

PERMEABLE BORDERS, IMPERMEABLE SOVEREIGNTIES

Canada has the largest marine area of any state in the world, and therefore has – or should have – a high degree of interest in ocean development of all kinds. Three maritime boundaries have been resolved; three remain to be addressed. One boundary, with Greenland, was settled by agreement in 1970. The other two existing maritime boundaries were settled by judicial settlement, though the International Court of Justice with respect to the Gulf of Maine. A special Court of Arbitration settled the boundary with the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. The unresolved boundaries are with the United States – in the Beaufort Sea, BC-Alaska, and BC-Washington. No negotiations are scheduled on any of them.

The freshwater interests of Canada are hardly less important, with the Great Lakes, and many rivers flowing across the land boundaries with the United States. Some issues relevant to international rivers in Central Europe were examined by Dr. Valerie Assetto²⁰. Despite numerous calls for increased cooperation in international river basin management there, almost no progress has been made on this issue in the period 1989-99. While international globalisation seems to dictate the logic of such co-operation, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Ukraine have been slow to respond to common problems surrounding the Danube, the Tisza, and other waterways. In her paper, Dr. Assetto examined the level of co-operation between these states over the past ten years with respect to flood control, navigation, energy production, and environmental protection. She concluded that despite pressures from globalisation, the reassertion of sovereignty by these states, after four decades of enforced co-operation, has actually hardened borders in the region and hampered the search for co-operative solutions.

Ian Townsend-Gault²¹ examined issues arising from the maritime jurisdictional disputes in the South China Sea, where the continuing focus on the occupation of reefs and *rights* over ocean space monopolises the regional debate as if these were the key issues as regards optimum maritime management. Lack of confidence and mutual antipathy are making it increasingly difficult to engender the forms of co-operation which are essential in a semi-enclosed marine space.

²⁰ *Permeable Border/Impermeable Sovereignities: International Rivers in Central Europe*, Dr. Valerie J. Assetto, Department of Political Science, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, USA

²¹ *When Boundaries are off the Agenda: Informal diplomacy in the South China Sea*, Professor Ian Townsend-Gault, Director, Centre for Asian Legal Studies, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada