



FINANCIAL PREPAREDNESS

"One of life's most painful moments comes when we must admit that we didn't do our homework, that we are not prepared." ~ Merlin Olsen

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Secession

The size, scope and power of the federal government has increased dramatically since the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, so today it has a major effect on the economy and our lives. Consequently, I try to follow political developments closely (my bachelor's degree is in Political Science), though sometimes it gets so crazy and depressing that I need to take a hiatus from political news for my own mental health. I try to understand and anticipate what could happen in the future, especially developments that are negative or unusual.

I recently finished reading [American Secession: The Looming Threat of a National Breakup](#) by F.H. Buckley, which was published last year. When people hear the word "secession," usually the first thing that comes to mind is the secession of the Confederate states from the Union in 1860-1. But secession is a universal and timeless phenomenon. In modern times, secession has occurred in India, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Ethiopia, Czechoslovakia, Sudan, and the United Kingdom (Brexit), among others. And currently there are secession movements in Canada, California (by both liberals and conservatives), Oregon, Colorado, Spain, the United Kingdom (Scotland and Wales), Turkey/Syria/Iraq (the Kurds), and even in metro Atlanta (Milton County).

I remember first reading about the idea of secession in America around 2000 and thinking, “What? Wow, that's crazy.” But now it seems like a reasonable and even desirable if not inevitable development. Thanks to the media (in a secular decline, they have become increasingly desperate to sensationalize the news by stirring up controversy and witch hunts), social media (especially Twitter outrage mobs), Google's search algorithms, YouTube's recommendations (which send users down a deep rabbit hole that becomes increasingly extreme), cancel culture, virtue signaling, the coddling of Millennials (which has produced hypersensitive, thin-skinned “snowflakes”), the war on free speech, the quaffing of the Kool-Aid and a lack of interest in independent, critical thinking, debate (Do schools still have debate clubs?) or trying to understand the views of others (which is really a lack of empathy), our political differences have become irreconcilable, and the only peaceful solution is divorce.

I think that if, say, California had voted to secede during the Trump presidency, not only would it have been unlikely (in my opinion) that Trump would invade the state with a federal army like Lincoln did, but most Americans would have been happily relieved. When Trump became president, a number of famous liberals threatened to leave the country. But why should they have to leave their home and family and friends just because a certain politician gets elected? Why can't they live on the political equivalent of a communal farm if that's what they and the vast majority of their neighbors want? I say let's have the equivalent of a West and East Germany in America, or a North and South Korea. If necessary, people could move to the country that is better suited to them and then we can see how it all works out.

Increasingly, our political system is moving closer towards winner-take-all, which raises the stakes for everyone and makes people more strident, extreme and just plain crazy. There is more political strife in America now than at any time since at least 1861, and it is not sustainable.

America is simply too big (both geographically and population-wise) and dissimilar. The book [The Nine Nations of North America](#) (which is on my To Read list) argues that there are really nine different nations in North America based on cultural and economic differences. Why insist on forcing so many different cultures into one nation (like the British did with Iraq) and expect them to get along reasonably well? It's both unrealistic and unnecessary.

Buckley shows that the size of a country is negatively correlated with liberty and prosperity and positively correlated with militarism and corruption. The Louisiana Purchase (which, ironically, was done by America's most libertarian president) was a great real estate deal but eventually had some major unintended consequences. Large, populous countries tend to throw their weight around militarily. War is not only extremely expensive, it is “the health of the state.”

In a small country, the government is closer to the people, not at “echelons above reality,” as we used to say in the Army. Politicians are more likely to live near you and have to look you in the eye and “explain themselves.” And the country is likely to be more homogenous, resulting in less strife and tribalism.

In 2005, I considered relocating to New Hampshire. It's a tiny state, yet its House of Representatives has 400 members. Just think about that from a lobbyist's perspective: Even if you spent the time and money to lobby and bribe over 200 representatives, the state and its budget is so small that it wouldn't be worth your efforts. Everything in the state seems very local (with strong, vibrant communities), sensible, reasonable and modest.

At some point within the next four years, I think something will happen that will make secession the only logical and peaceful solution. For liberals and the Deep State, it would be a second Trump presidency (or maybe someone like DeSantis). For conservatives and libertarians, it would be another blatantly rigged election and/or baldfaced tyranny (packing the Supreme Court and the Senate, de facto revocation of the 2nd Amendment, etc.).

At the end of the book, Buckley reveals that he's a unionist, so it's not written from the point of view of someone who advocates secession. Instead, he warns that the U.S. is ripe for it, and spends most of the book discussing alternatives to it such as Home Rule (which I doubt will ever happen).

Quotes of the Week

“What has always made the state a hell on earth has been precisely that man has tried to make it his heaven.” ~ F. Hölderlin

“When men yield up the privilege of thinking, the last shadow of liberty quits the horizon.” ~ Thomas Paine

What You Should Be Doing Now

I plan to cover the why and how of these in future issues (if I haven't already), but here are some actions I recommend you take (or at least start thinking about) now:

1. Documentaries to watch: “[The Creepy Line](#)” (I saw this on Amazon Prime Video)
“[Cannibal Island](#)” (ditto). When they ask you for your vaccine passport, remember this documentary.
2. Books to read: [American Secession: The Looming Threat of a National Breakup](#) by F.H. Buckley

[A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State](#) by John Whitehead. It took me a number of months to get through this because it's so depressing. I actually started reading it to my son, but he asked me to stop because it was so disturbing. Whitehead is a longtime civil libertarian activist. This book was published in 2013, so the situation is now even worse than he describes. 4.5 stars.

I would love to hear from you! I thrive on feedback from readers. If you have any comments, suggestions, insight/wisdom, or you'd like to share a link to a great article, please [email me](#).

Generally, I don't have time to answer questions about your specific situation, but if you have a general question that I think other readers also have, [let me know](#) and I will provide an answer in a future issue.

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Your Questions Answered

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