a turn of events, the British Commonwealth, USA, and France have seen this new anti-Chinese sentiment as an opportunity to gain popularity on the continent by promoting human rights and proper practices for mining and resource extraction (USIP, 2022).

This move, however, appears too little too late, but the future of this rivalry of the continent still could be shifted. China and Africa are now major trade partners, with "China-Africa relations are the bedrock of China's foreign policy." (Chatham House, 2023). With African nations like Kenya, Angola, Egypt, the DRC, and Burundi in massive Chinese debt, the future of this independent continent appears uncertain and dangerous. As China builds up a military/economic presence through their UN Peacekeeping missions, bases, trade deals, and mining deals, Africa is looking evermore under the CCP's control. With Western onlookers looking concerned over this situation, it will likely take a combined group of French, British, and American investors and political scientists to overturn this current geopolitical landscape; otherwise, Africa is looking towards a Chinese (and, to a lesser extent, UAE and Russian) future.



FROM BRITISH HONDURAS TO BELIZE

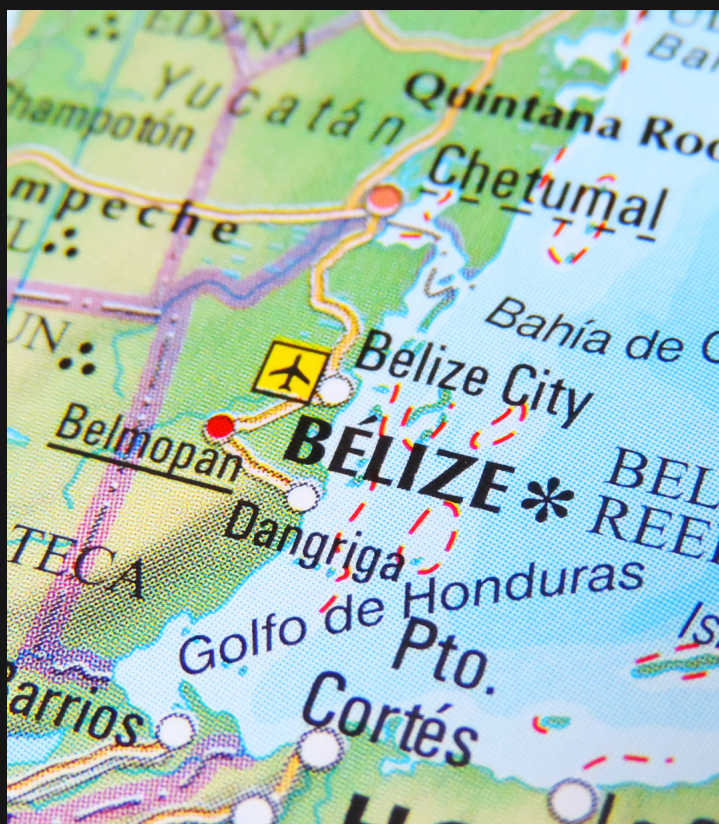
BY: AUSTIN WALLACE

The British Empire was the largest empire in world history. It expanded to every corner of the earth. This level of power meant remnants of its regime existed in places as remote and small as the beautiful and tourist-heavy nation of Belize in Central America. This small nation is surrounded by countries ideologically, linguistically, religiously, and culturally different from itself. This has meant it has often had difficulty integrating with its region and remains one of history's most interesting geographical and political situations to date. The story of British Honduras and its later transition to Belize, and why today it is a country known for its Anglo-centric travelers and its lonely geopolitical situation is one laden with peculiarity.

British Honduras began, like many other colonial regions, through conflict. This conflict would first be between the Spanish and the English (later resolved by the Spanish cession of the region to the UK in the Treaty with Spain in 1783 at Versailles) and later between the Mexicans, Mayans, and British Empire. At first, English settlements in the region were remote and relatively small until the discovery of mahogany and other mineral resources (JSTOR, 2024). Its unique geographic position also made it strategic for the British Caribbean colonies to trade with it and mainland Central America. As the British continued to profit from the region, a former establishment of a colonial zone was made in 1862, a decision that sparked outrage from Mexico City and the local Mayan populations and would not be resolved truly until British authorities gave self-rule in the 60s.

This outrage eventually led to modern-day issues in Belize's unique geopolitical situation. It was not related to other colonies in the region. In contrast, while some of its people spoke Spanish, a remnant of previous Spanish colonization in the region, or spoke Maya, a consistent cultural partition that existed in the nation; most of its population spoke English, used a different currency, and aligned with other nations within the Commonwealth of Nations and the USA. Not to mention, isolation was also caused by constant border disputes between Mexico and Guatemala."...heavy pressure on Washington to mediate Guatemala's claim that British Honduras is part of its national territory" (The Atlantic, 1966). Some of these disputes were so close to all-out conflict that the USA and UN often had to broker and mediate the situation. Even the British were unclear of the region's future by the 1960s, when many believed it would join Guatemala (The Atlantic, 1966).

History did not play out as such. British Honduras made it through the 60s without independence, although governed independently. It gained independence in 1981, likely due to "British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, it is safe to assume, was thinking more about the urban riots plaguing the nation than the tribulations of a country with a population of less than half a million on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean." (JSTOR, 2024). While insignificant for the British, this moment was enormous for the region. It signaled the true end to colonial rule in Central America.



In the following decades, Belize would become a prominent tourist destination for the American and British elites. "...the nation skipped a "modernist" era completely, transforming from an obscure backwater into a post-modernist hub for tourists in search of "authenticity." (JSTOR, 2024). This transition meant Belize could transition to a young democracy relatively quickly and has maintained this democracy despite consistent deterioration in the countries around it. "...a prism through which to view the development of Belize, which has emerged as something of an exception in Central America. In a region where rulers are embracing authoritarian tactics, Belize has developed into a relatively stable (albeit young) parliamentary democracy with a history of peaceful transitions of power." (NYT, 2024). This status, its unique history, and its profitable and positive political perspective on the globe meant Belize today is a country isolated in its region but connected outside to the USA and the British Commonwealth. Despite recent anti-UK movements against British colonial rule in the country, which traumatized and severely damaged the native populations of the region for Mahogany production and also participated in the horrific transatlantic slave trade, many Belizean people recollect British rule with more fondness than other colonial regions which experienced prolonged violence and independence wars (Reuters, 2023). This can be seen through its steadfast acceptance of the British Monarchy in Belize and, despite threats of changing to a Republic, a loyal ally in Britain's leave of the EU. This relative peace with its former colonial owner has meant that Belize can also not connect to the violent colonial pasts of its neighbors in the same way, meaning it is ideologically separate as well.



Belize got a relatively peaceful end to empire, a near weatherproof capital of Belmopan, the global power of the English language, a prosperous economy on tourism, and a stable democracy, meaning quite literally it has become a sort of "gem" in Central America for foreigners (NYT, 2024). Belize is a country that had a very traditional start to colonial rule, fraught with slavery, violence, and mass segregation of the local peoples and inbound enslaved Africans. However, modernized British policies in the 19th/20th centuries and a ban on the slave trade in the British Empire meant its importance as a colonial region died down, as well as its need for violent suppression by the English aristocracy. This turn meant a slow but gradual change to peaceful independence in the 80s, a strong economy and democracy, a British monarch in power, and, besides Costa Rica, one of the best human rights records in Central America. Belize is a country of many unique situations. This may isolate it in its region, but makes it favorable for Western Developments. This tiny Central American country subsequently punches heavily above its weight, supporting not only its rich Mayan history but also its very diverse current ethnic makeup, resulting in a nation highly diverse, economically viable, and peaceful. In Central America, those characteristics can be challenging to ascertain amidst democratic backsliding, mass cartel violence, and war. So, for those reasons, Belize will continue to push forward to the beat of its own Anglophile and Mayan steps.

A GAZA VOTE FOR PEACE?,

HIV CURE?,

KASHMIR CONFLICT,

WESTERN SAHARA,

AND HONG KONG'S FREEDOM



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