

Will the United States Break Apart?

There are several possibilities for America's demise. Like the fate of so many empires, kingdoms, and countries, the most obvious likelihood is to be conquered in war. However, the Second Amendment, and the proliferation of guns in our country, would make it a nightmare for any occupying army.

Another possibility is that we engage in a horrific nuclear war. However, if that happens, it will probably result in a nuclear holocaust, the likes of which could end all human life on Earth.

The most likely scenario for the United States' demise is fragmentation. We witnessed this scenario in the Soviet Union, which abruptly dissolved into numerous countries in 1990 and 1991. Historically, this scenario has plenty of precedent. The great European empires lost most of their colonies and lands over time, yet the mother country still exists. The United States already experienced one such breakup when several southern states declared their secession to form the Southern Confederacy. That act led to America's bloody Civil War.

Talk of secession is nothing new in the United States. However, most of the debate has focused on seceding from an established state, and creating a new fifty-first state. True secession from the United States will be very different. If one state, or region, officially seceded peacefully, and the Federal Government did not intervene, a domino effect could ensue, and more might follow.

What will be the impetus behind the crumbling of the world's great cultural melting pot? The political and cultural divisions in our country are geographical in nature. Rural and small town areas tend to be Republican and in favor of limited government, while cities are overwhelmingly Democrat and favor larger and more expansive government. The famous red/blue election maps by county show vast areas (in red) that vote Republican and small areas (in blue) that vote overwhelmingly Democrat.

If fragmentation begins, upstate New York, the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, northern Colorado, and eastern Washington State would seriously debate their independence.

Regions within states might also join and form new countries. Western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio have more in common with each than the other half of their states. The same might be true for northern California and southern Oregon, and parts of Virginia and Maryland.

Regional ties may also keep some states together. There might be a new Southern Confederacy (sans slavery, I hope), while many states in New England, the Rocky Mountains, the upper Midwest, and even the Great Plains could consider forming independent countries.

Race could be a factor, as Native Americans would no doubt attempt to form several nations west of the Mississippi River.

Ethnicity and language might come into play, as the growing Hispanic population unites in regions where it is the cultural majority. Southern Arizona and Southern California might carve out independent countries, aligned as much with Latin America while remaining autonomous.

Religion might also factor in. Catholicism is dominant in the northeast, and in areas that are largely Hispanic. The Church of Latter-Day Saints is concentrated in several mountain states. Lutherans and Methodists comprise much of the American heartland, while the Southern Baptists are naturally concentrated in the South. Atheists or secularists might attempt to form a country of their own. Jewish-Americans might create their own small country. And no doubt an Islamic country will emerge right by their side to keep things interesting.

With the incredible mobility we have today, it would not be unthinkable that all sorts of countries could form: a country of scientists and engineers, a LGBT country, a country of whites, and a country of blacks.

The cultural and political differences and divisions in themselves will not initiate the disintegration of the United States. Currently, prosperity and government money allows us to put aside and even mask our cultural differences. However, affluence does not last forever.

A massive depression, spiraling unemployment, exploding deficits, soaring interest rates, skyrocketing inflation, the collapse of the dollar, oppressive new laws and regulations, targeted restrictions on speech, and even religious suppression could ignite the simmering cauldron that exists in our multicultural society.

Whether it is the breakaway republics of the former Soviet Union, the ethnic factions of the former Yugoslavia, the Palestinians, the Kurds of Turkey, Iran, and Iraq, the Uighurs in northwest China, or even the separatists in Quebec, the past few decades have seen secession movements grow around the world for people of like cultures. Multiculturalism – or cultural diversity – is a noble concept. However, ethnic, cultural, and political homogenous societies may prove more stable, appealing, and cohesive over time.

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