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Editor's Note

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Editor's Note

History, intertwined with geography, leads to nation-states and to civilizations. But neither history nor geography, neither society nor politics, follow simple, strict, unwavering rules; nor are the products of the intersections of history even remotely uniform. That is why this journal and our society typically adopt a comparative approach.

To explain underlying historical movements, we seek to compare processes and results; we want to draw from specific examples generalized rules that are widely applicable. But two results of history and geography are almost always anomalous. Exclaves and enclaves are complicated products of evolution, actual, physical results of our geographically and historically complex world. Exclaves are parts of the geography not connected physically with the main; enclaves are places encased within other, foreign entities. From the sociological perspective, an enclave is a pocket of people foreign to the state or civilization which surrounds them; an exclave, on the other hand, belongs to a land or a people beyond the main borders. Both are found historically in civilizations and in states, including, frequently, in the present day.

During recent days, with the flotilla incident, the Gaza Strip has come into the public consciousness as a locus of international concern. One overlooked aspect: few of us stop to consider what the Gaza Strip actually is. Few of us appreciate the fact that geographically it is one example of an important aspect of civilizational study and civilizational clash.

Designated as part of the Arab territory by the UN's 1947 Palestine partition plan, and populated to a considerable extent as a result of a refugee flight from Israel that was associated with the subsequent 1948-9 wars, the Gaza Strip is bordered by the State of Israel on the northeast and southeast and by Egypt on the southwest. The Mediterranean Sea constitutes the rest of its border, essentially on the west.

Yet, the Gaza Strip has also been considered since 1994 by the international community as part of the Palestinian National Authority, the majority of which is located on the territory known to much of the world as "The West Bank" and to many in Israel as the provinces of "Judea and Samaria." At no point do the two parts of the Palestinian National Authority touch geographically.

Moreover, there is now a political separation of sorts between the Gaza Strip portion and the West Bank portion of the Palestinian National Authority. This developed following what was essentially a coup d'état within the Palestinian National Authority. The HAMAS movement assumed ascendancy over Gaza in 2007, and to this day, the Gaza Strip is controlled almost entirely by it.

A typical militant Islamic republic has been created there, dedicated to eliminating the State of Israel. The Fatah Movement and its allies have long constituted the central core of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and, after the Oslo Agreement went into effect, was recognized as the major party within the government of the Palestinian National Authority located on the West Bank and headquartered in Ramallah. This government is recognized by most countries in the world as leading the Palestinian people.

Yet the Gaza Strip from the geographic point of view still makes up what is called by political geographers a Palestinian "exclave." That is, it is part of a larger political entity with which it is not contiguous at any point.

It is true that under the plan drawn up by the United Nations before the War of 1948, the two major parts of the Arab territory (now called by most people the Gaza Strip and the West Bank) touched south of Tel Aviv. It is also true that proposals have been advanced over the years by Israeli governments, as part of the peace process, to provide for a protected corridor between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

But in geographic fact, the Gaza Strip is seen as an exclave by most of the world, not unlike other exclaves in the world today. Although there are many exclaves, several politically, civilizationally or sociologically significant examples come readily to mind.

Kaliningrad. One of the most interesting exclaves is the Russian *oblast* or region known today as Kaliningrad. From the 18th to the mid-20th Century, beginning in 1773, this territory, which lies adjacent to Poland, Lithuania, and the Baltic Sea, was a part of Prussia, or later, Germany. Known then as Königsberg, it was the home of the great philosopher Immanuel Kant.

The violence of World War II resulted in a forceful change of ownership, one ratified by the victorious allies immediately after the war. Today, although the smallest and most western Russian *oblast*, it connects at no point with Russia, the main body of which lies about 200 miles away. Yet, Russia ferociously holds on to the territory of

400,000 people. Able to host a warm water fleet as well as many Soviet, and now Russian, troops, Kaliningrad provides a Russian territory smack in the middle of the European Union.

Nagorno-Karabakh. Another interesting exclave is perhaps more analogous to the situation of the Gaza Strip. This is Nagorno-Karabakh. This region lies in the midst of Azerbaijan, a predominantly Muslim country. (That is, it is an “enclave” within Azerbaijan.) Yet, it consists mostly of Armenians, a Christian people. It is administered as an “exclave” of Armenia. And, surprisingly, to the southwest of Armenia, alongside Iran and Turkey, lies the mountainous region known as Nakhchivan. This “exclave” is a part of Azerbaijan, ironically. The two often feuding countries – Armenia and Azerbaijan — thus each have a major exclave within the other country.

East Pakistan. One famous and huge exclave that came to an abrupt end was East Pakistan. This “eastern wing” of Pakistan was designated by Britain to be part of Pakistan because it was a heavily Muslim portion of the important British Raj province of Bengal. The exclave lasted as part of Pakistan from 1947 to the war of 1971. As a result of that conflict East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan. The “western wing” kept the name Pakistan and the “eastern wing” chose the name of Bangladesh. Today, the countries are completely separate in almost every way.

Is there a political or humanitarian answer for the geographic anomaly of exclaves? One possibility is an exchange of both territory and population. In the case of Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhchivan, for example, could swapping exclave territories and moving people end a long struggle? Certainly, it could yield contiguous territories for both Azerbaijan and Armenia. It is possible to envision such a future for the Gaza Strip, as well.

In civilizational studies we have such exclaves and enclaves all the time. I don't believe that Arnold Toynbee uses the terms in his great work, *A Study of History*, but he does utilize a somewhat value-laden term that I find quite obnoxious, “fossil.” Thus, I have sitting before me a wonderful book entitled *The Professor and the Fossil: The Confusions, Prejudices, and Intellectual Distortions in Arnold J. Toynbee's A Study of History*, written by Maurice Samuel in 1956. He takes issue with Toynbee's description of “fossilized relics of similar societies now extinct.” Besides the Jews, Toynbee includes the Parsees and Jains, as well as certain Christians and Buddhists, in this category. “The Jews are manifestly fossils of the

Syriac Society.” Moreover, “the Zionist legatees of a fossilized Syriac Civilization” are what we see in the Middle East today.

Toynbee thus finds fossilized civilizations within others, enclaves of a sort. Perhaps it is too much of a stretch, but I think that when comparative civilizationalists refer to the periphery of certain civilizations, we may be ignoring the existence of important exclaves, enclaves, and fossils within civilizations. That would be a shame, because history hasn’t always flowed in a pattern that leads to clear demarcations. Moreover, it is at those interstitial points that creativity, innovation, is most likely to be found. Certainly, that is the argument that Robert Park and E.V. Stonequist make in their seminal work, *The Marginal Man*.

Let me close by congratulating those who were elected to membership on the Board of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations during the recent meeting in Utah, a meeting much enjoyed by the undersigned fossil.

Sad news to report: The readers, authors, and editors of this journal and the membership of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations have lost a giant in our field. Professor Matthew Melko, former president of the ISCSC, died this summer in Ohio. Dr. Melko was the mentor of many members of this association and he was a driving force who maintained the spirit and spurred the growth of both the ISCSC and the field of comparative civilizational study. He was a prolific author and a trail-blazer in the theory and understanding of civilizations.

A session will be held in his honor at the next annual ISCSC meeting and we will run a meaningful obituary in the next issue. In the meantime, all of us on the editorial board agree: Matt, our friend and colleague, rest in peace.

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