***American Nations***  A History of the Eleven Rival Regional Cultures of North America By Colin Woodard

**INTRODUCTION:**

On a hot late-August day in 2010, television personality Glenn Beck held a rally on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on the forty-seventh anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech. Mr. Beck stood where Rev. King had stood and addressed the white, mostly middle-aged crowd encircling the National Mall’s Reflecting Pool. “We are a nation, quite honestly, that is in about as good a shape as I am, and this is not very good,” he joked. “We are dividing ourselves,” he said, “but our values and our principles can unite us. We must discover them again.”

It’s a theme heard again and again in times of crisis: **Americans have become divided on account of having strayed from the core principles on which their country was founded**— a “firm reliance on divine providence” and “the idea that man can rule himself,” in Mr. Beck’s analysis— and **must return to those shared values if unity is to be restored.** When society was turned upside down by mass immigration at the turn of both the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries, intellectuals counseled that **America was in danger of losing the “Anglo- Protestant” culture and associated “American creed” that had supposedly kept the nation unified**. In the aftermath of the tumultuous 1960s, conservatives like Irving Kristol denounced liberal intellectuals, philanthropists, and social workers for abandoning America’s traditional capitalist values in favor of utopian social engineering; the liberals fervently defended these projects as promoting shared national principles of equality, justice, and freedom from oppression. With the United States allegedly divided between red states and blue ones in 2008, presidential candidate **Barack Obama promised to *“beat back the politics of fear, doubt, and cynicism”* in favor of hope**, a sentiment that had allegedly rallied Americans to rebel against Britain, fight and defeat Nazism, and face down segregation in the South. ***“We are choosing hope over fear,”*** he said before the Iowa caucus. ***“We’re choosing unity over division.”***

Such calls for unity overlook a glaring historical fact: **Americans have been deeply divided since the days of Jamestown and Plymouth.** The original North American colonies were settled by people from distinct regions of the British Islands, and from France, the Netherlands, and Spain, each with their own religious, political, and ethnographic characteristics. Throughout the colonial period, they **regarded one another as competitors**— for land, settlers, and capital— **and occasionally as enemies**, as was the case during the English Civil War, when Royalist Virginia stood against Puritan Massachusetts, or when New Netherland and New France were invaded and occupied by English- speaking soldiers, statesmen, and merchants.

Only when London began treating its colonies as a single unit— and enacted policies threatening to nearly all— did some of these distinct societies briefly come together to win a revolution and create a joint government. Nearly all of them would seriously consider leaving the Union in the eighty-year period after Yorktown; several went to war to do so in the 1860s. All of these centuries-old cultures are still with us today, and have spread their people, ideas, and influence across mutually exclusive bands of the continent. **There isn’t and never has been one America, but rather several Americas.**

Any effort to “restore” fundamental American values runs into an even greater obstacle: **Each of our founding cultures had its own set of cherished principles, and they often contradicted one another**. By the middle of the eighteenth century, eight discrete Euro-American cultures had been established on the southern and eastern rims of North America. For generations these distinct cultural hearths developed in remarkable isolation from one another, consolidating characteristic values, practices, dialects, and ideals. Some championed individualism, others utopian social reform. Some believed themselves guided by divine purpose, others championed freedom of conscience and inquiry. Some embraced an Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity, others ethnic and religious pluralism. Some valued equality and democratic participation, others deference to a traditional aristocratic order. **All of them continue to champion some version of their founding ideals in the present day.** The United States had Founding Fathers, to be sure, but they were the grandfathers, great-grandfathers, or great-great-grandfathers of the men who met to sign the Declaration of Independence and to draft our first two constitutions. Our true Founders didn’t have an “original intent” we can refer back to in challenging times; they had original intents.

America’s most essential and abiding divisions are not between red states and blue states, conservatives and liberals, capital and labor, blacks and whites, the faithful and the secular. **Rather, our divisions stem from this fact: the United States is a federation comprised of the whole or part of eleven regional nations**, some of which truly do not see eye to eye with one another. These nations respect neither state nor international boundaries, **bleeding over the U. S. frontiers with Canada and Mexico** as readily as they **divide California, Texas, Illinois, or Pennsylvania**. Six joined together to liberate themselves from British rule. Four were conquered but not vanquished by English- speaking rivals. Two more were founded in the West by a mix of American frontiersmen in the second half of the nineteenth century. Some are defined by cultural pluralism, others by their French, Spanish, or “Anglo- Saxon” heritage. Few have shown any indication that they are melting into some sort of unified American culture. On the contrary, since 1960 **the fault lines between these nations have been growing wider, fueling culture wars, constitutional struggles, and ever more frequent pleas for unity.**

**- - -**

Disregard the **conventional map of North America**, with its depiction of a continent neatly divided into three federations, thirteen Canadian provinces and territories, thirty-one Mexican states, and fifty American ones. For the most part, those **boundaries are as arbitrary as those chosen by European colonial powers** to divide up the African continent. The lines on the map **slash through cohesive cultures**, **creating massive cultural fissures in states like Maryland**, Oregon, or New York, whose residents have often found they have more in common with their neighbors in other states than they do with one another.

But on carefully examining events of the past four centuries, one realizes **these jurisdictions are illusions that mask the real forces** that have always driven and affairs of our sprawling continent: the eleven stateless nations of North America. *(NOTE: For this reading, we’ll just focus on “Nine Nations”, as the “First Nation”, notably Indians and Inuit, and “New France”, found in the New Orleans area, are not as important for this government theme…).* So what are these nations? What are their defining characteristics? What parts of the continent does each control? Where did they come from? Let me briefly introduce each of them, their spheres of dominance, and the names I have chosen for each.

**Yankeedom** was founded on the **shores of Massachusetts Bay by radical Calvinists** as a new Zion, a religious utopia in the New England wilderness. From the outset it was a culture that put great emphasis on **education, local political control, and the pursuit of the “greater good”** of the community, even if it required individual self-denial. Yankees have the greatest faith in the potential of government to improve people’s lives, tending to see it as an extension of the citizenry, and a vital bulwark against the schemes of grasping aristocrats, corporations, or outside powers. For more than four centuries, Yankees have sought to **build a more perfect society here on Earth** through social engineering, relatively extensive citizen involvement in the political process, and the aggressive assimilation of foreigners. Settled by stable, educated families, Yankeedom has always had a middle-class ethos and considerable **respect for intellectual achievement**. Its religious zeal has waned over time, but not its underlying drive to improve the world as the set of moral and social values that scholars have sometimes described as **“secular Puritanism.”**

From its New England core, Yankee culture spread with its settlers across **upper New York State; the northern strips of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa;** parts of the **eastern Dakotas**; and on up into **Michigan**, **Wisconsin, and Minnesota**. It has been locked in nearly **perpetual combat with the Deep South** for control of the federal government since the moment such a thing existed.

While short-lived, the seventeenth-century **Dutch colony of New Netherland** had a lasting impact on the continent’s development by laying down the cultural DNA for what is now **Greater New York City**. Modeled on its Dutch namesake, New Amsterdam was from the start a global commercial trading society**: multi-ethnic, multi-religious, speculative, materialistic, mercantile, and free trading**, a raucous, not entirely democratic city-state where no one ethnic or religious group has ever truly been in charge. New Netherland also nurtured two Dutch innovations considered subversive by most other European states at the time: a **profound tolerance** of diversity and an unflinching commitment to the freedom of inquiry. Forced on the other nations at the Constitutional Convention, these ideals have been passed down to us as the Bill of Rights.

Today, New Netherland comprises the five **boroughs of New York City, the lower Hudson Valley, northern New Jersey, western Long Island, and southwestern Connecticut** (where Red Sox fans are outnumbered by Yankee fans). As a center of global commerce, New Netherland has long been the front door for **immigrants**, who’ve made it the most densely populated part of North America. Its population—19 million at this writing—is greater than that of many European nations, and its influence over this continent’s media, publishing, fashion and intellectual and economic life is hard to overstate.

Arguably **the most “American”** of the nations, **the** **Midlands** was founded by English Quakers, who welcomed people of many nations and creeds to their utopian colonies on the shores of Delaware Bay. Pluralistic and organized around the **middle class**, the Midlands spawned the culture of Middle America and the Heartland, where ethnic and ideological purity have never been a priority, **government has been seen as an unwelcome intrusion**, and political opinion has been moderate, even apathetic. The only part of British North America to have a non-British majority in 1775, the Midlands has long been and **ethnic mosaic**, with people of **German** **descent—not “Anglo-Saxons”—**comprising the largest group since the late 1600’s. Like Yankees, the Midlanders believe society should be organized to benefit ordinary people, but they are extremely **skeptical of top-down governmental intervention**, as many of their ancestors fled from European tyrannies. The Midlands is home to a dialect long considered “standard American,” a bellwether for national political attitudes, and the **key “swing vote” in every national debate** from the abolition of slavery to the 2008 presidential contest.

From its cultural hearth in **southeastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey, and northern Delaware and Maryland**, Midland culture spread through much of the Heartland: **central Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; northern Missouri; most of Iowa; and the less-arid eastern halves of South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas**. It shares the key “border cities” of Chicago (with the Yankees) and St. Louis (with Greater Appalachia). While less cognizant of its national identity, the Midlands is nonetheless an enormously influential moderating force in continental politics, as it agrees with only part of each of its neighbors’ strident agendas.

**Tidewater**, the most powerful nation during the colonial period and Early Republic, has always been a **fundamentally conservative region**, with a high value placed on **respect for authority and tradition** and very little on equality or public participation in politics. Such attitudes are not surprising, given that it was founded by the younger sons of southern English gentry, who aimed to reproduce the **semifeudal manorial society** of the English countryside, where economic, political, and social affairs were run by and for landed aristocrats. These self-identified “Cavaliers” largely succeeded in their aims, turning the **lowlands of Virginia, Maryland, southern Delaware, and northeastern North Carolina** into a country gentleman’s paradise, with indentured servants and, later, slaves taking the part of the peasants.

Tidewater elites played a central role in the foundation of the United States and were responsible for many of the **aristocratic inflections in the Constitution**, including the **Electoral College** and **Senate**, whose members were to be appointed by legislators, not chosen by the electorate. But the region’s power waned in the 1830’s and 1840’s, its elite generally following the lead of the planters of the ascendant Deep South in matter of national political importance. Today it is **a nation in decline, rapidly losing its influence**, cultural cohesion, and territory to its Midland neighbors. Its undoing was a matter of geography: it was clocked by rivals from expanding over the Appalachian Mountains.

**Greater Appalachia** was founded in the early eighteenth century by wave upon wave of **rough, bellicose settlers from the war-ravaged borderlands** of Northern Ireland, northern England, and the Scottish lowlands. Lampooned by writers, journalists, filmmakers, and television producers as **“rednecks,” “hillbillies,” “crackers,” and “white trash,”** these clannish Scots-Irish, Scots, and north English frontiersmen spread across the highland South and on into the southern tiers of **Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois; the Arkansas and Missouri Ozarks; the eastern two-thirds of Oklahoma; and the Hill Country of Texas**, clashing with Indians, Mexicans and Yankees as they migrated.

In the British Isles, this culture had formed in a state of **near-constant war and upheaval**, fostering a warrior ethic and a deep commitment to individual liberty and personal sovereignty. Intensely **suspicious of aristocrats and social reformers** alike, these American Boderlanders despised Yankee teachers, Tidewater lords, and Deep Southern aristocrats. In the Civil War, much of the region fought for the Union, with secession movements in western Virginia (creating West Virginia), eastern Tennessee and northern Alabama. During Reconstruction, the region resisted the Yankee effort to liberate African slaves, driving it into a lasting alliance with its former enemies: the overlords of the Tidewater and Deep Southern lowlands of Dixie. The Borderlander’s combative culture has provided a **large proportion of the nation’s military**, from officers like **Andrew Jackson, Davy Crockett, and Douglas MacArthur** to the enlisted men fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq. They also gave the continent bluegrass and country music, stock car racing, and Evangelical fundamentalism. Greater Appalachia’s people have long had a poor awareness of their cultural origins. One scholar of the Scots-Irish has called them “the people with no name”. When U.S. Census takers ask Appalachian people what their nationality or ethnicity is, they almost always answer **“American” or even “Native American”.**

**The Deep South** was founded by Barbados slave lords as a West Indies-style slave society, a system so **cruel and despotic** that it shocked even its seventeenth-century English contemporaries. For most of American history, the region had been the bastion of **white supremacy, aristocratic privilege**, and a version of classical Republicanism modeled on the slave states of the ancient world, where democracy was a privilege of the few and enslavement the natural lot of many. It remains the **least democratic of the nations**, a one-party entity where race remains the primary determinant of one’s political affiliations.

Beginning from its Charleston beachhead, the Deep South spread **apartheid and authoritarianism** across the Southern lowlands, eventually encompassing most of **South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, and Louisiana; western Tennessee**; and the southeastern parts of **North Carolina, Arkansas, and Texas**. Its territorial ambitions in Latin America frustrated, in the 1860s it dragged the federation into a horrific war in an attempt to form its own nation-state, backed by reluctant allies in Tidewater and some corners of Appalachia. After successfully resisting a Yankee-led occupation, it became the center of the **states’ rights movement**, **racial segregation**, and labor and environmental deregulation. It’s also the wellspring of African American culture, and four decades after it was forced to allow blacks to vote, it remains politically polarized on racial grounds. Having forged an uneasy “Dixie” coalition with Appalachia and Tidewater in the 1870s, the Deep South is locked in an **epic battle with Yankeedom and its Left Coast and New Netherland allies** for the future of the federation.

**El Norte** is the **oldest** of the Euro-American nations, dating back to the late sixteenth century, when the **Spanish empire** founded Monterrey, Saltillo, and other northern outposts. Today, this resurgent nation spreads from the United States-Mexico border for a hundred miles or more in either direction. It encompasses **south and west Texas, southern California and the Imperial Valley, southern Arizona, most of New Mexico, and parts of Colorado**. Overwhelmingly Hispanic, it has long been a **hybrid between Anglo- and Spanish America**, with and economy oriented toward the United States rather than Mexico City.

Most Americans are well aware that the United States’ southern borderlands are a place apart, where **Hispanic language, culture, and societal norms dominate**. Split by an increasingly militarized border, El Norte in some ways resembles Germany during the Cold War: **two peoples with a common culture separated from one another by a large wall.** Despite the wishes of their political matters in Washington, D.C., and Mexico City, many *Norteños* would prefer to federate to form a third national state of their own. The Pew Research Center predicts that by 2050 the proportion of the U.S. population that **self-identifies as** **Hispanic will reach 29 percent**, more than double the figure in 2005. Much of that growth will take place in El Norte, where Hispanics already constitute a majority, increasing the region’s relative influence in state and national politics. Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes has predicted the borderlands will become an amalgamated, interdependent culture in the twenty-first century, so long as tolerance prevails. “I have always said it is a scar, not a border,” he remarked. “But we don’t want the scar to bleed again. ***We want the scar to heal.”***

A Chile-shaped nation pinned along the Pacific Ocean, **the Left Coast** extends in a strip from Monterey, California, to Juneau, Alaska, including four decidedly progressive metropolises: **San Francisco, Portland, Seattle, and Vancouver**. A wet region of staggering natural beauty, it was originally colonized by two groups: **merchants, missionaries, and woodsmen** from New England (who arrived by sea and controlled the towns) and farmers, prospectors, and **fur traders** from Greater Appalachia (who arrived by wagon and dominated the countryside). Originally slated by Yankees to become a **“New England on the Pacific”**—and the target of a dedicated Yankee missionary effort—the Left Coast retained **a strong strain of New England intellectualism** and idealism even as it embraced a culture of individual fulfillment.

Today it combines the **Yankee faith in good government and social reform** with a commitment to individual **self-exploration and discovery**, a combination that has proven to be fecund. The Left Coast has been the birthplace of the **modern environmental movement** and the global information revolution (it is home to **Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Apple, Twitter, and Silicon Valley**), and the cofounder (along with New Netherland) of the **gay rights movement**, the **peace movement**, and the **cultural revolution of the 1960’s**. The closet ally of Yankeedom, it battles constantly against the agenda of its neighbor, the Far West.

Climate and geography have shaped all of the nations to some extent, but the **Far West** is the only one where environmental factors truly trumped ethnic ones. **High, dry, and remote**, the interior west presented conditions so severe that they effectively destroyed those who tried to apply the farming and lifestyle techniques used in Greater Appalachia, the Midlands, or other nations. With minor exceptions this vast region couldn’t be effectively colonized without the deployment of **vast industrial resources**: railroads, heavy mining equipment, ore smelters, dams, and irrigation systems. As a result, the colonization of much of the region was facilitated and directed by **large corporations headquartered in distant New York, Boston, Chicago, or San Francisco**, or by the federal government itself, which controlled much of the land. Even if they didn’t work for one of the companies, settlers were **dependent on the railroads for transportation of goods, people, and products** to and from far-off markets and manufacturing centers. Unfortunately for the settlers, their region was **treated as an international colony, exploited and despoiled for the benefit of the seaboard nations.** Despite significant industrialization during World War II and the Cold War, the region remains in **a state of semi-dependency.** Its political class tends to **revile the federal government for interfering in its affairs**—a stance that often **aligns it with the** **Deep South**—while demanding it continue to receive federal largesse. It rarely challenges its corporate masters, however, who retain near—Gilded Age levels of influence over Far Western affairs. Today, the nation encompasses all of the interior west of the 100th meridian from the northern boundary of El Norte through to the southern frontier of First Nation, including **northern Arizona; the interiors of California, Washington, and Oregon**; the arid western halves of the **Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas**; and all or nearly all of **Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and Nevada**.

These eleven nations *(NOTE: Remember, just “Nine Nations” for this reading…)* have been **hiding in plain sight** throughout our history. You see them outlined on linguists’ dialect maps, cultural anthropologists’ maps of material culture regions, cultural geographers’ maps of religious regions, campaign strategists’ maps of political geography, and historians’ maps of the pattern of settlement across the continent. **California is split into three nations, and the divide is visible, plain as day, on a map** of which counties voted for or against same-sex marriage in 2008. The Yankee-settled portion of **Ohio** is evident on the county maps of the **2000 and 2004 elections: a strip of blue across the top of a largely red state**. Greater Appalachia is rendered almost perfectly in the Census Bureau’s map of the largest reported ancestry group by county: its citizens inhabit virtually the only counties in the country where a majority answered “American.”

The next part of this reading covers events of the late nineteenth, twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, including the formation of the “new” nations and the **intensification of “international differences”** over **immigration** and the **“American” identity, religion and social reform, foreign policy and war**, and, of course, continental politics. The epilogue offers some thoughts on the road ahead….So, let the journey begin.

**- - -**

**CHAPTER 28: The Struggle for Power (I): THE BLUE NATIONS**

The event we call the **American Revolution wasn't really revolutionary**, at least while it was underway. The military struggle of 1775-1782 **wasn't fought by an "American people"** seeking to create a united, continent-spanning republic where all men were created equal and guaranteed freedom of speech, religion, and the press. On the contrary, it was **a** **profoundly conservative action fought by a loose military alliance of nations**, each of which was most concerned with preserving or reasserting control of its respective culture, character, and power structure. **The rebelling nations certainly didn't wish to be bonded together into a single republic.** They were joined in a temporary partnership against a common threat: the British establishment's ham-fisted attempt to assimilate them into a homogeneous empire centrally controlled from London. Some nations--the Midlands, New Netherland, and New France--**didn't rebel at all.** Those that did weren't fighting a revolution; they were fighting separate wars of colonial liberation.

**Yankeedom was first to rebel**. The nation with the greatest religious and ethnic cohesion, national self-awareness, and commitment to self-governance, Yankees were **willing to fight and die to preserve “the New England Way.”** The Puritan notion that self-denial is virtuous was applied in the form of consumer boycotts of British luxury and manufactured goods. As a Rhode Islands newspaper put it, citizens must “forsake the use of one of their delights to ***preserve their liberty.”*** As one Revolutionary War veteran would later explain: “What we meant in going for those Redcoats was this: ***we always had governed ourselves and we always meant to.*** They didn’t mean that we should.”

But, for these nations, biggest prize sought over the course of America’s 200+ year history has been **control of** **federal government institutions: Congress, the White House, the courts, and the military.** As the central government has grown in size, scope, and power, so have the nations' efforts to capture and reshape it--and the rest of the continent--in their image. Since 1877 the driving force of American politics hasn't primarily been a class struggle or tension between agrarian and commercial interests, or even between competing partisan ideologies, although each has played a role. Ultimately the determinative political struggle has been a **clash between shifting coalitions of ethno-regional nations, one invariably headed by the Deep South, the other by Yankeedom.**

**CHAPTER 29: The Struggle for Power (II): THE RED AND THE PURPLE**

But if the Northern alliance and Dixie bloc have stood near-constant monolithic opposition to each other, what accounts for **the shift in power over the years**? The answer: the behavior of the **three ‘swing’ nations**. Neither of the continent’s superpower blocs has ever truly dominated the U.S. government without first winning the backing of at least two of the **swing nations: the Midlands, El Norte, and the Far West**. What are the three swing nations’ priorities?

**The** **Midlands** is the most **philosophically autonomous** of the nations, for centuries leery of both meddlesome, messianic Yankees and authoritarian Dixie zealots. **Midlanders share the Yankees’ identification with middle-class society**, the Borderlanders’ **distrust of government intrusion**, the New Netherlanders’ commitment to **cultural pluralism**, and the Deep South’s aversion to strident activism. It’s truly a middle-of-the-road American society and, as such, has rarely sided unambiguously with one coalition, candidate, or movement. When it has, it has been at **a time of profound national stress** and in reaction to perceived excess (the Midlands voted for Obama in 2008). It’s no accident that the Midlands straddle - but do not control - many of the key **“battleground states”** at the turn of the millennium: **Pennsylvania, Ohio, Illinois, and Missouri**. Its modern presidents, Truman and Eisenhower, were both “compromise candidates” who were able to defuse intrabloc rivalries to win the White House for one party or the other.

By contrast, **the** **Far West’s** agenda has been clear: to **escape the colonial domination** of the Northern alliance while maintaining the stream of federal subsidies upon which its way of life was built. In the late nineteenth century, Far Western congressional representatives **voted in lockstep with the Northern alliance** because they were bought and paid for by Yankee-, New York-, or San Francisco-based railroad, mining, ranching, and timber interests. But during the New Deal, World War II, and the Cold War**, federal government spending transformed the region** via the creation of airports, highways, dam, irrigation and water transfer projects, research laboratories, military bases, academies, research institutes, and a profusion of defense industry plants. The nation developed homegrown industrial and agricultural interests, senators with local power bases, and an agenda set in Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Denver rather than New York, Cleveland, and Chicago.

As a result, since 1968 it has **aligned itself with the Dixie bloc** **out of a** **shared interest in gelding federal regulatory power** for the benefit of large corporate interests. From its emergence in the 1880s until 1968, the Far West’s presidential vote reflected that of the Northern alliance in nearly every election. From 1968 to 2004 it **almost always voted for the candidate favored by the Dixie bloc**, except when Dixie has spurned a conservative in favor of a liberal Southerner. In the same period, its congressional representatives sided with their Deep Southern counterparts to pass tax cuts, oppose health care and financial reform, and roll back environmental regulations. Its affinity with Dixie is limited, however, as its people have a **strong liberation streak** that balks at restrictions on dissent and civil liberties. **In the 2008 election**, fault lines began to appear in the Dixie-Far West partnership, with **Colorado and Nevada voting for the northern candidate (Obama)** over a Far Western native son who chose to run on a Dixie platform (John McCain); **Republican support had ebbed in nearly every county in the region**, leaving McCain with a thin margin of victory even in “ultraconservative” Montana.

In the future, however, the balance of power will be largely shaped by the affinities of the **rapidly growing, increasingly assertive Hispanics of El Norte**. Until the second half of the twentieth century, the other nations generally ignored El Norte, a national culture that controlled no state governments and was assumed to be on the road to extinction, its various elements **absorbed into the Far West, Greater Appalachia, and the Deep South**. Norteños—isolated in enclaves in the Far West and marginalized by the racial caste system in the Border States under Dixie control—were **expected to go quietly the way of the American Indians**.

But Norteños began reasserting control over the political and cultural life of New Mexico, south Texas, and southern Arizona, and making deep inroads in Southern California. They’ve elected their own to city halls from San Antonio to Los Angeles, the governorship of New Mexico, the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. Senate seats for New Mexico and Colorado. As discussed earlier**, their numbers have increased rapidly both in raw totals and percentage of the federation’s population, triggering talk of a *reconquista* of land** lost after the Mexican-American War. Already the largest U.S. minority, Hispanics of all origins are expected to account for a quarter of the federation’s population by 2025. In 2010, Norteños already constituted **a majority in Los Angeles, San Antonio, and El Paso and a plurality in the state of New Mexico**. Some observers believe that, if Mexico were to break up, several of its northern states might seek annexation or political affiliation with the United States, further increasing El Norte’s influence and prestige within the federation. **The bloc that wins the allegiance of El Norte stands to control American affairs.**

For 150 years **the Dixie bloc has done itself few favors in neglecting to win Norteños hearts and minds**. The Deep South’s caste system and Appalachia’s commitment to white supremacy led to the **oppression and alienation of *Tejanos* and New Mexico *Hispanos***. Anglo colonists in Arizona and southern California – a majority of whom hailed from Dixie and have voted for Dixie candidates – didn’t go out of their way to integrate Spanish-speaking people into politics and society while they were in power. As a result, El Norte’s activists and political leaders have **aligned themselves with northerners while its electorate has voted with Yankeedom in every presidential election since 1988**. With Dixie and Far Western populists railing against the dangers of Mexican immigration, El Norte can be expected to back the Northern bloc for some time to come.

Let’s step back for a little perspective. Consider for a moment what U.S. politics and society might be like **if the Dixie bloc never existed**, or **if the Confederacy had peacefully seceded in 1861**.

You don’t have to stretch your imagination, because **this very scenario has been playing out north of the U.S. border….**