

# List of irredentist claims or disputes

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Not all territorial disputes are irredentist, although they are often couched in irredentist rhetoric to justify and legitimize such claims both internationally and within the country.

## Contents

- 1 Prominent irredentist disputes (by area)
  - 1.1 Europe (historical)
  - 1.2 Europe (continuing to the modern day)
  - 1.3 Asia
    - 1.3.1 Middle East
  - 1.4 South and Central America
  - 1.5 North America
  - 1.6 Africa
- 2 See also
- 3 References

## Prominent irredentist disputes (by area)

Prominent irredentist disputes during the past century have included:

### Europe (historical)

- Austrian claims to South Tyrol.
- Italian claims to Dalmatia after the First World War. The whole establishment of Italy originally, however, itself involved much irredentism, as it unified areas belonging to various states one-by-one with the growing proto-Italian state.
- Gabriele D'Annunzio's occupation of Fiume (now Rijeka) from 1919–1921 — proclaimed as the Italian Regency of Carnaro, the original irredentist dispute (when the term was first popularized).
- The establishment of Germany, like Italy, involved a large amount of unification of areas belonging to numerous small states.
- Greece's claims on areas of the ex-Ottoman Empire. After World War I Greece claimed what is now the Aegean coastline of Turkey, because of the predominance there of a Greek population since antiquity and former rule by the Byzantine Empire. Other Greek irredentist claims under the "Greater Greece" policy called *Megali Idea* included southern Albania (Northern Epirus) and Cyprus. Today, border changes are not a key topic of political discussion in Greece.
- French claims before World War I to Alsace-Lorraine.

- Nazi Germany's claims to Alsace-Lorraine, areas of Poland, Lithuania, Austria and the Czech Sudetenland.
- The Soviet Union annexed Petsamo, parts of Finnish Karelia, Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia after World War II. The question of the status of ceded Karelia was revived in Finland after the end of the Cold War.
- The claims of Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece and Montenegro on the European parts of the Ottoman Empire and Albania (both of which the four divided among themselves) before the First Balkan War, where they took these claims to the battlefield, and won.
- Romanian irredentists before World War I claimed the territories of Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina, Transylvania and Southern Dobruja.
- Croatian nationalists sometimes claim parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, most recently manifested as the Croatian Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia (1991–1994)

## Europe (continuing to the modern day)

- Spanish claims to Gibraltar which was ceded in perpetuity to Britain in 1713 under the Treaty of Utrecht, and argues its case at the United Nations claiming its territorial integrity is affected.
- Hungarian claims to parts of the neighbouring countries inhabited by the ethnic Hungarians (including parts of Slovakia, Romania, Serbia, Ukraine, etc.). The claim is based on historic criteria for some regions (such as Transylvania, where Hungarians are a majority in two out of sixteen counties), and ethnic for other regions. The former Kingdom of Hungary lost 2/3 of its territories as a result of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Nowadays, irredentists are split between a group which wishes to reclaim all former regions of Hungary, and those only desiring ethnic Hungarian regions that are contiguous to current-day Hungary.
- The Greater Romanian goal was achieved in 1918, but Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and Southern Dobruja were lost again in 1940. The goal of Romanian irredentism is the re-establishment of Greater Romania as advocated by the Greater Romania Party, thus claiming territories from Ukraine, Bulgaria and the merger with the Republic of Moldova.
- Greater Serbian claims to large areas of Bosnia, Croatia, Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, on grounds of ethnic affiliation; still promulgated by the Serbian Radical Party.
- Bosniak claims to Sandžak. and large areas of Montenegro due to a large historical Muslim population.
- Albanian claims to Kosovo, which Serbia asserts is a province of Serbia, and which the Kosovar government insists is an independent country, as well as to parts of Montenegro, the Republic of Macedonia and Greece (on grounds of ethnic affiliation).
- Irredentists from the Republic of Macedonia have expressed land claims to the entire region of Macedonia out of which only 40% lies within the Republic of Macedonia, the rest being in Greece, Bulgaria and Albania, on the purported ethnic, historical and geographic grounds.
- Bulgarian irredentists have claimed the Republic of Macedonia based on the idea that the

Macedonians are actually Bulgarians; this was an important factor in Bulgarian foreign policy between Bulgarian independence and World War II.

- Ingush (part of the Russian Federation) claims of the eastern part of the Prigorodny District in North Ossetia as part of Ingushetia on historical and historical-ethnic grounds. See Ingush-Ossetian conflict
- Armenian claims to the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan on ethnic and perceived historical grounds. It is de jure part of Azerbaijan, but de facto an Armenian populated independent country where conflict started in 1988 and has the explicit long-term goal of rejoining Armenia. See also: Nagorno-Karabakh Republic
- Armenian irredentists have also laid claim (on perceived historical, historical ethnic, modern ethnic and also juridical grounds) to territories up to the Pontic coast of Turkey near Trebizond, and south past Lake Van (sometimes far enough to incorporate the historical Subterranean region of Cilician Armenia, though this claim has now been abandoned for the most part), as well as Nakhichevan in Azerbaijan, Javakh in Georgia, and areas of Northwest Iran near Maku. See United Armenia concept for more info.
- Irish nationalists, including republicans, and originally the Irish state itself, have long laid claim to Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom.
- Some Scottish nationalists have also laid claim to the former burgh of Berwick-upon-Tweed, which is on the border between Scotland and England. Berwick had been part of Scotland until during the 16th century when it was seized by English lords.
- German nationalists claim westernmost and northern parts of Poland (including Stettin, Gdańsk, Poznań and Wrocław), southern part of Denmark (South Jutland County), eastern Belgium (Eupen-Malmedy), eastern France (parts of Alsace-Lorraine), Memel in Lithuania, and Kaliningrad Oblast, Russian Federation (including Kaliningrad), former parts of the German Empire.
- Polish nationalists claim westernmost parts of Belarus (including Grodno and Brześć), Ukraine (including Lwów, Stanisławów and Tarnopol), eastern Lithuania (including the capital Vilnius) and Zaolzie, now part of the Czech Republic. All these regions were part of the interwar Poland.
- Some Belarusian nationalists claim the region of Podlaskie from Poland as; the border region, of Lithuania which includes the capital Vilnius; parts of Smolensk and Bryansk Oblasts from Russia. Historically the listed regions belonged to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania a predecessor to modern Lithuanian state, and the borders were drawn during the short-lived Belarusian Democratic Republic.
- Some Ukrainian nationalists claim a multitude of bordering regions where there was or is mixed population. The Transnistria strip of land, presently a non-recognised breakaway republic from Moldova; parts of southern Bukovina and Maramureş from Romania; the Rusyn-populated Prešov Region from Slovakia; the historic Lemkivshchyna province, now part of Poland; the upper San River valley; land to the left-bank of the Bug River (Chełm and Podlaskie), all from Poland; the Polesian lands in Belarus, including the city of Brest; parts of Bryansk Oblast, including the city of Starodub; parts of Belgorod, Voronezh and Kursk Oblasts (historically part of Sloboda Ukraine); parts of Rostov Oblast including the cities of Shakhty and Taganrog; the historic region of Kuban

and parts of Stavropol Kray (Ukrainian nationalists see Kuban Cossacks as Ukrainians), all from Russia.

- The English Democrats Party are irredentist in regards to Monmouthshire (since 1974 part of Wales).<sup>[1]</sup>
- Chechenia (currently part of the Russian Federation) has occasionally laid claims on a region called Akkia (roughly the Auhovski rayon, in Russian), part of neighbouring Dagestan. Prior to the 1944 Chechen deportation to Kazakhstan, the region was part of Chechnya (then an autonomous region within the Soviet Union), which was abolished. It was given to Dagestan, and included all of the modern Novolak district as well as parts of the Kazbek district and the Khasavyurt district (including the city of Khasavyurt itself). Following the repatriation in 1958, Chechen autonomy was not restored in Akkia, and the Chechens were barred from returning there. In spite of this, Chechens have returned to Akkia, and according to the census, in 2002 there were nearly ninety thousand Chechens in Dagestan, primarily in Akkia.
- Russian irredentism has three definitions, narrow, interim and broad.
  - In a broader senses, it could include all lands that historically made up the Soviet Union and/or the Russian Empire at their maximum extent. The broadest sense of Russian irredentism would also extend to all neighbouring regions in bordering countries that are populated by people who also live/lived in Russia (e.g. Iranian Azerbaijan in Iran), or are closely related to those people due to linguistic, ethnic or religious reasons. Historically Russia has pursued these policies, examples include the Pan Slavism movement to put all of the Balkans under a Russian hegemony (which in majority were Slavic and/or Eastern Orthodox); the Russian Third Rome philosophy, which had an ultimate goal of re-claiming former Byzantine regions, in particular the warm winter port of Constantinople. In process establishing a hegemony over Greater Armenia, and in perspective the Holy Land (Lebanon, Palestine etc.) Simultaneously there were ambitions to continue expansion into Persia and even India (see The Great Game). Russia planned to force cession from China's Qing Dynasty of Xinjiang, Manchuria and Mongolia, and even Korea. The Russo-Japanese War ended those prospects, except for the successful Russian creation of the Mongolian People's Republic from a weak Republican China. Finally there were plans to continue expansion beyond the International Date Line into the Yukon, however the Alaska Purchase ended those ambitions, and Russian America became part of the United States.
  - The interim sense of Russian irredentism include some or all of the independent countries and/or territories that made up the Soviet Union and/or the Russian Empire. These include, in a narrow understanding of interim sense: the East Slavic countries of Ukraine and Belarus; the pro-Russian break-away states of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Transnistria; other nations making up the CIS and Georgia, the Baltic States and in broadest understanding, Finland, Poland and Kars Oblast.
  - The narrow sense of Russian irredentism focuses on regions that are populated by ethnic Russians that are outside the Russian Federation. Narva in Estonia; land around Daugavpils

and Riga in Latvia; the historic land of Sloboda Ukraine and New Russia from Ukraine, and in particular Crimea and the city of Sevastopol; the Gagra district in Abkhazia (de jure part of Georgia); lands between the Russian border and the rivers of Ural and Irtysh in Kazakhstan, as well as parts of Semirechye. Due to the conflicting nature of ethnic Russian, Russophone and Slavic definitions in the understanding of Russian irredentism, there is often lots of overlap between one sense and another.

## Asia

- Japan's Kuril Islands dispute with the former Soviet Union (now Russia), most recently over the loss of the southern four islands in the Kuril Islands chain in the closing days of World War II under the Treaty of San Francisco.
- Mutual counterclaims between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China to territories currently controlled by the other:
  - The People's Republic of China claims to the territories under the control of the government of the Republic of China (Taiwan).
  - The Republic of China's claims to mainland China ruled by the People's Republic of China, and most of the PRC's territorial claims.
- The People's Republic of China's former claims over Hong Kong and Macau, which were territories of the United Kingdom and Portugal respectively. They were transferred to the PRC in 1997 and 1999.
- The People's Republic of China's claims over South Tibet or Arunachal Pradesh under Indian administration (claimed by the PRC as part of Tibet).
- The Republic of China's claims to Tannu Uriankhai, now roughly corresponds to Tuva, a republic of Russia; and Outer Mongolia (i.e. the independent country of Mongolia).
- Afghanistan's claims to all Pashtun areas of Pakistan.
- Pakistani claims to all of Jammu and Kashmir (on grounds of ethnic and religious affiliation of the people of the Kashmir Valley) versus Indian rule (the 1947 partition of India led to the accession of Kashmir to India).
- Cambodia has claimed parts of the Mekong Delta that lie in present day Vietnam on the basis that the area, which was formerly part of the Khmer Empire, was artificially carved up by the French during the Colonial Period and given to South Vietnam upon French withdrawal. The area still is home to at least one million ethnic Khmers (the Khmer Krom) who claim to be persecuted by the Vietnamese.
- The Philippines has a territorial claim over Sabah (formerly known as North Borneo), which is now a state of Malaysia. It claims the territory through the heritage of the Sultanate of Sulu.

## Middle East

- Syrian claim for the remaining portion of the Golan Heights, captured by Israel in the 1967 Arab-

Israeli war and later annexed.

- Syrian claims to Turkey's Hatay Province. The Syrian Social Nationalist Party and Levantine nationalists furthermore claims southeastern parts of Turkey, Israel, State of Palestine, Jordan, Cyprus, Iraq, northern parts of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, southwestern parts of Iran, Lebanon and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula as Greater Syria.
- Lebanese claims of the Shebaa Farms, an area annexed by Israel.
- Mutual counterclaims between Israeli and Palestinian nationalist movements:
  - Palestinian: Hamas and other Palestinian factions claim the entire territory of the state of Israel;
  - Some Israeli political factions claim Israeli sovereignty over the entire West Bank (referred to by these factions as Judea and Samaria).
- Iraqi claims to Kuwait (esp. since the emirate's independence from Britain in 1961) before the Gulf War.
- The Iran-Iraq border dispute, includes Khuzestan populated by Iranian Arabs.
- Azeri claims on parts of Northwestern Iran, based on ethno-linguistic grounds.
- The government of Iraqi Kurdistan seeks to incorporate part or all of several neighboring provinces.

## South and Central America

- Bolivian claims to coastal regions of Chile annexed after the War of the Pacific. More recently, president Evo Morales expressed disgust with the secession of Acre (1902), which later become a Brazilian state, saying that the Brazilians provoked the unrest and later paid Bolivia only "a horse's price" for the priceless land.<sup>[2]</sup>
- Guatemalan claims to Belize and parts of Mexico, both nullified in 1995.
- Venezuelan claims to most of Guyana west of the Essequibo River, as Guayana Esequiba.
- Argentina's claims to the Falkland Islands, a British Overseas Territory.

## North America

- Claims among Mexicans to the Southwestern United States, conquered by the United States from Mexico in the Mexican-American War and later purchased (Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo) for a sum of 15 million dollars; and the Gadsden Purchase for 10 million dollars.
- The Quebec government claims that the territory of Labrador belongs to the province of Quebec. Labrador is officially part of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador.<sup>[3]</sup>

## Africa

- Morocco's claims, initiated in 1963 by King Hassan II, to a claimed "Greater Morocco" (an area comprising Morocco, parts of Algeria, Western Sahara, Mauritania, the Spanish cities of Ceuta and Melilla). This led to a border war with Algeria and the Moroccan military annexation of Western Sahara in 1976 & 1979.

- Within Somalia, the self-declared Puntland and Somaliland conflict over Sanaag and Sool, based on the Puntland desire to unite areas of the Darod clan.
- Somalia lays claim to the Northeastern Region of Kenya and the Ogaden Region of Ethiopia, based on historically being part of Somali lands and currently being inhabited by Somalis.
- Ethiopian claims, initiated in 1891 by Menelik II, to a claimed "Greater Abyssinian Empire" (an area comprising Ethiopia, Somalia, Ogadenia, parts of Kenya, parts of Uganda, Eritrea, Djibouti and parts of Sudan). This led to a border wars and crisis in the Horn of Africa, that is with Ogadenis, Somalia, Sudan and later Eritrea which became independent from Ethiopia in 1993.
- Comoros claim Mayotte from France after 2009 referendum.
- Madagascar claim the Scattered Islands in the Indian Ocean after France gave them independence in 1960.

## See also

- Ethnic nationalism
- Ethnic cleansing
- Identity politics
- Lebensraum
- Revanchism
- Status quo ante bellum
- Manifest Destiny
- Historical powers

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2. ↑ O Acre por um cavalo? - Terra - Antonio Luiz MC da Costa (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120211192150/http://terramagazine.terra.com.br/interna/0,,OI1016526-EI6607,00.html>)(**Portuguese**)
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