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# *THE BLUE / RED DIVIDE*

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*U. S. PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS*

*FROM 1964 TO 2020*

❧ *A CANGRANDE LITTLE BOOK* ❧

**WILLIAM LEISS** ©2020

**DISCUSSION DRAFT** (APRIL 2020\V3)

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## *Preface*

In 2019 a news organization poll found that one-quarter of Americans believed that “God wanted Donald Trump to become president.” In that same year some white southern evangelicals in the United States warned their fellow Americans that President Trump embodied the only force on earth which could head off the long-feared End of Days and the Apocalypse, the Final Battle leading to the destruction of the world. The only detail missing in this prognostication was the identity of the Antichrist; but among some of the evangelicals themselves this figure has had a name: Barack Obama. In September 2019, President Trump retweeted a passage from an evangelical megachurch pastor who predicted “a Civil War like fracture in this Nation from which our Country will never heal” if the President were to be impeached; during the impeachment trial Senator Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn) agreed, saying that a conviction “would just pour gasoline on cultural fires that are burning out there.” Since 2015, when candidate Trump referred to members of an immigrant racial minority as criminals and rapists, there has been a resurgence of racial and ethnic hatred. Finally, in 2018 a report of the Brookings Institution, using U. S. Census Bureau data, noted that the population of the country is projected to become majority non-white by 2045. Shades of Armageddon. Shades of 1860.

In the fifty years stretching from 1970 to 2020, the conviction that the people of the United States of America were divided into two bitterly-opposed political camps had become more and more widely and deeply entrenched. The fundamental issues underlying this division are race, immigration, economic inequality, and the politicization of morality. For both sides it seemed that this division had grown sharper and more fundamental with each passing year. Even worse, each side had become convinced that the other represented, not merely an honest difference of opinion, but rather a betrayal of the founding principles of the republic, something that was characteristic of the decade of the 1850s. The normal, habitual and well-practiced accommodations of democratic politics were fast vanishing, replaced by vitriol and rising anger – even hatred – and tactics of permanent obstructionism across all three branches of the federal government, executive, legislative, and judicial.

As a result, it seems likely that the bitterness and sense of irreconcilable differences between the two sides are set to intensify *no matter what the outcome of the 2020 presidential race turns out to be*. Paradoxically, the divide is likely to worsen considerably no matter what happens in the election, since President Trump's "base" will be further energized whether he wins or loses. For the president has come to embody this divide, and therefore either one side or the other would enter the coming decade convinced that the Republic was doomed. How long would it take for a nation of citizens armed to the teeth with military-grade weapons to conclude that the time had come to employ them in the service of their political beliefs?

Beginning in 1991, the country now known as the former Yugoslavia disintegrated in an orgy of civil strife, property destruction, murder, and mass rape. Seven new small nations emerged from the ashes: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia. The dissolution of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, heir to the Russian Empire (1721-1917), into fifteen separate sovereign states at the end of 1991 has been far more consequential, although one need not agree with Vladimir Putin that this was the "greatest geopolitical tragedy of the [twentieth] century." The suddenness of this breakup of the second-largest continental empire in world history has had a great many unfortunate results, especially the persistence of authoritarian regimes, financial fraud, quasi-criminal control over the economic sector, political murders, and naked territorial aggression against Ukraine. For a regime that had long boasted of the superiority of its "planned economy," this outcome was ironic indeed.

Now it is time for the citizens of the United States to begin considering whether a peaceful breakup of their own far larger and richer nation would be much more preferable in comparison with the possible alternatives. Careful planning and a clear sense of this nation's past history will be essential to securing a favorable outcome from these deliberations.

## *Introduction*

The sense of profound trouble that is roiling American national politics at this time has some clear historical antecedents. At times a sense of estrangement and poorly-articulated grievances infects a segment within a population which is unable to express clearly what it feels. Then a figure emerges who gives powerful voice to their concerns; in American history, for example, this has occurred fairly often in the appearance of third-party challengers in national presidential elections. Almost always the political establishment responds to successfully defeat the uprising – but not always. There are occasions when the figure in question has special talents which enable him to reach deeply into the wellsprings of discontent and to rouse the passions of the disaffected, to such an extent that a major part of the political establishment surrenders to the challenger in the hope that it too will benefit from the outcome. Generally speaking, these scenarios do not end well.

This essay begins in Section 1 by relating briefly the story of the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and the Compromise of 1850, two political deals in American history that were driven by the future of slavery in the expanding United States and were important factors in the coming of the Civil War, during which as many American soldiers died as occurred in the nation's all other wars. Section 2 discusses the ongoing legacy of slavery in American politics down to the present day.

Section 3 presents the interesting results from a first look at the Blue/Red divide in the popular vote among states in the USA over the course of fourteen presidential elections from 1964 to 2016. During the first half of that period (seven elections, 1964–1988), the Blue/Red split was 29%/71%; in the second half (seven elections, 1992–2016), the Blue/Red split was 51%/49%. Section 4 discusses the four key areas of national policy and development which have been the constituents of this steadily-growing divide: race, immigration, the economy, and the politicization of morality. The most telling statistics in those areas deal with the racial composition of the American population, in the process of changing from one in which Whites represented 80% of the total in the 1990 census to one projected to 2060, when the expected composition will be: Whites 44%, Hispanics 29%, and Blacks 18%. The many changes taking place in these four areas provide a good explanation for the growing polarization of attitudes and beliefs, as well as the rise of more extreme viewpoints, in the nation as a whole.

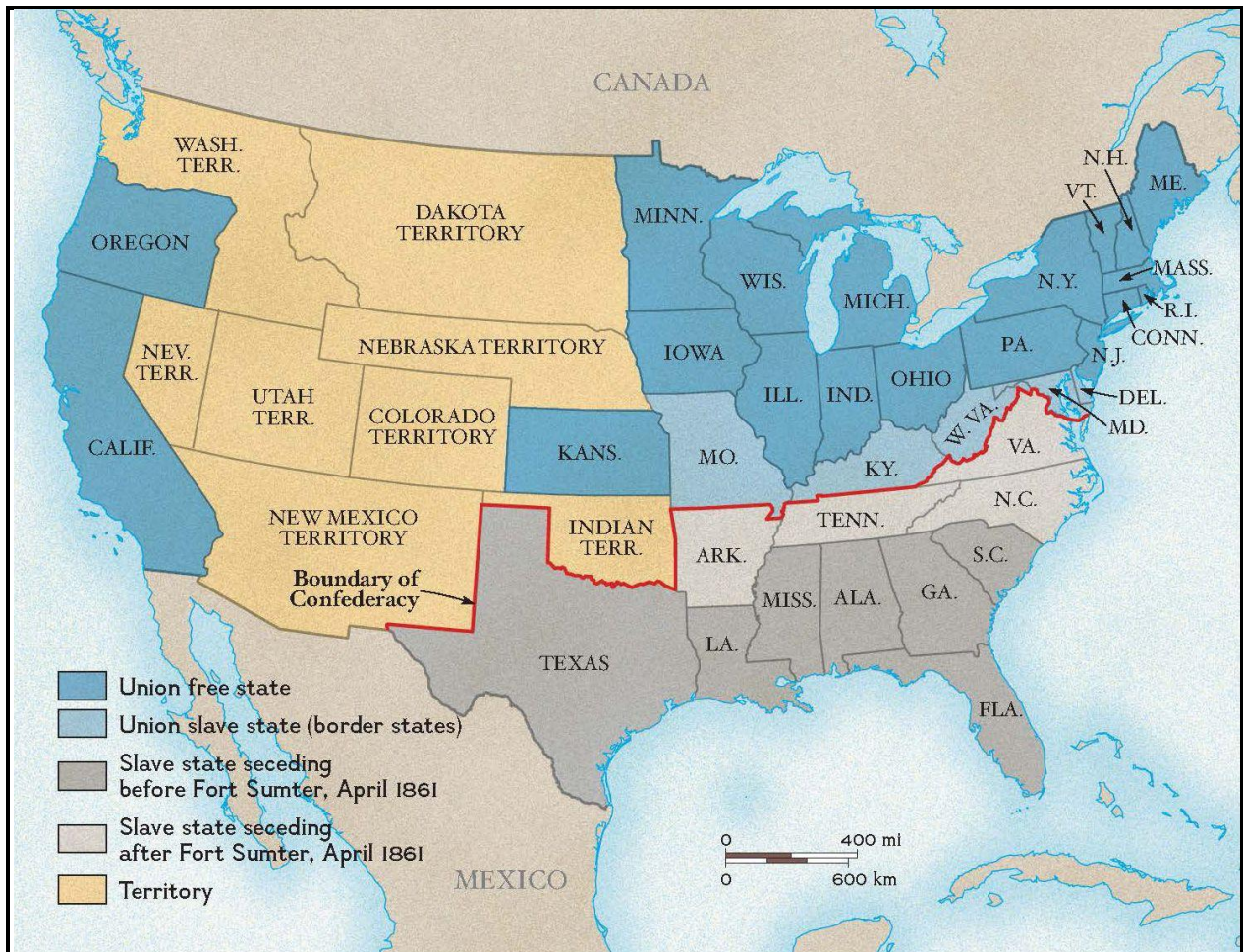
Section 5 (plus the Appendix) tries to imagine what kinds of political negotiations and constitutional revisions might take place in the second half of the decade of the 2020s in order to bring about a peaceful dissolution of the United States and the creation of four new independent sovereign countries on its territory. Section 6 includes a map showing the four new countries and some of their key characteristics, especially their economic clout in the world: All four countries would rank among the Top 10 nations in terms of their GDP. Section 7 uses two more tables on the Blue/Red divide in presidential elections to ask whether the breakup might provide a high degree of long-term political stability for the four new countries, based on a strong majority consensus of political beliefs in all of them.

Section 8 takes up, once again, the legacy of slavery in terms of the large share (43%) of the black population in the former United States who would now be residing in the new nation called the Southern States of America. It discusses the need for a legal and political Agreement among the citizens of the USA as a whole, made in the course of negotiations preceding its dissolution, to protect that subpopulation from further discrimination. Section 8 also briefly raises the issue of the fast-growing population of Hispanics in the USA and the contrasting situation of Hispanics and African-Americans, especially in terms of the persistent and growing income and wealth inequality in the USA. Section 9 takes a final look at the closeness of the Blue/Red divide, down to the election of 2016: When the votes for the two main third-party challengers (Stein and Johnson) are allocated to the mainstream candidates, Clinton and Trump, the difference (out of over 136 million votes cast) is a small fraction of 1%.

The conclusions, in Section 10, argue that among the valuable and lasting benefits of dissolution, by far the most important will be putting an end to the destructive polarization of viewpoints among the citizenry which has been inexorably leading to extremism and, perhaps, political violence. If that tendency is not thwarted, it is possible that the uncertainties as to where this extremism will ultimately lead will be far more serious, and damaging, than those which would attend the creation of four independent new republics.



## Section 1: The Compromise of 1850



**Figure 1: Free and Slave States and Territories in 1860 (National Geographic)**

The defining political issues for the United States in the period from 1820 to 1860 were slavery and expansion to the West, and both were deeply intertwined. Western expansion meant deciding whether or not new states, carved out of various territories, would be legally slaveholding or not. A complicating factor was the existence of the “three-fifths clause” in the Constitution, whereby each of the enslaved African-Americans in the South was counted as three-fifths of a person for the purpose of determining any state’s total population, and thus its entitlement to a certain number of members in the national government’s House of Representatives. And since each state was entitled to two senators, maintaining a balance of states as between free and slaveholding was a priority.



An informal border between the two types of states had been established by the Mason-Dixon Line, a line originally surveyed to fix the borders of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware. But a more formal political agreement was needed as new states kept being formed, resulting in the Missouri Compromise of 1820. When Alabama was admitted to the Union in late 1819, the number of slave and “free” states became equal; soon, however, pressure began building to add Missouri, also as a slave state. A compromise was reached when Maine was admitted as a free state and, at the same time, the parallel 36°30' north (at the southern boundary of Missouri) was recognized as the new line between free and slave domains by making Missouri the only exception which was permitted. But the pressures of Western expansion would prove to be relentless.

The trigger for further political conflict was the seizure of Mexican territory and creation of the independent Republic of Texas in 1836, followed by the admission of Texas as a slave state in 1845 and the territorial gains achieved by the United States following the ending of the Mexican - American War in 1848 (the “Mexican Cession”). Continuing territorial claims made by Texans, to enlarge the northern and western borders of their state, and other issues, led to the Compromise of 1850, largely the work of Kentucky’s Senator Henry Clay, a package of seven bills designed to be voted on as a totality. An important part of the deal was the admission of California as a free state, which among other things ended the hopes of slave states to extend their peculiar institution to the west coast and the Pacific Ocean. But perhaps its most fateful component was the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which compelled all the citizens of free states, on pain of jail and huge fines for disobedience, to take part in the recapture of escaped slaves anywhere on the territory of the United States. Since by 1850 both the abolitionist movement and the Underground Railroad were gaining strength day by day in the North, this Act enraged many of the citizens there and among other things led to the huge popularity of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852).

The Compromise of 1850 is sometimes said to have postponed the onset of the Civil War by a decade. It is more accurate to claim that, by including the Fugitive Slave Act in its package of bills, it made the Civil War inevitable. By forbidding all citizens from assisting escaped slaves and indeed requiring their active participation in recapturing them, in all the towns, villages, cities, and

countryside where people lived, the Act brought all northerners face-to-face with the ugly reality of human bondage and oppression, otherwise a distant reality of far-off places, at a time when travel outside one's local area was uncommon. Undoubtedly the result was a rapid hardening of attitudes among the people of the North, hastening the arrival of the moment when the two sides would be compelled to go to war in order to settle the matter once and for all.

As a new decade dawns in the year 2020, the people of the United States may be arriving at the time when they must begin to consider whether there are other and better options for resolving the deep fractures in their polity than the possibility of taking up arms against each other once again.

## *Section 2: The Enduring Legacy of Slavery*

For most of the nineteenth century, the constitutional history of the United States was dominated by a single overriding issue, namely, the enslavement of African-Americans. On the eve of the Civil War, the census of 1860 counted a little over 31 million citizens in total, of whom 9 million lived in the eleven states which were soon to secede from the Union and form the Confederate States of America. Left entirely forgotten in that census was the astonishing number of 4 million souls in the South who were slaves, living in the fifteen states of the Union which then permitted this lawful abomination – a huge national minority of disenfranchised, racially-distinct, and unfree persons who were denied all of the constitutional protections of law and justice.

The first slave ship from Africa destined for the British colonies in North America, holding 20 blacks in chains, showed up in Virginia in 1619; eventually 600,000 other captives would follow. The United States passed an Act prohibiting the overseas slave trade in 1808, following the lead of

the United Kingdom, which had done so the previous year, although some individual states had taken this step earlier; however, thousands of slaves were smuggled into the South for many years thereafter. (It should be noted that Americans were also very active in the slave trade into other countries, such as Cuba and Brazil.) Shortly thereafter, the 1810 Census indicated that there were about 1.2 million slaves in the country out of a total population of 7.2 million (16%). Therefore, most of the very large increase in the population of slaves between 1808 and 1860 is attributable to the fact that all the offspring of slaves were automatically enslaved themselves: In other words, the breeding of human infants served to replace new importations. Also, after 1808 a large domestic slave trade arose; the historian Michael Tadman estimates that over a million blacks were bought and sold on the soil of the United States.

The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution, all adopted between 1865 and 1870, finally granted citizenship and equality before the law to the former slaves. The Reconstruction Era, a period extending from the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation to 1877, when the last Northern troops were withdrawn from the South, sought to implement and consolidate the new freedoms for black men and women. It failed, thoroughly and catastrophically. Immediately thereafter the resurgent white power in the former Confederacy began to revoke those gains through murder and mayhem, in what would become the longest, cruelest and most widespread campaign of domestic terrorism in the history of the United States. Moreover, an entirely new set of practices was invented in those years to control and oppress blacks.

These practices included convict leasing, peonage, and sharecropping. Southern states did not build new prisons; rather, they leased out convicts to private employers. They also invented an entire set of new crimes which mostly blacks were suited to commit, but these proved unnecessary, because blacks were often simply arrested for no crime at all and forced to work without pay. More incredibly still, these forced laborers were bought and sold by leaseholders. Sharecroppers were compelled to remain on the land they worked and were whipped for disobedience. Peonage (debt slavery) was another form of involuntary servitude, in this case used against poor whites as well as blacks: Arrested for minor crimes, when they could not pay the outrageous court fees and fines imposed through the proceedings, they were forced to work for employers who paid these charges. Although slavery and involuntary servitude were outlawed together by the Thirteenth Amendment,

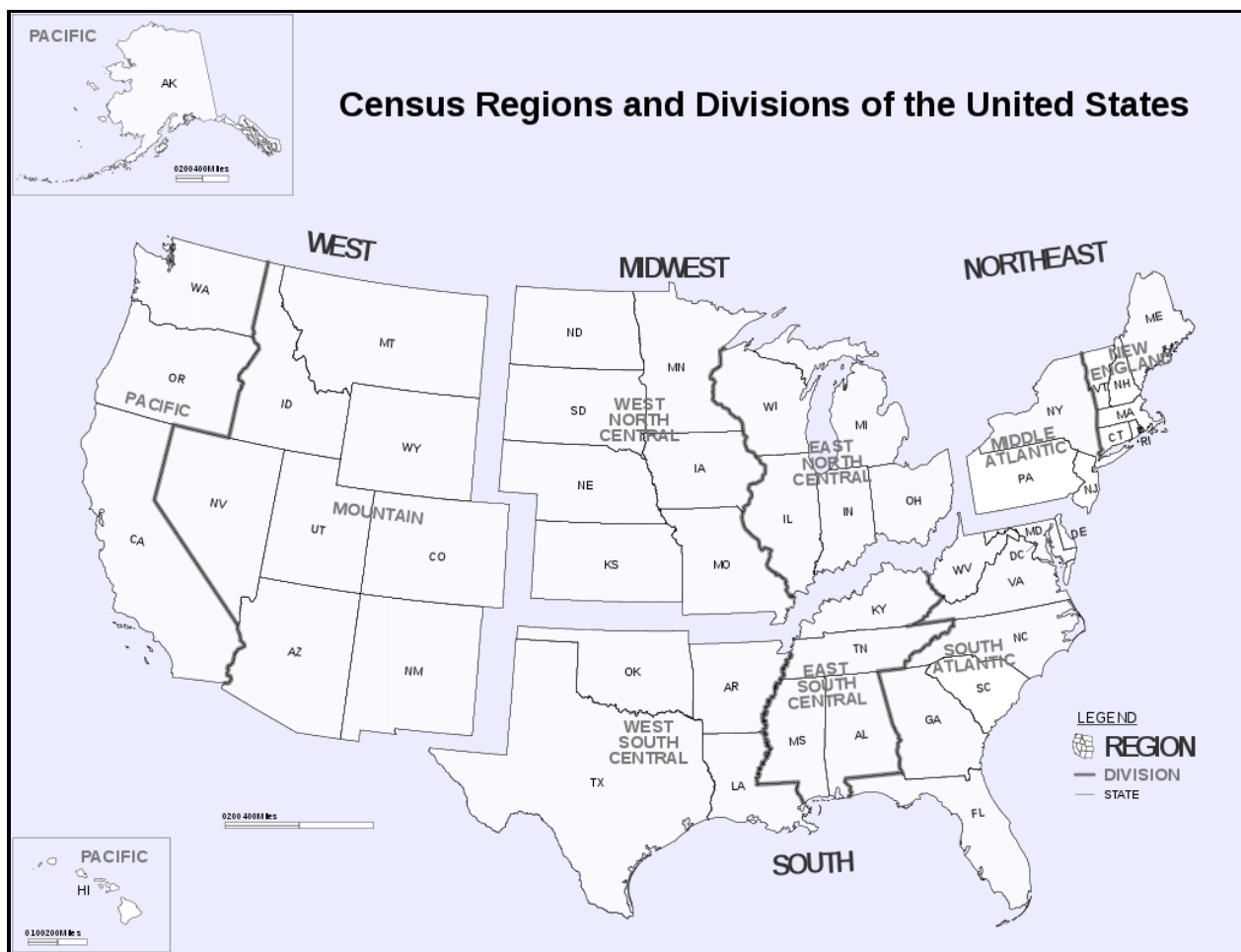
which was ratified in 1865 (having been first rejected by some states), peonage persisted widely until the early 1940s. Only just after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 did President Franklin Delano Roosevelt instruct his Attorney General of the time to insist that federal prosecutors put an end to these ugly practices. Some six months earlier, Roosevelt had issued an Executive Order guaranteeing equality of employment for blacks in defense industries. It took the reality of a world war to bring about these modest gains.

One of the great and enduring tragedies of American history has been that the legacy of slavery was never fully confronted and resolved. No secure means of livelihood for the population of former slaves as a whole was devised and implemented once the Civil War had ended. No compensation of any kind was offered for their long suffering and brutal treatment, extending over a period of almost 250 years, a quarter of a millennium. When after 1877 the white majority in the South effectively revoked equal treatment under the law for blacks, no remedy was supplied by those states whose young men had fought and died, or had suffered horrendous injuries, in great numbers to liberate them. There was no Truth and Reconciliation Commission, no congressional inquiry, no ringing condemnation of past evils in a national forum, nor much attention paid to the litany of new crimes against black citizens committed after the end of the Civil War in the name of white democracy and freedom. Blacks would have to make do with the collection of insipid legislative apologies for the history of slavery issued around the year 2007, some of which explicitly stated that such apologies would not under any circumstances lay the groundwork for the payment of compensation to the contemporary descendants of slaves.

And all the while, the corrosive attitudes of racism spread and persisted. The denigration of the intellectual capacities of black people had originated in the need of white oppressors to justify the domination and exploitation of their slaves. Christians all, their theology took pains to prove that all this was perfectly consistent with the teachings of a just and benevolent deity. When terror, discrimination and segregation replaced slavery, the grounds had already been prepared whereby the new forms of injustice too could rest comfortably within the moral and religious beliefs of the privileged white majority. And there they have remained, widely albeit not universally held, down to the present day.

### *Section 3: The Presidential Electoral Map, 1964–2016*

The prospects for the possibility of an amicable breakup of the United States of America are to a large extent dependant on the stability of the Blue/Red political divide across an extended period of time. One easy way to look at this situation is to examine the electoral map for the fourteen presidential elections held during the period from 1964 to 2016, about half-a-century. The results, offered below in Table 1, are summarized in terms of the states allocated to the four regions used by the U. S. Census Bureau (since 1984): Northeast, South, Midwest, and West:



**Figure 2: Regions in the USA (U. S. Census Bureau)**

The divisions among these four regions are shown graphically in Figure 2. Quite obviously, any scheme that imposes a sense of regional unity on the disparate and ever-changing demographic

and social dynamics of the various U. S. states is somewhat arbitrary. But such an effort can be rewarding when one seeks to overlay a longer-term political alignment onto the four-part collection of regions used by the Census Bureau. The political alignment referred to here is contained in the results of the fourteen presidential elections for the two major parties, in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia, held between 1964 and 2016, as given in Table 1. (For the sake of consistency, in constructing this database I have equated “Blue” with the Democratic Party and “Red” with the Republican Party for the entire period under discussion.)

**TABLE 1: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS BY STATES AND U. S. CENSUS BUREAU REGIONS, 1964 TO 2016**

YEARS	ALL BLUE	ALL RED	NORTHEAST		SOUTH		MIDWEST		WEST	
			B	R	B	R	B	R	B	R
<b>1964 to 1988 (7)</b>	105 29%	252 71%	24	39	39	80	21	49	21	84
<b>1992 to 2016 (7)</b>	181 51%	176 49%	61	2	39	80	36	34	45	60
<b>TOTALS</b>	286 40%	428 60%	85	41	78	160	57	83	66	144

In American politics the years from the early 1960s to 2016 included notable milestones in terms of presidential elections. But the changing political landscape also reflected the beginnings of strong and occasionally violent divisions among the citizenry, first in the episode of the civil-rights “Freedom Riders” and then in the opposition to the Vietnam War. The election in 1964 was marked by the decisive victory of Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater; then, during his single full term of office, President Johnson forged the most progressive social legislation since the days of FDR’s New Deal (Civil Rights Act, Medicare and Medicaid, and other elements of the “Great Society” package). But then he was gone, undone by the Vietnam War, replaced by the utterly different one-and-one half terms of Richard Nixon. The brief interlude with Jimmy Carter ended with the two sweeping successes by Ronald Reagan, followed by – after another single-term presidency – the offsetting strong two-term electoral results achieved first by Bill Clinton and then by George W. Bush. It is noteworthy that the twenty-five years between 1973 and 1998 was also

marked by two impeachments, one threatened and another actual, something that had not happened since 1868.

These contrasting results were less remarkable than the next set of decisive public policy reversals, during which the largely unexpected Trump success in 2016 came on the heels of two impressive Obama victories. The radical shifts in public policy from Johnson to Nixon in 1968, and then again from Obama to Trump in 2016, constitute remarkably similar bookends for the entire period of 50-some years under discussion. But the complete election-by-election data set on which Table 1 is based reveals another underlying pattern:

- (1) Northeast:  
Almost consistently Blue except for the two Reagan elections;
- (2) South:  
Almost consistently Red except for Johnson, Carter, and 2 Clinton elections (all Southerners); but Gore failed to win any states in the South, even his home state of Tennessee, in 2000.
- (3) Midwest:  
This Region appears to have the most inconsistency from election to election during this period;
- (4) West:  
The configuration of states in this Census Bureau Region masks a strong divide between the rest of the Midwest (generally Red) and the Far West (Blue).

#### THE UNDERLYING PATTERN:

- (5) In the first 7 elections (1964–1988) the split across states was: B105 (29%), R252 (71%); in the last 7 (1992–2016), the split was: B181 (51%), R176 (49%).

**The dramatic change in the Blue/Red divide over the course of these two epochs of twenty-eight years each – from 29%/71% to 51%/49% – is remarkable.** One could plausibly see this as good evidence that the electorate as a whole has become *significantly more liberal* in the second half of this period. This is precisely the understanding of the most dogmatic segment of the Republican-leaning electorate at the present time, and thus it provides a reasonable explanation for the growing level of anger and anxiety in that segment. This subgroup is also overwhelmingly white, and to some extent the actual roots of this anxiety are concealed by racism and anti-immigrant attitudes, as discussed in Section 4, below.



## Section 4: The Post–Trumpian Divide

Here we examine the four most decisive issues in social policy – race, immigration, the economy, and the polarization of morality – in which the sharp Blue/Red divide has played out. It is assumed that these issues would continue to be salient irrespective of whether Donald Trump serves either one or two terms of office as President.

### I. RACE

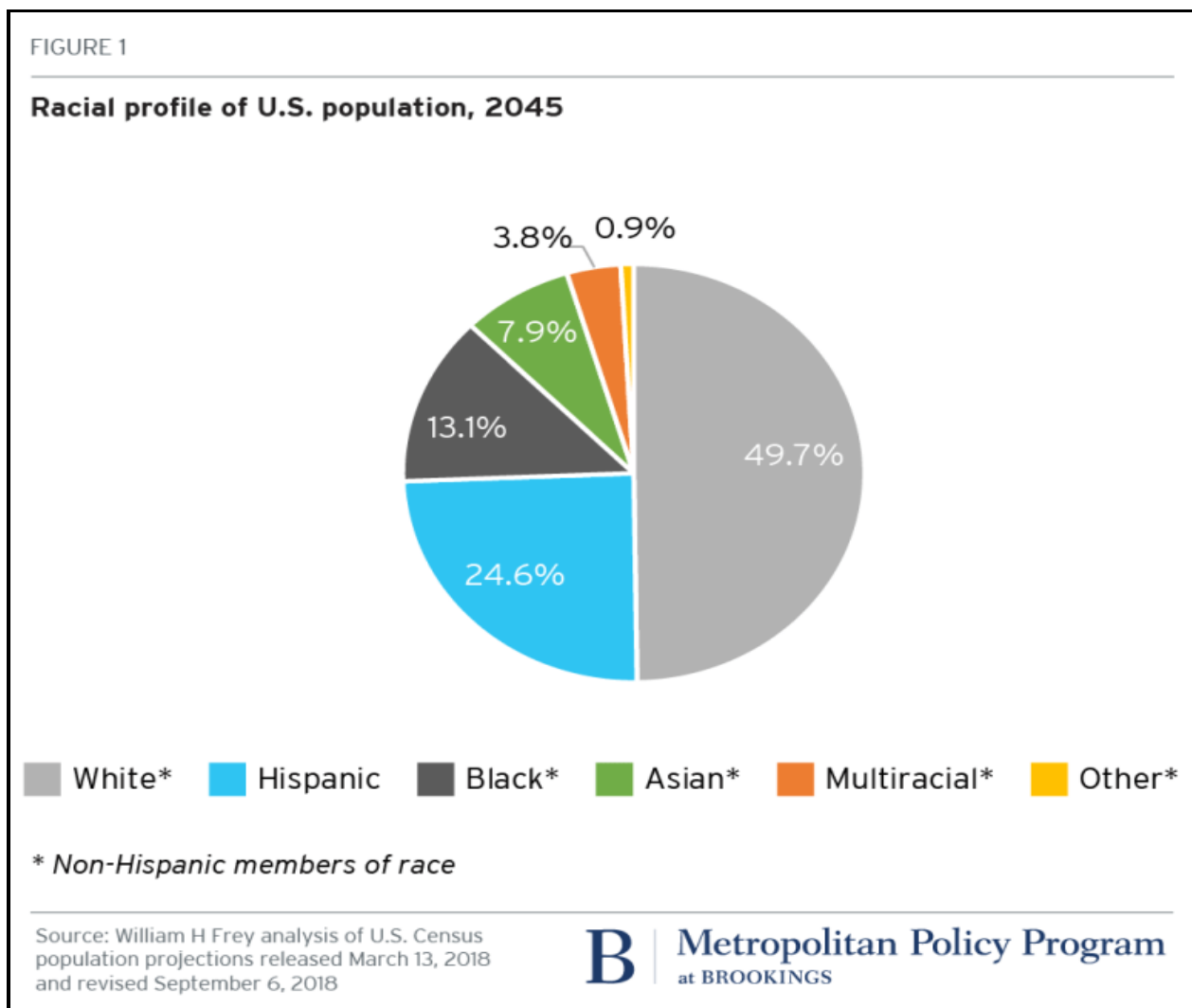


Figure 3: Brookings Institution, Racial Profile of U.S. Population in 2045

The Brookings Institution attracted a huge amount of media attention when it produced this graphic in a report published in March 2018 (as noted, the projection is from the U.S. Census Bureau). This projection may be contrasted with the Bureau’s actual population estimates as of 1 July 2018 (when the total population of the country was estimated at 327.2 million):

Black or African American alone, percent	13.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	1.3%
Asian alone, percent	5.9%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.2%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	18.3%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	60.4%

According to these numbers, the proportion of the “white alone” population in the U.S. will decline from over 60% in 2018 to just below 50% twenty-seven years later in 2045. But already in 2015 the Census Bureau had given 2014 population racial composition numbers and projected them to 2060. Those results are truly remarkable:

RACE	2014	2060
WHITE	62%	44%
HISPANIC	17%	29%
BLACK	14%	18%
ASIAN	6%	9%

In one sense, this is all one needs to know about the increasingly dire political anxieties in many parts of the nation, and especially among its Red-state peoples.

## II. IMMIGRATION.

The long and troubled history of immigration politics in the United States is well-known and will be only briefly recapitulated here. At 1790 the U.S. population (excluding indigenous peoples) was 4 million, of whom about 750,000 were slaves; all were the descendants of “immigrants,” of course. There was relatively little immigration from 1770 to 1830, during which time population growth was almost entirely internally-generated; therefore as of 1830, when the total stood at 13 million, virtually all citizens were native-born. But then large numbers began arriving again, mostly from the United Kingdom (especially Ireland) and Northern Europe: During the decade from 1830 to 1840, the number of immigrants more than quadrupled, and by 1850 it had tripled again; in the latter part of that period, it was the terrible famine in Ireland that caused the numbers to shoot up.

It was the coming of the Irish, in particular, who were largely unskilled and now (unlike earlier immigrants from Ireland) Catholic, which set off the very first wave of ethnic discrimination, known as “nativism,” initiating a pattern that would be repeated many times thereafter. But they kept coming, 3.5 million British and 4.5 million Irish from 1820 to 1930, and 5 million Germans between 1850 and 1930; midway through that great migration, the second wave of nativism appeared in the 1890s. The patterns of disparagement had been set and were reproduced in the reactions of the native-born to successive waves of desperate people from southern and eastern Europe and then Asia (and only much later from Central and South America).

The litany of complaints was always pretty much the same: “They” were filthy and lazy, carriers of infectious diseases, speakers of incomprehensible languages, petty criminals or worse, often Catholics, their children unschooled, undisciplined and clothed in rags, the men habitually drunk and fit only for menial labor, the women of loose morals, and so on. Discrimination and unequal treatment in employment, housing, access to public services, justice and incarceration, education, political influence, and other advantages were the means by which the native-born, largely British, and Protestant majority expressed its displeasure at their arrival.

But for almost all of these immigrants there was one important difference between them and the huge number of native-born slaves and then former slaves: Almost all of them (except only for some swarthy southern Europeans) were not black. They may have been kept underfoot for the first decades after they had passed through Ellis Island, but they were relatively soon freed

from the chains of unequal treatment and social discrimination and allowed to make their way up the social ladder. Not so for African-Americans, either before the Emancipation Proclamation or a full one hundred years later, until the passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. Even thereafter, down to the present day, discrimination and unequal treatment persisted, as the white majority invented one new technique after another to ensure that blacks would be “kept in their place.”

The only parallel to this story was the earlier treatment of Asian immigrants. The first federal legislation restricting the arrival of this group dates from 1875, and a long series of such acts followed: The Page Act (1875), the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), the Emergency Quota Act (1921), and the Immigration Act (1924). But even here the contrast with American blacks stands out. Increasingly, in the decades after the end of the Vietnam War, Asian immigrants have been welcomed more openly, and as of the present day they and their descendants rarely experience the kinds of persistent discrimination inflicted on African-Americans. The final chapter of the story to date has to do with the enormous influx of Hispanic immigrants: By 2014 Hispanic-Latino people had passed non-Hispanic whites as the largest population group in California (40% of the total), itself by far the most populous state in the Union; they are also the majority in New Mexico.

Not for a very long time, perhaps not since the 1920s, had a leading U.S. political figure attacked a racial minority in this country as criminals and rapists. But it happened in 2015.

### III. ECONOMY.

The economic history of the United States for the period 1964 to 2016 has played an important role in the changing political sphere. It is a history of collapsing fortunes on the lower end of the socio-economic scale and increasing extravagance on the upper end. In a 2018 report the economists John Schmitt, Elise Gould, and Josh Bivens summarized the long, sad story about the undermining of the lifestyles of low- and middle-class people in the United States over the preceding forty years:

For the last four decades, the United States has been experiencing a slow-motion wage crisis. From the end of World War II through the late 1970s, the U.S. economy generated rapid wage growth that was widely shared. Since 1979, however, average wage growth has decelerated sharply, with the biggest declines in wage growth at the bottom and the middle. The same pattern of slow and unequal growth continues in the ongoing recovery from the Great Recession.”

For the entire period 1947 to 1979, real wages grew at the rate of 2.2% per year; when the increase is compounded, the result is a doubling of real incomes over that 32-year period. Since 1979, that rate has been cut by fully two-thirds; worse, during almost all of that latter period, “for the large majority of workers over the last four decades, wages were essentially flat or falling apart from a few short bursts of growth.” At the other (upper) end of the socioeconomic scale, both the concentration of wealth and also shares of national income, aided by the steady reduction in income tax rates in this sector, are nothing short of stunning. The period 1937–1967, known as the “Great Compression,” was an era of relative equality when compared with the epochs preceding and following it; the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 2019 that income inequality had reached the highest level in fifty years. As for shares of wealth, it was widely reported recently that inequality in this domain at present had reached levels not seen since the 1920s.

Important data on these issues, including excellent charts showing changes over time, will be found in the article in the New York Times of 10 April 2020, by David Leonhardt and Yaryna Serkez (see URL), “America will struggle after Coronavirus: These charts so why.” For example:

G.D.P. measures a country’s total output. In the U.S., it has risen 79 percent since 1980, after adjusting for inflation and population growth. Over the same 40 years, the after-tax income of the bottom half of earners has risen only 20 percent. The after-tax income of earners near the middle has also badly trailed G.D.P., rising only 50 percent. But for the very wealthy, the story is completely different. Their after-tax incomes have risen much faster than G.D.P. – up 420 percent since 1980.

To dramatize this point, Leonhardt and Serkez describe a scenario which assumes today’s GDP but with the same income distribution as the 1980 levels of inequality: “In effect, each household in the bottom 90 percent of income would be earning about \$12,000 more – not just this year, but permanently. In effect, each household in this bottom 90 percent ... has effectively given the rich \$110,268.60.”

Of the four socially-divisive issues discussed in this section, that of structural changes in the economy is perhaps the hardest for citizens to understand. For the lower and middle classes, the great period of progress during the Second World War and the following quarter-century has faded from memory. It had been the time of better-paying and secure unionized jobs, of dramatic increases in home ownership, consumer credit, and more secure retirements, of fairly easy access

to higher education and the professions, and reasonable hopes for additional gains in the future. (My four brothers and I lived through this era and benefited greatly from it. But it should be remembered that these gains were much less available to blacks.) Almost every aspect of this progress has subsequently vanished, and there is no indication that it will return. It is impossible to imagine, for example, that large numbers of the good jobs that have been sent overseas will ever return. The acute levels of despair that now exist in the hollowed-out zones of economic decay in the United States are indicated by the opioid crisis – something it is impossible to imagine might have happened in the 1950. Rising death rates from suicide, alcoholism, and drug use among non-Hispanic whites in their 40s and 50s are called “deaths of despair” by the economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton (see David Leonhardt and Stuart A. Thompson, “How Working-Class Life is Killing Americans, in Charts,” *The New York Times* of 6 March 2020). Many people are easily led to believe that there are simple solutions for changing what has happened to them. The sad truth is that no such solutions are available.

#### IV. THE POLARIZATION OF MORALITY.

The single most important issue in this sphere is, of course, the long-running attempts by religious groups opposed to abortion to re-criminalize these medical procedures. Tactics have included, among others: seeking to have federal courts overturn *Roe v. Wade*, reducing the availability of clinics and doctors willing to provide these services, collapsing the timeframe within which abortions are allowed, abusing those who wish to access these services in clinics, and simply by murdering doctors. Over the decades attitudes have hardened and increasingly restrictive measures have been adopted in states where the majority of voters are opposed to abortion. Where state governments have been willing to provide administrative and legislative support for these tactics, they have been overwhelmingly in the Red column, although of course in every such state there would have been some political divide on all of this. In general, Blue states have been willing to adhere to the practices permitted under *Roe v. Wade*.

Strong, persistent differences in views among citizens on these four issues and some others are causing the Blue/Red divide to become cemented in place. The polarization of opinion around the Trump presidency is aggravating the trend that was already evident before the 2016 election and has been gathering strength ever since. No matter which side claims the presidency in 2020,

almost certainly the divide will widen and deepen. I contend that it is time to consider seriously a scenario under which it is preferable to contemplate the dissolution of the United States and a separation of the Union into four new sovereign nations, two Red and two Blue. Section 5 reviews quickly the kind of administrative changes and political negotiations that might bring this new alignment into being. Section 6 describes the outcome.



## *Section 5: The Compromise of 2030*

It is expected that negotiations leading to a collection of new laws, containing all authorizations required to create four new successor sovereign nations, and to conclude the required set of Agreements among the parties, will commence not later than 30 June 2025 with an anticipated completion date of 30 June 2030.

- A new national census to be completed by 30 June 2030;
- An Agreement apportioning the military authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, together with all serving members of the armed forces, their equipment and facilities (including nuclear weapons), among the successor nations;
- An Agreement to apportion all federal non-military civil service personal, their facilities and equipment, among the several successor nations;
- An Agreement to have all existing federal legislation, as well as all official personal identity documents, remain in force until modified by the several successor nations;
- An Agreement for a process to deal with existing international treaties and how to occupy the seat on the U.N. Security Council now reserved for the USA;
- An Agreement for providing dispute resolution for conflicts over access to resources, especially water, and environmental pollution;
- An Agreement dividing the national debt, on the basis of population, per the census of 2030;
- An Agreement establishing citizenship and permanent residency for the four new nations;
- An Agreement to create a set of internal continental “soft” borders between the territories of the four successor nations; to create a continent-wide customs zone, assuring free movement of goods and persons; and to apportion responsibility for maintaining the two continental hard borders (Canada and Mexico);
- Any other agreements required to assure the uninterrupted functioning of government, laws, and security on the territories of the four successor nations;
- Any and all matters not covered in this set of agreements will be regarded as being within the sole jurisdiction of each of the four successor nations.

A section on the constitutional framework which will be needed to implement the compromise will be found in the Appendix at the end of this paper.

## Section 6: The Four New Nations in North America

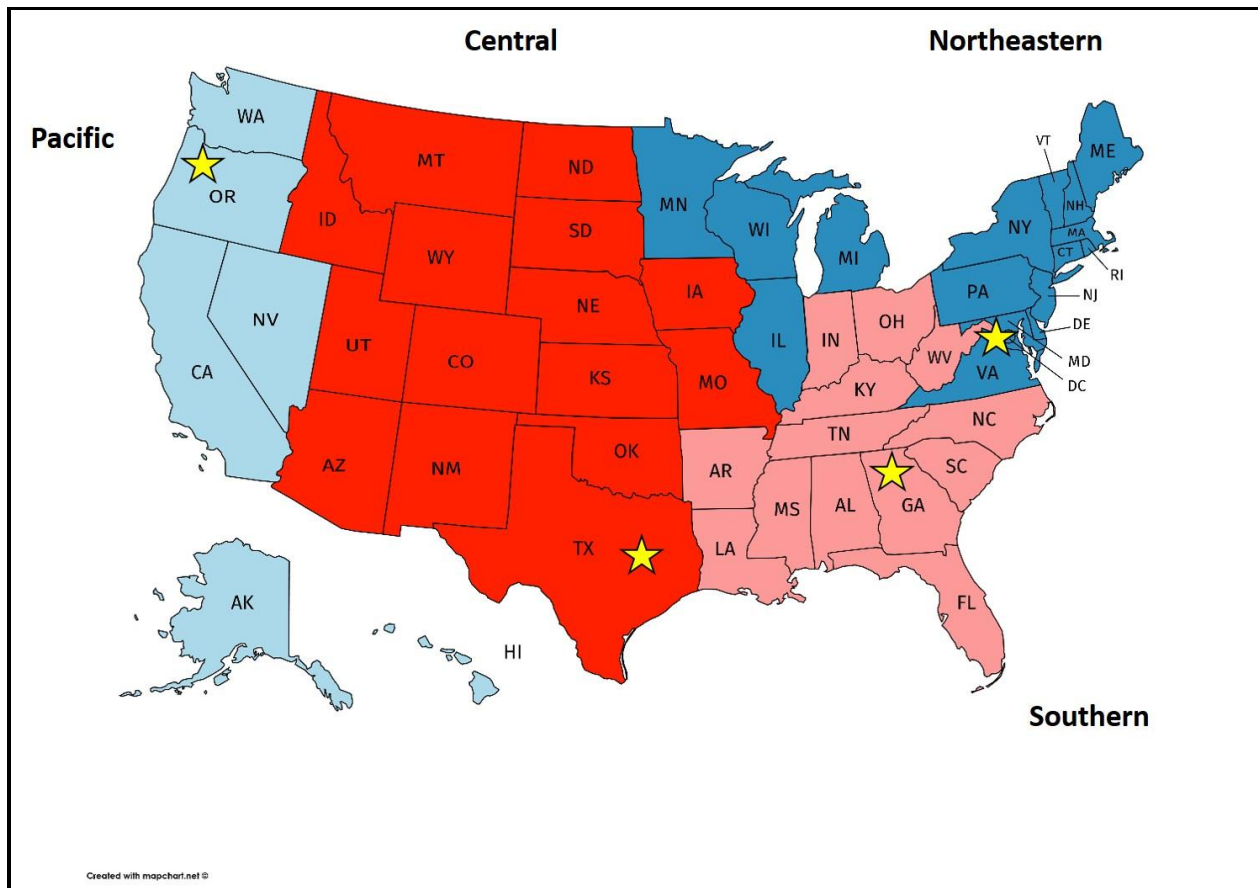


Figure 4: Map of the Four New Sovereign States

### I. THE BREAKUP OF THE USA CREATES FOUR NEW NATIONS AS OF 2031:

#### (1) The Southern States of America (13 former states):

*Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. Capital: Atlanta*

Comparison with its historical antecedent:

The Confederate States of America (1861, secession, 11 states): Florida, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. (In the 1860 census, the population of the Confederacy was 29% of the total

population of the United States [9 million out of 31 million]. The Confederacy was never recognized as a sovereign nation by any foreign power.) Based on the 2010 census, the population for the new nation in the South would be about 75 million (out of a U.S. total of 309 million), a 24% share. The projected population in the 2020 census (an 8% increase) is 81 million.

(2) Northeastern United States of America (16 former states):

*New England (12 plus DC): Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, plus District of Columbia. Plus Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Capital: District of Columbia.*

Total population (2010 census) was 91 million; projected in the 2020 census (8% increase), 98 million.

(3) Central United States of America (15 former states):

*Idaho, Montana, Utah, Arizona, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Iowa, and Missouri. Capital: Austin*

Total population (2010 census) was 85 million; projected in the 2020 census (8% increase), 92 million.

(4) Pacific States of American [Pacifica] (6 former states):

*Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and Nevada. Capital: Portland*

Total population (2010 census) was 58 million; projected in the 2020 census (8% increase), 63 million.

## II. ISSUES OF THE PLACEMENT OF STATES IN THE NEW SOVEREIGN ENTITIES.

Quite obviously, this four-part proposed regional configuration contains some few but important, and undoubtedly controversial, decisions about sorting various states into one grouping or another. These and other political battles would have taken place in the lead-up to the final version of the Compromise of 2030.

## 1) THE SOUTH.

- Without a doubt, winning the adherence of Texas will be the great prize in the competition between the South and the Central (Midwest) Regions, and Texas will be the acknowledged political leader of whatever region it chooses to join. The South will call upon historical precedent from 1861; but Texas was a relatively new player at that time with a population of only about 125,000, whereas now it is an industrial powerhouse, rivalling New York and California in terms of its economic clout. There will be a hard-fought battle between the South and the Central for its allegiance, but almost certainly the latter will win in the end. Additionally, for the Central as a whole, the inclusion of Texas guarantees direct access to the oceans.
- Following a long Republican majority from 1952 to 2004, Virginia turned Democratic in the next three elections, and seems likely to stay that way for the foreseeable future, and therefore it will join the Northeast. This placement of Virginia creates a slightly ragged southern border between the Northeast and the South, but it is workable.
- Delaware and Maryland (both consistently Blue since 1992) will insist on inclusion with the Northeast.
- The Northeast will insist on retaining the District of Columbia as its capitol.

## 2) THE NORTHEAST.

- By far the most significant issue is the expected placement of Ohio and Indiana in the Southern Region, which disrupts the land-based territorial contiguity of the Northeast. This is because Ohio has been Red eight times since 1968, although in more recent times voted twice for Obama, and Indiana has been consistently Red since 1968 except for the single Blue in 2008. However, since Illinois has been consistently Blue since 1992, it will certainly opt for inclusion in the Northeast.
- Three Northeast states helped to give Trump his victory by narrow margins in 2016: Pennsylvania (Blue since 1992 except for 2016), Michigan (also Blue since 1992 except for 2016), and Wisconsin (Blue since 1988 except for 2016). These results could well change back to their earlier pattern; in the election for governor in 2018, e.g., the Democratic

victor won over the Republican with a 10% margin (55% to 45%) out of a total of over 4 million votes cast for both.

- Minnesota has been staunchly Blue for all but a single election (1972) since 1964 and even earlier. It too will have strong motivation to join the Northeast.

### 3) THE CENTRAL (MIDWEST):

- Thirteen out of the fifteen states allocated to the Midwest have very consistent records of voting Red over recent decades.
- The two exceptions are New Mexico, which has been Blue since 1992 except for 2004; and Colorado, which has been Blue since 2008. These two states are likely to feel somewhat out of place in this region, and may press hard for some special considerations as a result. But since the two states to the west of them (Utah and Arizona) have been consistently Red for a long time, it is difficult to see how this placement could or would be changed by shifting all four of them to the West Region. On the other hand, Arizona (Red since 1952 except only for 1996) has been changing towards Blue recently, and if this trend were to continue, there might be a concerted push from Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado for these three states to join Pacifica.
- If Texas were a sovereign country on its own, its economy would rank tenth in the entire world in the present global set of nations.

### 4) THE WEST (PACIFIC):

- Alaska has been consistently Red since 1968, an outlier in this otherwise solidly Blue major region; but it has a small population and no real alternative options in geographical terms.
- If California were a sovereign country on its own, its \$3 trillion economy would rank fifth in the entire world, just behind Germany, at present.

### 5) REMAINING MAJOR ISSUES.

- Ohio and Indiana: In political terms these two states belong with the South, but in that configuration, the Northeast loses geographical contiguity. However, with enough good will on all sides, placing them with the South should be workable. (The experiences of Alaska and Hawaii show that lack of such contiguity does not pose insuperable problems in

administrative terms.) In the four-state configuration described here, the placement of Ohio and Indiana is the only violation of geographical contiguity in the entire scheme.

- **Colorado and New Mexico:** In political terms these two states belong with the West, but to preserve geographical contiguity they have been placed provisionally in the Midwest. It is at least possible to imagine transferring them administratively from Midwest to West, but this would create an awkward “Blue island” inside the Midwest. Considering these alternatives would undoubtedly be the subject of intensive negotiations. A transfer of both from Midwest to West would shift about 7 million people and one-half-trillion dollars of GDP. Adding Arizona would shift 14 million people and 850 billion dollars of GDP.
- Some further insight into the changing Blue/Red dynamic can be gained by studying the interesting Wikipedia map shown in Appendix 2, based on the combined presidential elections of 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016.

### III. GDP IN THE FOUR NEW SOVEREIGN NATIONS

AS OF 2018:

	<u>GDP*</u>	2010 <u>POPULATION</u>	2020** <u>POPULATION</u>
THE 6 PACIFIC STATES:	\$4.073 TRILLION	58 MILLION	63 MILLION
THE 15 CENTRAL STATES:	\$4.079 TRILLION	85 MILLION	92 MILLION
THE 16 NORTHEAST STATES:	\$7.425 TRILLION	91 MILLION	98 MILLION
THE 13 SOUTHERN STATES:	\$4.844 TRILLION	75 MILLION	81 MILLION
TOTALS	\$20.421 TRILLION	309 MILLION	334 MILLION

\*U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

\*\* projected

In this new configuration, the four new nations in North America would all rank in the Top 10 in the world in terms of GDP: The Northeast would rank second, after only China; the South would rank fourth (after China, Northeast, and Japan); and the Central and Pacific would rank sixth and seventh, after Germany.

## *Section 7: Would the Breakup Help?*

In Table 2, the Blue/Red divide for all three categories of outcomes is here based on the regional makeup of states allocated to the four new countries in Section 6, whereas Table 1 had used the U.S. Census Bureau regional map. It is interesting to see that the differences between the two tables in this category are relatively small. Table 2 shows the substantial shift from Red to Blue in all three dimensions from Phase I (1964 to 1988) to Phase II (1992 to 2016), a result that is masked by the outcome of the 2016 election.

**TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NATIONAL RESULTS BY POPULAR VOTE, STATES, AND ELECTORAL COLLEGE FOR THE BLUE/RED DIVIDE**

YEARS	OUTCOMES BY POPULAR VOTE		OUTCOMES BY STATES		OUTCOMES BY ELECTORAL COLLEGE	
	BLUE	RED	BLUE	RED	BLUE	RED
1964 to 1988 (7)	45.7%	54.3%	26.6%	73.4%	31%	69%
1992 to 2016 (7)	50.2%	49.8%	49%	51%	58%	42%

First, Phase I (1964–1988) considered by itself shows a marked disparity between the proportion of popular vote when contrasted with both outcome by states and by the Electoral College. This indicates that the Red vote was more concentrated in many states and that the Blue vote was much more dispersed across the nation as a whole. However, in the minds of citizens, the outcomes of both state and electoral-college voting patterns would be more evident and easily recalled in the popular imagination than would national totals for the popular vote. (In fact, the change in the Blue/Red popular vote totals was quite gradual over time.) Therefore, in the traditionally Red states, there would be a strong perception that that nation as a whole had been solidly Red since 1968 and might be expected to remain so indefinitely. Second, in both of those more easily recalled dimensions (state and Electoral College), the change from Phase I to Phase II (1992–2016) is nothing short of dramatic. We can see more clearly what has been happening in this shift



when we break down these results in regional terms, based on the breakup of the former United States of American into the four new independent nations as described in Section 6. The regional breakdown has two visible features: (1) the longer-term shift towards the predominance of Blue in the Northeast and West; (2) the increasingly sharp divide between two regions that have become consistently Red and two, consistently Blue.

**TABLE 3: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS BY STATES AND REGIONS, 1964 TO 2016, WITH REGIONS REALLOCATED TO FOUR NEW NATIONS**

YEAR	ALL BLUE	ALL RED	NORTHEAST		SOUTH		CENTRAL		WEST	
			B	R	B	R	B	R	B	R
1964	38	13	17	0	8	5	8	7	5	1
1968	13	38	10	7	1 (N.1)	12	0	15	2	4
1972	2	49	2	15	0	13	0	15	0	6
1976	22	29	9	8	12	1	0	15	1	5
1980	7	44	4	13	2	11	0	15	1	5
1984	2	49	2	15	0	13	0	15	0	6
1988	11	40	6	11	1	12	0	15	4	2
	95 26.6%	262 73.4%	52	69	24	67	8	97	13	29
1992	31	20	16	1	7	6	3	12	5	1
1996	30	21	16	1	7	6	2	13	5	1
2000	20	31	15	2	0	13	1	14	4	2
2004	20	31	16	1	0	13	0	15	4	2
2008	28	23	17	0	4	9	2	13	5	1
2012	26	25	17	0	2	11	2	13	5	1
2016	21	30	14	3	0	13	2	13	5	1
	176 49%	181 51%	111	8	20	71	12	93	33	9
<b>TOTALS</b>	271	443	163	77	44	138	20	190	46	38
<b>%</b>	38%	62%								

Note 1: District of Columbia makes 51 in total

Note 2: Wallace 5 counted as R.

The popular vote totals for Phase II also show a remarkably consistent pattern across the four new regional groupings, as shown in Table 4:

**TABLE 4: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS BY POPULAR VOTE PERCENTAGE (OOO),  
1964 TO 2016, FOR THE BLUE/RED DIVIDE IN THE FOUR NEW NATIONS**

YEAR	ALL BLUE	ALL RED	NORTHEAST B R	SOUTH B R	CENTRAL B R	WEST B R
1964	43,345	27,186	21,959/11,316	6,152/5,849	9,495/6,265	5,739/3,756
1968	30,970	41,764	16,094/17,211	4,262/9,396	6,455/9,789	4,159/5,368
1972	29,162	46,643	14,430/20,115	4,020/9,572	6,074/11,440	4,638/5,516
1976	41,084	39,452	18,096/17,302	8,588/7,165	9,167/9,520	5,233/5,465
1980	35,589	49,477	15,315/20,137	8,004/9,487	7,734/12,423	4,536/7,430
1984	37,582	53,457	16,562/20,125	7,302/11,847	8,151/13,768	5,567/7,717
1988	40,813	48,885	16,772/18,600	7,727/11,090	9,664/12,192	6,650/7,003
	258,545 45.7%	306,864 54.3%	119,228/124,806 48.9% 51.1%	46,055/64,406 41.7% 58.3%	56,740/75,397 42.9% 57.1%	36,522/42,255 46.4% 53.6%
1992	43,905	58,966	18,677/21,669	9,360/12,578	8,687/12,067	7,181/12,652
1996	47,305	47,311	19,843/16,889	10,060/11,578	9,920/12,876	7,482/5,968
2000	53,875	50,571	23,008/16,946	10,810/12,709	10,998/13,918	9,059/6,998
2004	59,028	60,243	24,505/20,313	12,154/15,847	12,431/16,647	9,938/7,436
2008	69,516	59,939	28,119/19,347	13,800/15,921	15,514/16,713	12,083/7,958
2012	64,905	60,936	26,798/19,302	12,582/17,092	13,758/16,907	11,767/7,635
2016	67,194	65,027	26,237/21,342	14,494/17,568	13,692/18,319	12,771/7,798
	405,728 50.2%	402,993 49.8%	167,187/135,808 55.2% 44.8%	83,260/103,293 44.6% 55.4%	85,000/107,447 44.2% 55.8%	70,281/56,445 55.5% 44.5%

Note 1: The four regions correspond to the states aligned in the four new sovereign nations.

Note 2: All major third-party votes were counted for either Republican (Red) or Democratic (Blue): Wallace 1968 (R); Anderson 1980 (R); Perot 1992, 1996 (R); Nader 2000 (B); Stein (B) and Johnson (R) 2016

In some very important ways, the proposed four-part division of U.S. states reflects well the longer-term Blue/Red divide and thus could be expected to provide political stability and a marked reduction in polarized viewpoints (but not eliminating them entirely, of course). For the most recent period, considering the last three presidential elections together (2008, 2012, and 2016), these are the results:

- The West was consistently Blue except for Alaska, which has a very small population;
- The Central was overwhelmingly Red; in 2016, 13/15 (see Note 1);
- The Northeast was consistently Blue, almost entirely so, except for the 2016 results in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, all involving small or vanishingly small margins of victory (see Note 2);
- In the South, 13 out of 13 states voted Red in 2016 (see Note 3).

NOTE 1:

Iowa was Blue in 2008/2012 and Red in 2016; it was Red from 1968 to 1984, then Blue from 1988 to 2000. The other two exceptions are Colorado (Blue for the last three, but consistently Red for many previous elections) and New Mexico (Blue for all but one election since 1992).

NOTE 2:

In 2016, Trump won Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin by very narrow margins: For the three states taken together, the total of all votes cast for both Clinton and Trump was 13,233,376; the total margin between the two was 77,744, or .059%, that is, little more than half a percentage-point overall. In Pennsylvania, the margin was 44,292 out of 5,897,174 votes cast for both candidates (.0075%); in Wisconsin, 22,748 out of 2,787,820 (.0082%); in Michigan, 10,704 out of 4,548,382 (.0024%.) The 46 electoral-college votes for these three states together were the margin of victory for Trump.

Both Michigan and Pennsylvania had been Blue from 1992 to 2012; in 2012, the margin for Obama over Romney in these two states was 9.5% and 5.4%, respectively; Wisconsin had been Blue from 1988 to 2012, and in 2012 the Blue margin was 6.8%. It may be plausible to assume that they might all revert to this longer-term pattern starting in 2020.

NOTE 3:

Both Ohio and Florida were Blue in 2008 and 2012 before becoming Red in 2016. Both also have a longer-term Red pattern and it may be plausible to assume that they will remain Red in 2020.

*Will the polarization continue or even worsen in the future?*

The main reason to think that the divide will continue or even worsen is the projection of the future racial composition of the U.S. population. In March 2015, a report from the U.S. Census

Bureau entitled *Projections of the Size and Composition of the U.S. Population: 2014 to 2060*, previously referred to in Section 4, made this observation:

A much smaller percentage of the child population is non-Hispanic White alone, as compared with the total population. In 2014, 52 percent of children are projected to be non-Hispanic White alone, compared with 62 percent of the total population. **Thus, among those under age 18, the United States is already nearly a majority minority nation.** The percentage of the population in this group is projected to decrease to only 36 percent by 2060. Put another way, **by 2060, 64 percent of children will belong to racial and ethnic minorities**, compared with 56 percent for the total population.

This is nothing short of appalling news for all those among the white subpopulation in the United States, who represented 80% of the total population as late as the 1990 census and who continue to believe that maintaining white “supremacy” in a political sense is fundamental to their well-being. But the underlying changes in the racial composition of the population of the USA have become increasingly rapid and inexorable: By 2018, a little over only a quarter-century after 1990, the white subpopulation had fallen from 80% to 60% of the total, an astonishing (and, for some, devastating) rate of change. There is simply no stopping the ongoing changes that will, it is projected, result in the following population shares by 2060: white 44%, Hispanic 29%, and black 18%. Moreover, just given the other underlying structural change, namely, in the under-18 population, as indicated in the passage quoted above, those trends will inevitably result in a further shrinking of the share for the white population after 2060.

In my opinion, the combination of the “race and ethnicity” plus “immigration” themes is and will remain, for the foreseeable future, the most intensely divisive political issues in the USA. They underpin the likely intensification of the struggle of some among the ever-decreasing white majority to maintain their perceived political supremacy. Beginning in mid-2015, this struggle has crystallized in the “base” exploited by Donald Trump, and is regularly re-energized in his virtually white-only “rallies.” It will not soon disintegrate and disappear again, whether or not he wins re-election in 2020. It may over time stretch the institutional bulwarks of “normal politics” in the American republic to the breaking-point. There are some lessons to be drawn from the history of the twentieth century which suggest that, once a bitter divide within an important country has been allowed to fester and grow over a sufficient period of time, the appearance of any sudden new global crisis of whatever kind could cause one side of the divide to seek a regressive “solution,” a

resolution which cannot easily be reversed thereafter and which eventually brings about dreadful consequences.

Optimists will respond that the American republic is perfectly capable of finding ways to confront and overcome the political divide, while maintaining its institutions intact, without having to resort to drastic solutions, most especially the peaceful breakup of the Union. One hopes that they will be proved right.

## *Section 8: African-Americans in an Independent South*

Considering together twelve of the thirteen states to be collected into the new sovereign entity called the Southern States of America (excluding only West Virginia), the percentage of blacks in these states in the population listed in the 2010 census ranged from 8% to 37%, with North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana all in the upper part of that range. The total black population in all thirteen of those states numbered almost 18 million in 2010, representing about 43% of all blacks in the United States. Assuming a 1% increase per year going forward, the number would be close to 20 million by 2030.

What are known as the “Jim Crow” laws appeared in the Southern states during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and were used to enforce racial segregation of public facilities; some of them were in force until outlawed by the federal *Civil Rights Act* of 1964 and the *Voting Rights Act* of 1965. As noted earlier, Jim Crow laws accompanied the other, more severe discriminations and injustices represented by the legally-approved practices of convict leasing, sharecropping, voter suppression, as well as peonage, the last of which applied either exclusively or predominantly to black people. (See Jamelle Bouie, “The Authoritarian Stamp of Jim Crow,” *The New York Times*,

21 February 2020, and David W. Blight, “Trump reveals the truth about Voter Suppression,” *The New York Times*, 11 April 2020). *Thus a full century of systematic mistreatment was piled atop two-and-a-half centuries of brutal slavery, altogether three-and-a-half centuries of uninterrupted oppression and injustice.* A fundamental question about the creation of the four new sovereign nations is: Would the predominantly Red Southern States of America – or, conceivably, both it and the Central States – seek to revive any of those practices? Although it might appear outrageous to even pose this question, what is actually outrageous is how long those practices endured after Reconstruction, and how uniformly they were supported and enforced by the majority white population in much of the South.

Earlier it was argued that the legacy of slavery hangs over the entire history of the United States of America, down to the present day, like the Sword of Damocles. A recent Pew Research Report (2019) states that “most U.S. adults say the legacy of slavery continues to have an impact on the position of black people in American society today”; among blacks, 84% believe that this is the case either “a great deal” or “a fair amount.” This legacy has never been confronted and resolved at all adequately: The stain of bondage, oppression, chains, whippings, murder, sexual exploitation, and families torn apart on the auction block is this nation’s original sin, impossible to wipe away. Furthermore, the appalling treatment of African-Americans also fuels the racism lurking behind anti-immigrant attitudes more generally. Therefore it is useless to pretend that this broad legacy of racism would simply vanish of its own accord upon creation of the four new sovereign nations. It is unlikely that the project of peaceful dissolution, which has many notable advantages for the future, can possibly succeed if there is no explicit recognition and no effective resolution of the issue. Nor are there any easily-formulated proposals which could reliably accomplish what may be needed.

A solution must be found. One possibility is to include in the set of Agreements among the citizens of the proposed four new states one that would require protections from discrimination on racial grounds in all of the constitutions of the new republics. An immediate objection would be that this is exactly what was sought in the three amendments (Thirteenth, Fourteenth, Fifteenth), and they failed miserably to accomplish that objective. On the other hand, the anti-discrimination provisions in the new constitutions could incorporate concepts and wording from the later laws and jurisprudence which sought to overcome the earlier deficiencies. As an added protection, the set of

Agreements could grant dual citizenship to all members of the racial minorities in the new states; or an automatic right for anyone to exchange citizenship among the four new nations for a period of five or ten years. Or better alternatives might exist which could be suggested by others.

One complicating factor is the astonishing and relatively recent rise in the Hispanic-Latino population in the USA. Even more remarkable is that, in the U.S. Census Bureau projection of U.S. population growth between 2014 and 2060, the largest growth by far is expected to be among the Hispanic population. As compared with the share for blacks (growing from 14% to 18%), Hispanics are projected to increase from a 17% to a 29% share over the same period. The complication is that in the wealth divide (income and wealth inequality) in this country, blacks are steadily falling behind both whites and Hispanics. A 2019 report from the U.S. Institute for Policy Studies states: “Between 1983 and 2016, the median Black family saw their wealth drop by more than half after adjusting for inflation, compared to a 33 percent increase for the median White household.” But by 2016 median wealth for black families was also *close to only half* of that of Hispanics. The authors of that report then projected the current trends into the future:

If the trajectory of the past three decades continues, by 2050 the median White family will have \$174,000 of wealth, while Latino median wealth will be \$8,600 and Black median wealth will be \$600. The median Black family is on track to reach zero wealth by 2082.

As more recent and mostly lighter-skinned immigrants, Hispanic-Latinos appear to be positioned to achieve the kind of upward mobility that has been characteristic of most European and Asian immigrants over the course of U.S. history. But, as has been the case since the beginning of the European invasion of North America, blacks are still condemned to suffer from a unique set of disadvantages in terms of social and economic mobility.

At least over the coming shorter term, the set of antagonistic issues surrounding race and immigration likely will force the Blue/Red divide further and further apart.



## *Section 9: Just How Close is the Blue/Red Divide?*

In terms of U. S. presidential elections in the period from 1964 to 2016, the popular vote totals are most relevant evidence which reveals the true depth of the Blue/Red divide in American politics. To get an idea of how close this divide has been, consider three contingencies: (1) What if the popular vote totals had determined the outcomes of these elections? (2) What if some third-party candidacies on both sides of the divide had not determined the outcome of all three of the elections of 1992, 2000, and 2016? (3) What if Richard Nixon had had not become ensnared by the Watergate caper and had finished his second term? Allowing for just these three contingencies, the results *in electoral-college terms* would have been first, a solidly Red presidency from 1968 through 1996, and a solidly Blue presidency from 1996 to 2020. On the other hand, it is no less important to realize that in many cases, over this entire period of time, the margin of victory in popular vote terms was extremely narrow.

The truth of the matter is that, for the last 52 years, the American public has often been – in terms of popular votes for the presidency – almost equally divided between Blue and Red factions. Consider this set of both facts and contingencies:

- In 1976, Carter defeated Ford by a margin of 2% in the popular vote; assuming that Nixon had still been in office in 1976, either Ford or Reagan might well have won the election;
- Only the third-party candidacy of Ross Perot prevented George H. W. Bush from being re-elected in 1992 (the combined vote totals for Bush and Perot exceeded those for Bill Clinton by a large margin);
- In 1996, the vote for the two sides was almost even (Bill Clinton beat the Dole/Perot popular vote by a little more than 100,000 out of almost 95 million votes cast);
- In 2000, Gore's popular vote total exceeded George W. Bush's by one-half of one percent, but the votes for Nader in Florida cost Al Gore the victory.
- Assuming that Gore had been elected in 2000, he might well have been re-elected in 2004;
- In 2016, combining the votes for Hillary Clinton and Jill Stein (Blue), and the votes for Donald Trump and Gary Johnson (Red), the Red vote exceeded the Blue by a little over 200,000 out of a total of over 136 million votes cast, a margin of victory amounting to a small fraction of 1% (.0015);

- In *each* of the key states which gained Trump his victory in 2016 (Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin), *his margin of victory over Clinton was less than the votes for Jill Stein.*

Thinking of the long-term and dramatic changes in the racial composition of the U.S. population, discussed earlier, under established voting patterns there will be a gradual but decisive shift to what might be a permanent Blue dominance from 2020 onwards. Under “normal” circumstances, this shift would result in the Blue control of the presidency as well as both the House and Senate in the Congress, at the national level, and predominance in the two Blue regions at the state level. Over time, Blue predominance at the federal level would be reflected in major public policy domains.

However, with the election of Donald Trump, circumstances are no longer normal. He has greatly energized the Red “base” and has accepted the complete surrender of the Republican Party to his leadership. He could well win re-election in 2020, and it would be hard to predict now what the country would look like, politically, by 2024 if he does; but even if he does not, the polarization of Blue and Red will be greatly exacerbated, with similarly unknowable consequences. In a real and truly ominous sense, the United States is steadily moving closer to the broader trend that now encompasses virtually all of Europe. In the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Poland, and Hungary, if not elsewhere, right-wing popular movements, fueled by anti-immigration politics, are on the rise. The bitter divisiveness which characterizes this situation is replicated as far away as India, where it is based on the Hindu/Muslim conflict. These divides, now lodged firmly in so many of the world’s once relatively well-functioning democracies, create a kind of open political paralysis in both national and international terms; and against those nations, now paralyzed, the powerful, active dictatorships of Russia and China are arrayed.

Events have already moved beyond the point in time when the champions of democracy ought to have begun assessing all the ramifications of this situation and trying to work out in detail some plausible responses to it.

## *Section 10: Conclusions*

At the global level, a number of contradictory tendencies are visible at the present time. On the one hand, the possession of devastating nuclear weapons by the major powers, and some others, serves to inhibit among all parties the traditional resort to large-scale warfare, without limiting the scope of regional conflicts. At the same time, and owing to this reality, modes of unconventional and asymmetric warfare become increasingly important. This requires nimbleness and innovation in response, and not just reliance on large standing armies. There is no reason to think, therefore, that the dissolution of the United States of America into four separate but economically-powerful and nuclear-armed republics (all of which would rank among the Top 10 global economies in terms of GDP) would make a material difference in the prevailing level of international security.

Many believe that climate change will be the single most problematic global social and environmental issue in the coming decades. Ever since 1997, when the U.S. Senate passed the Byrd-Hagel Resolution by a 95-0 vote, the USA has been an obstacle to securing meaningful international agreement on climate change. During this time, China has become by far the world's leading emitter of greenhouse gases, emissions which are still rising as of 2020; with the USA in process of withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, China has no incentive to improve its performance. After dissolution two powerful new nations (the Western and Northeastern States of America) would likely support more effective action on climate change on the world stage.

But almost certainly there will be other sources of serious global instability in the future. The Russian Federation has already breached the international consensus against the violent rearrangement of national borders that had existed since the end of World War II. China, the emerging superpower, also will test the limits of this consensus. Year 2008 showed how a global crisis can appear suddenly. If the destructive polarization of viewpoints among the U.S. citizenry, which has been inexorably leading to greater extremism, is not overcome, some unanticipated type of serious international disruption might possibly push this polarization into truly dangerous and damaging waters.

## *Appendix 1: Constitutional Changes*

### ARTICLE V OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

“The Congress, whenever two thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose Amendments to this Constitution, or, on the Application of the Legislatures of two thirds of the several States, shall call a Convention for proposing Amendments, which, in either Case, shall be valid to all Intents and Purposes, as Part of this Constitution, when ratified by the Legislatures of three fourths of the several States, or by Conventions in three fourths thereof, as the one or the other Mode of Ratification may be proposed by the Congress;...”

The plan to create a set of four proposed new nations would be formulated within the terms of a master agreement among the 50 states of the Union, which would be converted into a single, unified set of amendments (beginning with Amendment XXVIII) to the U. S. Constitution. This then requires ratification by three-quarters of the 50 states, amounting to 38 states, allowing for a maximum of 12 not ratifying. It may be regarded as highly unlikely that more than half-a-dozen states at most would refuse both entreaties and various sweeteners from the others and decline to ratify; but the deal would be constitutionally valid once the threshold of 38 ratifications was passed. A nominal description of the amendments follows. Undoubtedly, this account will be found to be naïve, perhaps laughably so, by established constitutional authorities, who are hereby invited to provide the proper wording to operationalize the political pact in legal terms.

#### A. THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

- An Amendment to create four new successor sovereign nations.
- An Amendment to end the terms of all Representatives and Senators, and the President and Vice-President, on 31 December 2030.
- An Amendment to dissolve the Supreme Court of the United States.
- An Amendment to recognize the legal validity of all Agreements concluded under the auspices of the Compromise of 2030.
- Any other amendments required to assure the uninterrupted functioning of government, laws, and security on the territories of the four successor nations.

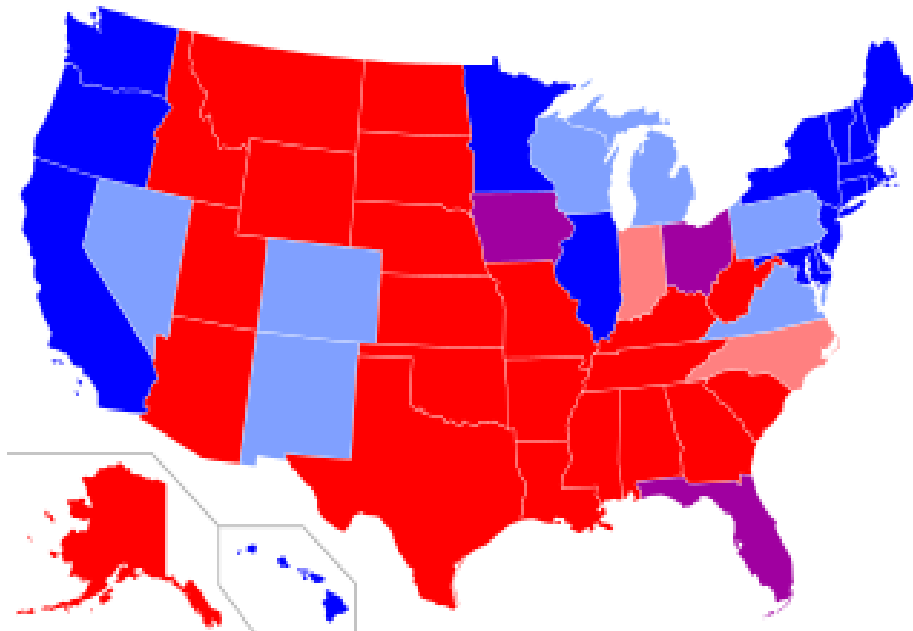
## B. THE CONSTITUTIONS OF THE FOUR SUCCESSOR SOVEREIGN NATIONS.

- Each of the four new nations will have drafted and ratified, as of 31 December 2030, a new constitution (to a substantial degree, adopting many of the various articles and amendments of the historical U. S. document, with variations as required).
- Each of the four will schedule elections for the members of the Congress and the Executive to be held on 1 January 2031.
- One provision of the U.S Constitution that is certain to be contentious as this process unfolds is the functioning of the Electoral College in the election of presidents. Like the original provision for the indirect election of senators (where senators were chosen by state legislatures), the Electoral College was designed by those influential men among the founders who thought it important to erect constitutional barriers to the expression of the popular will, by preventing some elections from being decided by a simple majority of voters. It is likely that at least the new Blue-dominated sovereign nations, the Northeast and the West, will do away with the Electoral College; perhaps all four of them will do so.
- The breakup may bring serious involvement in the major environmental issue of the present age, climate change, from important segments of the North American polity. The West especially, but also the Northeast, are likely to be participants on the world stage. No effective international agreement on climate change is likely to be successful without them.
- The breakup may make it far easier for at least the two Blue segments to introduce much-needed changes in health-care coverage to the United States, where medical bills are the leading cause of personal bankruptcy. There are better options now functioning elsewhere, including Canada's single-payer system and the many combined public/private schemes, in Europe and elsewhere, that provide universal coverage for basic needs.
- It is expected that two of the four new nations will criminalize abortion and the other two will not. Thus women living in the former who seek abortions will have to travel to one of the neighboring nations for medical assistance, just as Irish women did for many years, traveling to the United Kingdom.
- Similarly, it is expected that two of the four new nations will enact strict gun control laws and the other two will not. Assuming open borders among all of them, these arrangements will create an ongoing dilemma for all those who seek to limit the slaughter of innocents.

- Trans-border agreements on water supply will be extremely important. California and Arizona, for example, have been dependent on long-distance aqueducts for many years: the Los Angeles Aqueduct (1913); Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct, delivering water from Yosemite to San Francisco (1934); the Colorado River Aqueduct (1939); and many others.
- The five permanently inhabited territories of the United States are Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands (Caribbean Sea) and Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa (North and South Pacific Ocean). They would be distributed among the four new nations according to a negotiated formula.

## *Appendix 2: The Red/Blue Divide 2004–2016*

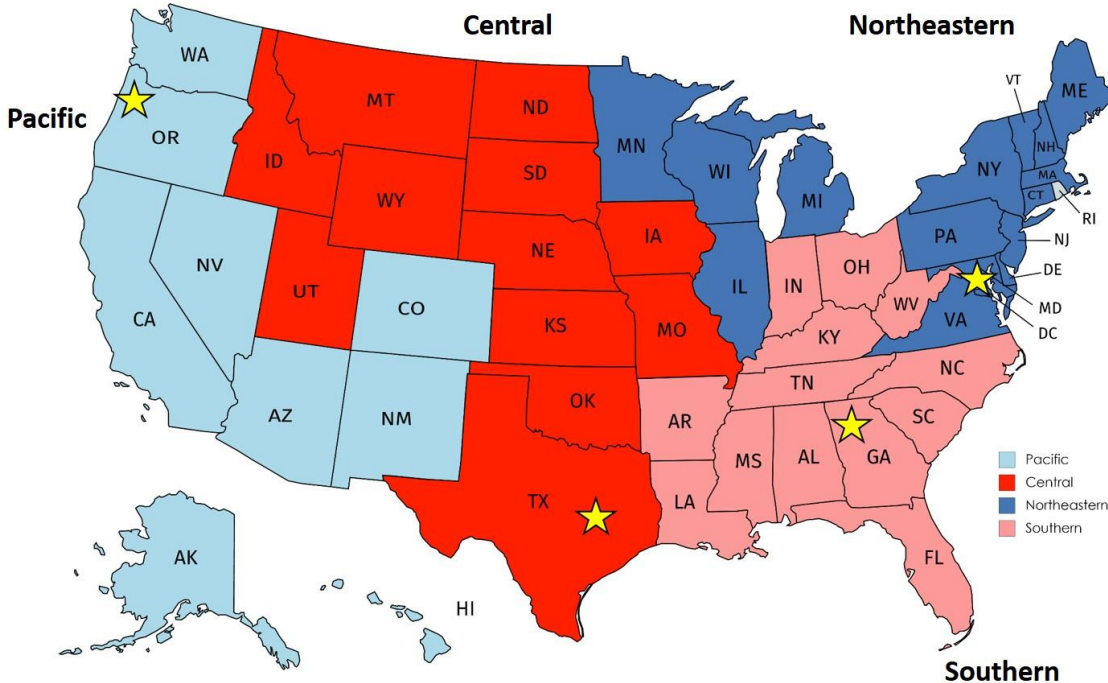
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red\\_states\\_and\\_blue\\_states](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_states_and_blue_states):



Summary of results of the 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 presidential elections

- States carried by the Republicans in all four elections
- States carried by the Republicans in three of the four elections
- States carried by each party twice in the four elections
- States carried by the Democrats in three of the four elections
- States carried by the Democrats in all four elections

### *Appendix 3: A Bluer Southwest?*



**Figure 5: Second Allocation among the Four New Nations**

Some recent reporting (Timothy Egan, “California takes Revenge on Trump,” *The New York Times*, 14 February 2020) suggests that, in addition to Nevada, Arizona is experiencing a shift from Red to Blue. If Arizona were to be added to the new Pacific state, it would be possible, on the basis of geographical contiguity, to simultaneously shift the Blue states of New Mexico and Colorado to the Pacific as well. As noted above, transferring Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado from Midwest to Pacific would shift 14 million people and 850 billion dollars of GDP. In a new configuration based on the second allocation, the four new nations in North America would still all rank in the Top 10 in the world in terms of Nominal GDP: The Northeast would rank second, after only China; the Pacific would rank fourth and the South, fifth (after China, Northeast, and Japan); and the Central would rank seventh, after Germany. The second allocation would then look as follows:

## GDP IN THE FOUR NEW SOVEREIGN NATIONS (SECOND ALLOCATION)

	2018 <u>GDP*</u>	2010 <u>POPULATION</u>	2020** <u>POPULATION</u>
THE 9 PACIFIC STATES:	\$4.923 TRILLION	72 MILLION	78 MILLION
THE 12 CENTRAL STATES:	\$3.229 TRILLION	71 MILLION	77 MILLION
THE 16 NORTHEAST STATES:	\$7.425 TRILLION	91 MILLION	98 MILLION
THE 13 SOUTHERN STATES:	\$4.844 TRILLION	75 MILLION	81 MILLION
TOTALS	\$20.421 TRILLION	309 MILLION	334 MILLION

### Comments:

- (1) In the second allocation, Texas (with a 2018 GDP of \$1.8 trillion) would have more than 50% of the GDP of the entire Central States of America, thus giving it a predominant position in this new nation.
- (2) Newer color maps have begun to emphasize “purple” states, referring to the larger states which have begun to swing between red and blue in recent presidential elections. This group of states should now probably include Wisconsin.
- (3) Texas has been consistently Red since 1980; in 2016, Trump won the state by a margin of 9.4% over Clinton. Timothy Egan reports that Texas has become the leading destination for ex-Californians, however, and that recent polling data could suggest that this key state is now “in play.” A shift from red to purple or blue in Texas would signal the chance of a tectonic shift in the changing dynamics of the entire Blue/Red divide in the United States as a whole.



## References and Acknowledgments

### Acknowledgments:

The data on the votes in the presidential elections from 1964 to 2016, used in this essay, is taken from the website for “The American Presidency Project,” University of California, Santa Barbara, directed by John Woolley and Gerhard Peters (<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>).

### References (Sample of Internet URLs):

*Note on the sources:* All of the information referred to in these pages, without exception, is freely available from trustworthy entries on the Internet. But users can only truly benefit from this astonishing resource if they are willing to use their brains for something other than a sponge. It is simply astonishing how much has changed in this regard during the past 30 years: Information formerly buried in bewildering hard-copy public library resources can now be accessed in mere milliseconds without leaving one’s desk. But Internet information search which serves to broaden and deepen the seeker’s knowledge is not free of charge, however odd this may sound. That type of search requires the diligent application of a critical and questioning mind, rather than the naive quest for opinions which will reinforce the beliefs someone already holds. (This is known as “confirmation bias.”) Learning how to evaluate the trustworthiness of information sources may be, these days, the single most valuable lesson educators can instill in their pupils. Genuinely new knowledge is expensive to acquire in terms of time and effort, and it is only admitted to a mind that has been trained to experience the joy of encountering a well-reasoned argument. Here are a few quick specific suggestions:

- Seek “hard information” (data, graphs, etc.) and actually *work with it*. For example, for this essay I searched for detailed information on U.S. presidential elections and then reformatted what I found to suit my specific objectives. I am not skilled in statistical analysis, so I relied on simple addition and division, using a cheap handheld calculator!
- Avoid all opinions of others, even of your friends and acquaintances, especially “anecdotal” accounts (reports of personal experiences), unless they are supported by hard evidence which you can verify from another source.
- Don’t believe everything you hear or read; don’t even necessarily believe everything you think you see with your own eyes (in many criminal cases, eyewitness reports have turned out to be thoroughly unreliable)!
- Always interrogate yourself about why you are inclined to believe any source of information you happen to encounter on the Internet.

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WILLIAM LEISS was born in New York City and grew up in rural Pennsylvania. He completed his B. A. undergraduate major in American History, a M.A. at Brandeis, and a Ph.D. in philosophy at the University of California, San Diego. In 1968 he emigrated to Canada and taught there in varied academic programs at seven universities before retiring as Emeritus Professor in the School of Policy Studies at Queen's University. He is author, co-author, editor, or contributor for twenty books ([www.leiss.ca](http://www.leiss.ca)) as well as journal articles and consulting reports. The author is grateful to his friend, Dr. Michael Tyshenko of Ottawa, for preparing Figures 4 and 5.

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