

Chapter 3 - Defence by Rules. Protections offered to states by the international system.

The post war international system dominated by the United Nations offers significant protections to the nation state. The United Nations Charter made war illegal except in self-defence and required that any military action against another state needed the approval of the United Nations Security Council³². Those states that gained membership of the United Nations fell under a system that recognized their sovereignty equally with all other states and that offered protection from invasion and coercion³³. For smaller states this was a guarantee of sovereignty that they had never had before. States no longer had to fight to protect their sovereignty, nor did they need to surrender elements of sovereignty to a larger power in order to be protected.

Liechtenstein

One such state is the Principality of Liechtenstein, a 160 square kilometre wedge of land alongside the headwaters of the Rhine River between Switzerland and Austria. It has a population of around 37,000 people of whom approximately 70% are Liechtenstein citizens³⁴. Liechtenstein is a political construction of the age of European Empires. The Princes of Liechtenstein were a noble family in the service of the Austrian Habsburgs. They took their name from a white chalky limestone (lichter stein) castle they bought near Vienna in the 12th century³⁵. The family built a reputation for devoted imperial diplomatic, political and military service and through shrewd politics and wise investment they developed a powerful portfolio of position and property. Most of the family's extensive estates were in what is now the Czech Republic and Slovakia but were then Bohemia and Moravia³⁶. These estates were vast, grand and produced significant income but they lacked the appropriate political status in that they were beholden to another suzerain who himself was beholden to the Holy Roman Emperor. In order to gain a seat in the Imperial Diet the Liechtensteins needed to possess lands that were beholden to the Emperor alone without any sort of intermediary Lord. Two such entities were found in the form of the Lordships of Vaduz and Schellenberg. In 1699 Prince Johann Adam von Liechtenstein purchased the Lordship of Schellenberg and the first option to buy the Lordship of Vaduz from the cash strapped Count of Hohenems. In 1712 with the fortunes of the Count of Hohenems continuing to decline the County of Vaduz was sold to the Liechtensteins. Now in possession of two entities that had direct fealty to the Emperor the Liechtensteins petitioned the Emperor to join them into a single Principality (or Fürstentum) which gave the

³² <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-vii/index.html>, Article 51.

³³ <http://www.un.org/en/sections/un-charter/chapter-i/index.html>, Article 2.

³⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, 506-508.

³⁵ David Beattie, *Liechtenstein: A Modern History*, (London: I B Taurus, 2004), 8.

³⁶ Peter H. Wilson, *Europe's Tragedy, A History of the Thirty Years War*, (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 354.