

Finally, from 1910 to 1970, all European states consolidated and expanded power, resulting in the worst depression in history and inflation of 1,400 percent, not to mention the two most ruinous wars in all human history, which contributed to casualties, mostly deaths, of 100 million or more.

The larger the state, the more economic disaster and military casualties. Hence, the Law of Government Size.

How does all of this apply to the United States today?

Of the 50 states, 29 have populations below five million people. Half of the population lives in 40 states that average out to 3.7 million people; the other half is in the 10 largest states. There are ten states and one colony in the three to five million population class that would be ideal secession candidates: Iowa, Connecticut, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Kentucky, Louisiana, South Carolina, Alabama, Colorado, and Mississippi. And there are another 13 with populations between one and three million—Montana, Rhode Island, Hawaii, New Hampshire, Maine, Idaho, Nebraska, West Virginia, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Kansas, and Arkansas—and another eight below one million but larger than Iceland, including Vermont. In other words, 30 of the states (plus Puerto Rico) fall in a range where similar sizes in the rest of the world have produced successful independent nations.

Again, 84 political areas in the world are smaller than Vermont, the second smallest U.S. state. The median area of U.S. states is roughly 58,000 square miles—25 states are smaller than that, and 25 bigger. If all of those under 58,000 were independent, they would match 79 other countries in the world—among them Greece, Nicaragua, Iceland, Hungary, Portugal, Austria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Denmark, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Taiwan.

The argument for secession need not focus exclusively on population or geographic size—one might factor in cultural cohesion, developed infrastructure, historical identity—but that seems to me to be the sensible place to start when considering viable states. And since the experience of the world has shown that populations ranging from three to five million are optimal for governance and efficiency, that is as good a measure as any to begin assessing bodies for their secessionist potential and their chances of success as independent states.

The only hope for reenergizing American politics is to create truly sovereign states through peaceful, popular, powerful secession.

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from Sonnets From the Dark Lady

by Jennifer Reeser

10.

“Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy Will . . .”
—William Shakespeare, Sonnet 136

Existent in the *will* of comprehension,
 Upheld by both the foresight and the hind,
 Are bounds and bonds about which future tension,
 Admitting love with distance, holds in mind.
 If I *will* hold you, I will hold you, seeing
 Or blind, or—best—peripherally skilled:
 That most appropriate outlook of being
 For one en-bonded to the richer-willed.
 Come nearer, clearer conscience loses sight.
 Remain away, and vision cannot see,
 Yet to see and hold too closely will invite
 A will of window-wishing not to be.
 Withhold, bequeath, cry *bankrupt*, owe or bill;
 You hold that ruby title which is will.



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Secession and American Republicanism

by Donald W. Livingston

WHEN THE AMERICAN COLONISTS SECEDED from Britain in 1776, Europe was shared out among great monarchies. Only Switzerland was republican, but Americans were determined to enjoy a republican style of government in the New World. The republican tradition went back over 2,000 years to the ancient Greeks and consistently taught that a republic must satisfy three conditions. Self-government: The citizens should make the legislation they live under. The rule of law: Legislation should be made in accord with a more fundamental law known to all citizens through custom or natural reason. Human scale: The republic should be small.

Most of us would accept the first two conditions but not the third. We talk of the French and American republics, and of the People's Republic of China, as if size no longer mattered. But for over two millennia the most brilliant ancient, medieval, and modern republics rarely had populations over 200,000, and most were considerably below that. Ancient Athens, one of the largest Greek republics,

had around 160,000. When a larger sphere of politics was needed—e.g., for defense or ease of trade—the remedy was a federation of small republics, as with the Swiss federation.

The vast territory Americans acquired after independence seemed to doom them to a centralized monarchy, whether they wanted it or not. This was not perceived as a problem at first because, with the exception of regulating trade, the crown had left the colonists pretty much to themselves. David Hume could write in Scotland in the 1730's that "the Charter governments in America are almost entirely independent of England." Although the territory was vast, the population was sparse. Being made up of small, rural Protestant communities, Americans enjoyed a republican style of politics on a scale smaller than that of the ancient Greeks. The largest city was Philadelphia, with around 30,000 people. New York did not reach the size of ancient Athens until around 1830.

As the territory filled with population, Americans confronted the problem of republicanism and size. The so-