

ABSTRACT

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY DISPUTES: BORDER ISSUES IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

Barry M. Taylor

This paper reviews and explores international boundary disputes and the concepts necessary to understand those disputes which arise between and among sovereign states. Territory and sovereignty are defined and related to the concept of boundary which arises from them. The methods of acquiring territory are described, as well as the concept of hinterland.

International boundaries are also defined and distinguished from national frontiers. The continuous process of formulating international boundaries and their classification into different analytical frameworks is described, as well as their delimitation and demarcation and the problems encountered by boundary commissions. The causes of international boundary disputes, including the process of boundary making, territory and economic expansion, state succession and the principle of uti possidetis are set forth.

The writer reviews three Caribbean basin disputes: the Belize-Guatemala dispute, which arises principally from interpretation of the Anglo-Guatemala Treaty of 1859, Guyana's dispute with Surinam as to the source of the Corentyne River, and the possession of land between the Kutari and New Rivers; and the controversy between Venezuela and Guyana arising from an arbitration decision in 1898.

A survey of the mechanisms available for settling international boundary disputes, including war, diplomacy, arbitration and adjudication, completes the paper.