



The post-Cold War world order depends upon the military and economic powers of the United States to sustain it. But the exercise of those powers is dependent on the country's domestic stability. And that stability is being undermined by political polarization and talk of secession. "And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.", Joseph E Fallon reminds us.

Increasing polarization in the United States between left and right is being expressed in incendiary language and/or acts of physical violence or intimidation or threats of same on an array of issues as diverse as :

capitalism, socialism, Wall Street, climate change, oil drilling, oil and gas pipelines, gas stoves, gas engines, federal lands, federal government, statehood for the District of Columbia, statehood for Puerto Rico, independence for Puerto Rico, Green Agenda, foreign aid, United States history, United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, United States Supreme Court, Congress, Executive Orders, Separation of Powers, Electoral College, Census Bureau, Social Security, Medicare, welfare, workfare, economics, regulations, national debt, debt ceiling, balanced budget, free trade, fair trade, employment, unions, "right to work", work place environment, police, FBI, crime, violence, property, housing, rent, racism, discrimination, affirmative action, quotas, "diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)", reparations, courts, laws, law enforcement, domestic spying, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, prisons, bail, incarceration, drugs, homelessness, aggression, harassment, sex, gender, marriage, homosexuality, adoption, parental rights, transgenderism, sports, taxes, IRS, military, education, pronouns, hate speech, free speech, censorship, sensitivity training, religion, the Bible, language, abortion, euthanasia, death penalty, covid, mandatory vaccinations, mandatory masks, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, free association, domestic terrorism, immigration, illegal aliens, border controls, border patrol, amnesty, guns, citizenship, voting, voter IDs', and voting tabulation.

It is a "culture war" between two increasingly different peoples in two distinct geographical

regions holding two irreconcilable ideologies. Waged by population relocations, referred to as "voting with your feet," it is resulting in the ideological consolidation of two blocs of states. The effect is impressive; potentially destabilizing. People are relocating primarily from Blue/Democrat states to Red/Republican states. Forbes dubbed these relocatees - "leftugees."

On September 3, 2022, The Economist noted "American policy is splitting, state by state, into two blocs." The Blue states are Democrat/liberal/socialist. And the Red states are Republican/conservative/capitalist. As Pew Research Center noted November 13, 2020 "Race, religion and ideology now align with partisan identity in ways that they often didn't in eras when the two parties were relatively heterogenous coalitions."

This ideological consolidation culminates in a "political trifecta." According to Ballotpedia, the encyclopaedia of American Politics, "State government trifecta is a term to describe single-party government, when one political party holds the governorship and majorities in both chambers of the state legislature. The following are variations of the term:

Trifecta: One political party holds the governorship, a majority in the state senate, and a majority in the state house in a state's government.

Trifecta plus: A trifecta and a working majority of the state's court of last resort siding with the political leaning of the party in power.

Trifecta with supermajority: A trifecta in which both legislative bodies have a supermajority, commonly defined as either 60 percent or two-thirds of seats held by a single party.

A trifecta with a supermajority increases the odds of a party passing new bills with only token opposition from the minority party.

As of March 11, 2023, there are 22 Republican trifectas, 17 Democratic trifectas, and 11 divided governments where neither party holds trifecta control.

Ideological consolidation partitions the United States into a Red heartland, stretching from the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico to the Rocky Mountains and from Canada to Mexico, bordered by a Blue West Coast and Blue Northeast with isolated Blue pockets in the Midwest and the Southwest.

The phenomenon of political relocation extends beyond people migrating to Red states. It includes counties in Blue states seeking to secede and join a neighbouring Red state. This is permitted by the United States Constitution. Article IV, Section 3 declares – "no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress."

Precedents exists for secession of counties from a state in times of peace and in times of war. In 1820, the northern counties of Massachusetts voted to secede and became the State of Maine. And in 1863, during the Civil War, the north western counties of Virginia voted to secede and became the State of West Virginia.

The only difference between then and now is many current secession movements seek to join another state rather than form a new state. But the principle remains the same: Voters' approval in the counties seeking to secede followed by consent of the respective states' legislatures and the United States Congress.

On January 10, 2023, The Brookings Institution reported on the growing phenomena of local movements seeking to change state borders. "The Pacific Northwest is home to a long-running movement to reorganize state lines along political rifts. In Oregon, Washington, and northern California, as in much of the United States, rural counties are much redder than their densely populated, coastal counterparts. Citing dissatisfaction with the liberal policies of the state government, citizens in some rural Oregon counties have organised to place on the ballot the question of whether to break from their home state to join neighbouring Idaho—a reliably red state for the past fourteen presidential elections, where Republicans hold every state-wide and Federal office. In 2021, five of those counties in Oregon forged ahead and voted to join Idaho. Similar votes are likely to be held in the future in rural counties in Washington and northern California."

If secession from Oregon is successful, it will energise similar secessionist movements in Maryland, Illinois, and Colorado. "In the Mid-Atlantic, Republican state lawmakers in heavily

Democratic Maryland made overtures in 2021 to the state legislature in West Virginia expressing their desire to secede from their home state. The lawmakers - all representing portions of three counties in Maryland's rural western panhandle - claimed in their letters that West Virginia, in both its professed values and the heavily Republican lean of its government, would be a better home for their constituents than Maryland, where Democrats enjoy supermajorities in the State House and reclaimed the Governor's Mansion in November. Residents of the three counties have not yet been asked to weigh in on the switch via a ballot question, though the lawmakers have indicated that such a step could be taken in the future."

In the Midwest, "Over two dozen counties in Illinois, including four in the southern portion of the state that border ruby-red Kentucky, have taken steps to leave Illinois for redder pastures, including by passing non-binding resolutions that encourage local officials to explore the possibility of leaving the state."

In the Rocky Mountains, "...residents of a county in northern Colorado have explored the idea of joining heavily Republican Wyoming."

"In 2021, a New Mexico state senator proposed an amendment to the state constitution that would allow counties to pursue secession, either by joining neighbouring states or by creating a new one."

However, counties' secessions as well as population relocations are viewed as existential ideological threats by some Blue states supporters. They have responded with rhetoric both hyperbolic and inflammatory; asserting the very existence of Red states threatens the continued unity of the United States.

CNN, a news media "strongly aligned with liberal, progressive, or left-wing thought and/or policy agendas" declared Red states are engaged in "an effort to define a nation within a nation...the real threat in the red state effort to set their own course may be less an advantage for one side or another than a challenge to the nation's underlying cohesion. As red states grow more aggressive about going their own way, while working to pre-empt challenges from above (the Federal government) or below (blue local governments), they are testing how much divergence the nation's fundamental cohesion can take before it begins to unravel. "You have a very dangerous situation," said David Leopold, a former president of the American Immigration Lawyers Association and legal adviser to the immigration advocacy group America's Voice. "This is a direct threat to the nation as a unified entity."

Then how should Blue states respond to the existence of Red states? On February 23, 2023, left-wing commentator Keith Olbermann demanded Blue states wage 'economic civil war' on Red states. He declared since "The blue states have all the money, they must starve the red states into submission."

Blue states might have the money, but Red states produce the food. Red states are the breadbasket of the nation. If the Blue States unleash economic civil war, Red states could effectively respond by ceasing to export food to Blue states.

Accusations Red states promote national disunion for adopting legislation contrary to the ideological views of Blue states and, therefore, to preserve national unity Red states must be starved into submission elicited a predictable response from Red state supporters.

Congresswoman Marjorie Taylor Greene has called for "a national divorce.....We need to separate by red states and blue states and shrink the federal government. Everyone I talk to says this. From the sick and disgusting woke culture issues shoved down our throats to the Democrat's (sic) traitorous America Last policies, we are done."

There is precedent. The country is governed by the United States Constitution. Drawn up by delegates in 1787 at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, it is a secessionist-enabling document. Thirteen states constituted the United States at that time. The union was then governed by its first constitution, the Articles of Confederation and Perpetual Union, (1781-1789). Changes to the Articles required unanimous consent of the states. Article VII of the proposed second constitution specified "Ratification of the Conventions of nine States, shall be sufficient for the Establishment of this Constitution between the States so ratifying the Same."

In justifying such secession from the United States, James Madison, Founding Father and Fourth President of the United States, wrote in The Federalist No. 43, January 23, 1788, "On what principle the confederation, which stands in the solemn form of a compact among the States, can be superceded without the unanimous consent of the parties to it?...by recurring to the absolute necessity of the case; to the great principle of self-preservation; to the transcendent law of nature and of nature's God, which declares that the safety and happiness of society are the objects at which all political institutions aim, and to which all such institutions

must be sacrificed."

After a new union was established in 1789 under the United States Constitution and had been functioning for more than a quarter of a century, Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence and Third President of the United States, wrote in 1816 "...If any state in the Union will declare that it prefers separation...to a continuance in the union, I have no hesitation in saying, let us separate".

As political polarization accelerates accompanied by rising threats of intimidation and violence against opposing viewpoints, secession may be the outcome.