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THESIS

**IMAGINING THE IMPOSSIBLE:
INSURGENCY IN THE U.S.A.**

by

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March 2011

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IMAGINING THE IMPOSSIBLE: INSURGENCY IN THE U.S.A.

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requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

As the United States focuses on external threats will internal threats sufficient to enable the overthrow of the United States government materialize? Most contemporary literature prescribes a myriad of solutions to counter a foreign nation's insurgency after it has already manifested. A prudent way to counter an insurgency is to identify it and prevent it before it starts. To know when an insurgency is developing is difficult, but is an important measure for any government to pursue to ensure its survival. Historically, the United States has not been immune to insurgent impulses. Although not necessary for insurgent mobilization, a Perfect Storm of converging existing conditions (globalization, demographic shifts, anti-Christian attitudes, and increasing domestic militarization) may threaten America's white non-Hispanic Christian population and potentially foment an insurgency. Current trends suggest this may already be happening in an area within the United States. This research seeks to determine the mechanisms by which an insurgency could manifest itself in the United States and assist the U.S. government in considering how to preemptively counter a domestic insurgency.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MNC	Multinational Corporation
U.S.	United States
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
ROL	Republic of Lakota
AIM	American Indian Movement
GSP	Gross State Product
MS-13	Mara Salvatrucha
SAFE	Secure America Forever
NORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
CRS	Congressional Research Service
DoD	Department of Defense
TSA	Transportation Security Administration

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To my wife, Cheri, for all the love and patience she has given me throughout our years together.

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I. INTRODUCTION: INSURGENCY IN THE UNITED STATES?

A. BACKGROUND

As the United States focuses on external threats posed by Islamic terrorists, the resulting war in Afghanistan, and current global economic instability, could internal threats materialize sufficient to enable the overthrow of the United States government? Most of today's literature focuses on counterinsurgency strategy and techniques. Naturally, the counterinsurgency focus is a direct result of the United States' military involvement in both Iraq and Afghanistan. But most, if not all, of the literature explains or offers a blueprint for how to counter an insurgency after an insurgency has developed and pertains to the foreign nation in which the insurgency is underway. An alternative way to counter an insurgency is to identify it and stop it before it starts. To know when an insurgency is developing is difficult, but is important for any government to know how to do to ensure its survival.

Throughout its history and development, the United States has not been immune from insurgencies and it would be unwise to think it will be immune in the future. There are numerous incidents of political instability and violence that have occurred in the relatively short history of the United States. Most notable is the birth of the nation by insurgency against Imperial England. Then, there is the Civil War in which the Northern states defeated the Southern states' secessionist movement and the resultant Southern insurgent activity during the post-Civil War Reconstruction period against the Northern occupation army. Prior to the attacks on September 11, 2001, domestic terrorism was synonymous with the Oklahoma City bombing; during the 1990s the country witnessed the rapid rise of anti-government movements/militias. One could theorize that, for Americans, violence is an acceptable behavior used to right injustices, perceived or real, to overthrow the government and establish a government more responsive to the will of the people.

Contemporary open source literature draws attention to numerous conditions that create instability: the effects of globalization with the loss of America's jobs to

developing countries; shifting demographics and diminution of the white majority; culture wars over issues of abortion, homosexuality, and religion; increased political polarization and perceptions that the federal government is pushing an agenda contrary to that of most Americans—with universal healthcare and immigration being at the forefront of disagreement. For instance, does the formation of a grass roots movement (e.g., the Tea Party) indicate a latent and incipient domestic insurgency?

Given the historical precedence for rebellion in the U.S., what goals and objectives would insurgents seek to achieve? Would they attempt the complete overthrow and re-establishment of a federal system? Or would they attempt to establish a sovereign autonomous territory inside the contiguous 48 states?

B. PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE

The purpose of this thesis is to determine the mobilization factors leaders of an insurgency could use to at least some effect in the United States. Specifically, this thesis will attempt to identify: which segment of the population is most vulnerable to mobilization by anti-government movements/militias; what goals mobilizers would say they are seeking to achieve; and what potential trouble this could cause for the United States Government. Essentially, this thesis will seek to offer an enhanced understanding of how someone could be recruited to support secession from the United States.

C. METHODOLOGY

The thesis relies on qualitative analysis and narrative description, and draws on historical precedents and contemporary issues to gain an emic understanding of potential domestic insurgents' motivations. "Emic" is defined by Merriam-Webster as: of, relating to, or involving analysis of cultural phenomena from the perspective of one who participates in the culture being studied.¹ This approach was chosen for several reasons: Trained as a U.S. Army Special Forces Officer to develop foreign insurgencies in support of the U.S. government's National Security Strategy, I have some idea of how to gauge

¹ Emic, Merriam-Webster online dictionary, (accessed November 21, 2010)

the political discord and sensitivities that could be used to foment insurgent movements. Critical to this task is the ability to objectively assess the potential insurgency's mobilization capabilities, and limitations, and determine the probability of success. But, in addition, having been raised as an American, I can empathize with the legitimate concerns and grievances of fellow Americans and am not challenged by unfamiliar cultural norms or language. In other words, I am able to "walk in the other person's shoes" to gain contextual perspective.

This thesis will use Seth Jones' definition of insurgency, according to which an insurgency is a political-military campaign undertaken by non-state actors who seek to overthrow a government or secede from a country through the use of unconventional—and sometimes conventional—military strategies and tactics.² My analysis will be limited to domestic anti-government movements/militias in the permissive U.S. political environment that overtly advertise their anti-government ideology, and receive no external support.

The thesis will be divided into five chapters: Chapter II will briefly discuss the historical precedents for U.S. insurgent movements, both before and after the establishment of the United States federal government. The historical instances to be examined are: the U.S. Revolutionary War, the U.S. Civil War, the U.S. Civil War Reconstruction period, and the 1990s U.S. militia movement. For each case, I will discuss why the insurgency developed, which demographic it attracted, and then examine the results of the insurgency. In Chapter III, I will examine contemporary and potential future conditions that might help leaders of an insurgency recruit. Specifically, I will consider the potential mobilizing effects of globalization, demography, the culture wars, and U.S. government policies. Chapter IV presents a course of insurgent action just plausible enough that people might try it: Secession of the Pacific Northwest. Chapter V will briefly summarize my findings and examine the challenges they present.

² Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's insurgency: State Failure and Jihad," *International Security*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Spring 2008): 7–40. In each of the cases described in Chapter II, the term insurgency is used and fits with Jones' definition. The term "rebellion" will not be used, as it pertains to open armed defiance of a power and rebels do not necessarily aim to overthrow or secede from the existing government.

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II. HISTORICAL PRECEDENTS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter will briefly outline historical precedents for U.S. insurgent movements, both before and after the establishment of the United States federal government. U.S. insurgent movements are not a new phenomenon, having occurred with varying levels of intensity and outcomes over the course of U.S. history. In each instance, a group of Americans felt threatened by real or perceived grievances and members felt justified in countering their persecution with violent opposition. Thus, throughout our history, at least some Americans have accepted the use of insurgency against a central power when that power counters their sense of identity. Among the best known instances are: the Revolutionary War with the American, colonists rejecting British attempts to reassert authority; the American Civil War when eleven southern states fought Union forces for the right of secession. Immediately following the Civil War came the southern Reconstruction period, resulting in widespread insurgent violence as Southerners countered the Union's occupation goals. More recently, the 1990s militia movement saw radical anti-government actors coalesce and use the farm crisis to build their insurgent organizations and perpetrate violence against the United States federal government.

In what follows, I represent versions of American history readily available and often cited by those sympathetic to the view that the United States today is headed in the wrong direction. This view of history could be used as a mobilizer, to encourage those who consider themselves responsible Americans that they have little choice but to respond as their forbears did when they felt their identity was under attack.

B. REVOLUTIONARY WAR

1. Cause

The advent of the American Revolution and subsequent war was essential to the creation of the United States of America. Gravely threatened, thirteen separate colonial

entities coalesced into an armed rebellion against a major superpower of that era. Even if they did not do so perfectly, they did so effectively. Compounding the threat was the British government's repressive actions to reestablish its authority.

It is commonly believed that taxes imposed by the British parliament on the American colonies were the impetus that sparked the American rebellion. This is partly true but, in fact, the American colonists had inherited a healthy distrust of British rule from their ancestral settlers. Why would any person desire to traverse 3,000 miles of unforgiving ocean to an uncertain existence in an undeveloped land? As Edmund S. Morgan, in his piece entitled, "The American Revolution Considered as an Intellectual Movement," explains, "It is no coincidence that England's American colonies were settled before 1640 or after 1660. Emigration offered a substitute for revolution to thousands of men and women who were discontented with the Church of England and with the government that fostered it."³ Rather than be persecuted in Britain for their beliefs, early colonial settlers decided to leave and start anew.

Geographical separation and the extreme hardship of sea travel infused them with confidence that an overbearing England would have minimal interference in their affairs. At the same time, the experience gained from trying to survive in the American environment instilled many with a sense of independence, confidence and no need for overbearing government. Many Colonial settlers were also poor, as extreme hardship kept away members of the wealthy, comfortable ruling class. All these factors resulted in what Claude Van Tyne, writing about the development of the American Spirit, would probably label "Identity" if he were using today's vernacular.⁴

Inherent to this identity was Puritan theology, which directly influenced colonial political development and colonial attitudes toward the purpose of government.

They taught that society originates in a contract between God on the one hand and the people on the other, whereby if the people agreed by His

³ Edmund S. Morgan, "The American Revolution Considered as an Intellectual Movement," *Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution*, Esmond Wright, ed. (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 174.

⁴ Claude H. Van Tyne, *The Founding of the American Republic: Volume I The Causes of the War of Independence* (Cambridge: MA: The Riverside Press, 1922), 1-21.

commands (though again, for true, inner obedience was beyond them) He would assure them outward prosperity. Having made such an agreement, the people, in another compact, voluntarily subjected themselves to a king or to other civil rulers. This was the origin of government; and the purpose of government was to restrain the sinfulness of man, to prevent and punish offenses against God. As long as a king enforced God's commands, embodying them in human laws, the people owed him obedience and assistance. If, however, moved by his own depravity he violated God's commands or failed to enforce them, he broke the compact on which his political authority rested, and it was the peoples duty to remove him lest God visit the whole community with death and destruction.⁵

Historians give credit to influential English Republican writers and John Locke's political doctrine. Nevertheless, Puritan theological beliefs were deeply engrained in the colonists so that "Every generation learned of its duty to pull down bad rulers and uphold the good ones."⁶

After 150 years of relatively light rule, reassertion of British control over the colonies increased the colonist's distrust. Taken in context, and from the colonists' viewpoint, the British threat seemed to materialize rapidly even though it was implemented over a couple of decades. Ironically, the colonists enjoyed being British and the benefits being British granted—honor, prestige, and protection. However, the conditions of their power relationship and "The ever-recurring clash between the provincial governor, symbol of the monarchial principle in government, and the assembly, symbol of the democratic principle, worked increasingly to awake the colonial sense of a divergence between American interests and those of England."⁷ Just prior to the start of hostilities, the British Parliament passed an Act to fund their governors in the colonies. Instead of the colonies paying for the Provincial Governors, Parliament began paying their appointees directly, thus exacerbating the colonists' sense of loss of control and ability to maintain their increasingly distinct, American identity.⁸

⁵Morgan, "American Revolution as Intellectual Movement," 175.

⁶Morgan, "American Revolution as Intellectual Movement," 176.

⁷ Van Tyne. *The Founding of the American Republic*, 46.

⁸ Van Tyne. *The Founding of the American Republic*, 42

Of course, there were other factors that contributed to the outbreak of American resistance. Repressive British political, economic, and military actions compounded and helped cement the colonists' belief that the American identity was no longer congruent with being British. Despite differing interpretations of the underlying causes of the American Revolution, historians seem to agree that America and Britain had become two distinct societies.⁹ It is acknowledged that the decision to resist was not instantaneous, nor taken without considerable deliberation. Nor did everyone support rebellion. The decision to sever ties came over a year after hostilities had commenced in Massachusetts on April 19, 1775. The July 4, 1776, Declaration of Independence, published by the second Continental Congress, provides evidence of an American identity:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.¹⁰

2. Conduct

The military conduct of the Colonial American forces during the course of the war in 1775–1783 was complex and varied. Numerous factors accounted for the outcomes of combat. The size and the scope of the conflict involved numerous

⁹ Esmond Wright, *Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1966), 50.

¹⁰ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 2008), 2.

geographical locations, different mixtures of forces, and levels of leadership. Campaigns conducted by the Continental Army for the most part depended on the capabilities, limitations, and disposition of continental, militia, and enemy forces. For the most part, Colonial forces—both regular and militia—could not defeat a well led, well trained, and logistically well supported British army. The strategic goal crafted by General George Washington was to not lose while at the same time exacting a heavy toll on British forces.

Although superior, British forces found themselves in a war they could not win. Unable to either destroy the resilient Continental Army or hold territory they conquered, they found the war difficult to maintain politically or economically.

In contrast, fighting for their identity, the Americans had more to lose. With the defeat of British forces under General Burgoyne at the battle of Saratoga, the French and Spanish governments committed support to the Americans, thus the British found themselves engaged in an increasingly international struggle. Unwilling to relent, the British launched their 1780 southern campaign. The British were thwarted thanks to a symbiotic relationship between Nathanael Greene's Continental Army and the southern guerrilla forces of Francis Marion and Thomas Sumter. British forces were unable to disperse sufficiently to cover the immense southern territory and deal with Greene's forces. Likewise, loyalist strongholds and supply trains were under constant attack by guerrillas. This dual squeeze exacted a heavy price on the British forces and led directly to the final outcome of the war.¹¹ The British met defeat at the battle of Yorktown in 1781.

3. Outcome

Independence was formally complete with the 1783 Treaty of Paris. The United States of America was formally established via the Articles of Confederation. The Articles codified the arrangement between sovereign states and a weak central government.

¹¹ Anthony James Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, (Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky Press 2000), 48–49.

Key lessons to be drawn from the entirety of this conflict were that as Americans developed a distinct identity they chafed at British control. Second, some Americans were willing to use violence to assert autonomy they believed they deserved thanks to their distance from Britain both physically and politically. The military means used to resist the British threat were adaptive and resilient. Indeed, guerrilla tactics facilitated the defeat of a superpower's army. Finally, we see the codification of the American psyche in the U.S. Constitution—with distrust of centralized government a key feature.

C. U.S. CIVIL WAR

1. Cause

Beginning in late 1860, a second instance of insurgency occurred in America when the Southern Confederacy seceded from the United States following the election of Abraham Lincoln as president. The underlying cause was the threat to Southern states' identity and their fear they would lose the power they needed to maintain their identity. Slavery was at the heart of the Southern identity issue.

At the turn of the 19th century, up until the Civil War, the United States was characterized by explosive growth in geography, population, and economic prosperity.¹²

Slave-grown crops sustained part of the era's economic growth and much of its territorial expansion. The cascade of cotton from the American South dominated the world market, paced the industrial revolution in England and New England, and fastened the shackles of slavery more securely than ever on Afro-Americans.¹³

From Southerners' viewpoint "slavery became essential to the region's economy and culture."¹⁴ Around the same period, a Second Great Awakening occurred as New Englanders and others sought to eradicate the evils of slavery. "All the people were equal in God's sight; the souls of black folks were as valuable as those of whites; for one of

¹² James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 6.

¹³ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 6.

¹⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 8.

God's children to enslave another was a violation of the Higher Law, even if it was sanctioned by the Constitution."¹⁵ As these beliefs permeated politics, the Abolitionist movement was born.

Of the nine million inhabitants of the south, African slaves accounted for four million. African slaves were regarded as members of an inferior race. Although the percentage of slave owners was one-third of the population, the dominating belief was that any change in the African slave's status would affect the framework of the South as "emancipation would produce economic ruin, social chaos and racial war."¹⁶

Phil Davies, author of the *American Civil War*, captures these differing viewpoints: "Slavery made possible a distinct, southern way of life; it was central to a social system that embodied an interpretation of the legacy of the Founding Fathers, an interpretation not shared by the North"¹⁷ Northern beliefs were based on a different outlook. Industrialists and Northern factory owners required protection from overseas competition and the federal government facilitated this. Additionally, the North harbored resentments about the economic and political power that slavery subsidized.¹⁸

Politically, "The ideology of republicanism had also become more divisive than unifying, for most northerners interpreted it in a free-labor mode while most southerners insisted that one of the most cherished tenets of republican liberty was the right to property—including property in slaves."¹⁹ The Agrarian South embraced the belief that states rights should dominate over federal authority to guarantee freedoms.

As the United States expanded its territory and grew in member states, compromises were made within Congress to maintain a delicate balance of power between slave and free states. Eventually, anti-slavery abolitionists and their political allies grew increasingly powerful in the Northern states. The election of 1860 proved to be the catalyst that disrupted the power balance. Running on a platform that opposed the

¹⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 8.

¹⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 8.

¹⁷ Phil Davies, *American Civil War*, (Harpندن, GBR: Pocket essentials, 2001), 7.

¹⁸ Davies, *American Civil War*, 8–15.

¹⁹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 40.

expansion of slavery, Abraham Lincoln won the Presidency and anti-slavery Republicans won majorities in both the Senate and House of Representatives. Southern states, fearing their identity was at risk, asserted what they believed was their right to voluntarily leave the Union. South Carolina was the first state to secede in December of 1860, followed rapidly by six other southern states. In total, eleven southern states seceded from the United States of America. Both the outgoing and incoming presidents agreed “State sovereignty was not superior to national sovereignty.”²⁰ War ensued.

2. Conduct

When it comes to comparing war waging capabilities, the Union had distinct numerical and industrial advantages over the Confederacy. The Union did not react immediately to the Confederate secession; in fact, it was the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter that opened hostilities.

Throughout the war, strategic indecisiveness plagued the Southern Confederacy.

For a belligerent with the limited manpower and resources of the Confederacy, General Lee’s dedication to an offensive strategy was at best questionable. To be able to come to no decision between an offensive strategy such as Lee’s and a strategy of defense such as Jefferson Davis favored and to waver between the two was still worse.²¹

Unable to capitalize on Confederate guerrilla strengths, given the south’s “great spaces, rural society and rudimentary transportation system”²² the Confederates fought the Union forces in a manner not conducive to victory. “Lee was too Napoleonic. Like Napoleon himself, with passion for the strategy of annihilation and the climactic, decisive battle as its expression, he destroyed in the end not the enemy armies, but his own.”²³

Guerrilla warfare tactics had profound effects on the Union Army: “guerrilla warfare and the problems of administering sizable regions with populations of doubtful

²⁰ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 246.

²¹ Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1977), 118.

²² Joes, *America and Guerrilla Warfare*, 51.

²³ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 127.

loyalty tied down large numbers of union troops in the border states.”²⁴ Confederate cavalry, using guerrilla tactics, demonstrated the South’s advantages in fighting defensively on known terrain. In Tennessee, “With 2500 men Forest and Morgan had immobilized an invading army of forty thousand.”²⁵ Yet, thanks to other factors, such as the Confederacy’s inability to wage a strategic campaign to defeat the Union, the Confederacy surrendered on April 9, 1865.

3. Outcome

Having occupied the secessionist southern states, the North needed to begin the process of reintegrating them into the Union. Emancipated Black slaves were now to be considered Whites’ equals.

Key lessons to be drawn from the Civil War period: Southerners felt their identity threatened by political shifts in the U.S. government. Southern Americans thus accepted the need to use violence and insurgency to preserve their power in order to maintain their identity and way of life. However, the military means used to counter the Union’s invasion of the Confederacy were not conducive to the Confederacy’s strengths. Guerrilla tactics facilitated significant operational effects, but were not used in a strategic manner. Worth remembering again, is that although the Civil War is called a civil war, it fits Seth Jones’ definition of an insurgency (referred to previously), and thus offers a precedent and lessons learned to anti-government insurgents today and in the future.

D. POST-CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD

1. Cause

Following the Confederacy’s defeat, the United States went through a period known as Reconstruction. From 1865–1877, the eleven southern states had to contend with occupying Union forces and emancipated ex-slaves being placed on an equal footing with former slave owners. By the early 1870s, an insurgency developed into violent

²⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 307.

²⁵ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 514.

opposition to the 1867 Reconstruction Acts. Continuing their fight to maintain their identity, southerners resisted the Union's consolidation of its victory.

Initially, President Andrew Johnson instituted a moderate plan for southern reconstruction. The responsibility for reintegration into the Union was given to the very state governments that had rebelled. "Thus, Johnson's plan was a speedy way for white southerners to resume governing themselves at the local and state levels as well as returning their representatives to congress"²⁶ The Union occupation force acted as a constabulary. Not surprisingly, Southerners supported the passage of "Black Codes." These measures aimed to restrict and regulate former slaves, known as Freemen. Minus slavery, Southerners were reasserting white political and social dominance.²⁷

Dissatisfied with President Johnson's Reconstruction methodology, Congress implemented the "Radical" Reconstruction Acts in 1867. These Acts firmly placed the military in charge of the former Rebel States and enforced equality of the Freemen. Freemen were elected to federal and state political positions, taking active roles in rewriting state constitutions in accordance with the 1867 Reconstruction Acts. Violence ensued as insurgent organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, sought to influence local and state elections with an aim of reinstating southern leaders.

2. Conduct

Resisting forced social integration, southerners conducted widespread insurgent operations. They used murder to intimidate, violence to coerce, and voter fraud to get leaders, known as redeemers, into local and state office. Avoiding direct confrontation with Union troops, guerrilla-like elements used terrorist tactics to achieve their desired outcome—an end to the dream of a bi-racial society of equals. Targets of the violence were primarily Negroes, then white sympathizers, and Republican supporters.

²⁶ Joseph G. Dawson III, "The US Army in the South: Reconstruction as Nation Building," *Armed Diplomacy: Two Centuries of American Campaigning*, ed. Kevin W. Farrell. (Fort Leavenworth, KN: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 42.

²⁷ Dawson, *The US Army in the South*, 42.

The Southern insurgency reaped political rewards thanks to the efforts of white paramilitary organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, which wore down the will of the North. As Allen Trelease writes, “The Northern Public was tired of crusading. It was tired of using troops to buttress governments which could not stand alone. By 1874, it wanted peace and a return to normalcy more than it wanted to preserve equal rights for Negroes or majority rule in the South.”²⁸

3. Outcome

Reconstruction officially ended with the Compromise of 1877 and the withdrawal of remaining Union troops by April 24, 1877. Although slavery was abolished, the status quo of southern white dominance remained for another 100 years.

Key lessons to be drawn from this period of conflict: Southern identity was threatened by occupation policies of the U.S. government. Southern Americans again accepted the need to use violence to preserve power in order to maintain their identity. The terrorism used to counter the Union occupation of the former Confederate states fit with the insurgents’ strengths. Guerrilla tactics facilitated significant operational effects, resulting in political and ultimately strategic success.

E. INTERMEDIATE PERIOD

There is a long chronological gap between Reconstruction and the rise of Militia movements in the 1990s. One explanation for why there were so few domestic insurgent movements may be that there were plenty of “external” enemies during this period, from American Indians, to Germans in World War I, to Germans and Japanese in World War II, to communists during the Cold War fights in Korea and Vietnam. During the 1950s and 1960s, the domestic threat from communists and the Civil Rights movement gave rise to the John Birch Society and Posse Comitatus, and reinvigorated the Ku Klux Klan. The 1960s civil unrest and backlash against U.S. military involvement in Vietnam in turn inspired left wing insurgent groups like the Weatherman Underground, which sought the overthrow of the U.S. government. However, groups like the Weatherman Underground

²⁸ Alan W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1971), 420.

were so small and so out of the mainstream that the next movement worth considering due to its potential for wider appeal is the 1990s militia movement.

F. 1990s MILITIA MOVEMENT

1. Cause

On April 19, 1995, America was jolted by a truck bomb targeting the Federal building in Oklahoma City. The attack was a counter-attack, a warning to the federal government that it had over stepped its bounds, militarized too many of its dealings with citizens (e.g., the Branch Davidians), and that some individuals would not accept this.²⁹ The rise of the militia movement came about due to a combination of factors: Globalization resulting in an economic shift from family-run to corporate farming, militarization of the U.S. by the government, and repressive actions.³⁰ Some Americans felt their identity was under assault, and decided to no longer take it.

The current period of economic globalization began with the close of the Second World War and the establishment of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organization and the U.S. dollar as the international reserve currency. Politicians have made numerous arguments about the benefits of globalization, but often have failed to mention how much pain this would cause for some. The 1980s U.S. farm crisis signaled such pain.

Encouraged by U.S. government officials and lending incentives in the 1970s, a large number of farmers expanded operations by increasing their financed debt. When economic problems surfaced in the 1980s, farmers in particular found themselves in trouble. As Joel Dyer explains, many “had become victims of powerful forces far beyond their control. A destructive combination of high interest rates dictated by the Federal Reserve, low prices for farm products due to the multinational food monopolies’ control

²⁹ Gore Vidal, *Perpetual War for Perpetual Peace: How We Got to Be So Hated* (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nations Books 2002), 108–109. Prior to his execution, Timothy McVeigh sent Gore Vidal a letter detailing the reasons for his actions.

³⁰ Stuart A. Wright, *Patriots, Politics and the Oklahoma City Bombing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). A work studying the causal mechanisms in what Wright describes as Threat/Opportunity Spiral that gave rise to the Patriot Militia movement.

of the market, and new, smaller government subsidies that caught farmers by surprise in 1985 had sealed their fate.”³¹ In his book, Dyer points to experts who were sounding alarms, such as Dr. Glenn Wallace who testified before a congressional subcommittee about the state of rural America in 1989:

He warned those in power that the economic policies and food monopolies that were bringing ruin to the nation’s agricultural areas were also creating feelings of anger and distrust among the rural population, feelings directed towards the federal government. At the time, Wallace could only have guessed what form this anger would eventually assume, but he predicted accurately that it would be a force in America for decades to come.³²

Dyer points out that this was a long-term process at the end of which an individual might either seek help or become violent. If an individual chose violence, it would be either directed inwards or outwards. With an outward focus, an individual threatens his legitimate or perceived enemy. According to Dyer, “the people in this group are the most susceptible to the violent antigovernment message.”³³ Indeed, seizing the opportunity to grow their ranks, existing anti-government movements targeted rural Americans during the 1980s. Organizations such as the John Birch society, Posse Comitatus, Sovereign Citizen, and Christian Identity made their presence noticed at farm foreclosures and rallies. Eager to promote their organizations’ explanation for the farmer’s misfortune, these anti-government groups tailored their message to downplay racial hatred. Instead, they focused on their common enemy: the federal government and impending government repression.

Coincidentally, federal and state law enforcement agencies were increasing their efforts to stamp out drugs during this same period. Thus, there was greater militarization of law enforcement. At the same time, the military industrial corporations were scrambling to diversify with the end of the Cold War.³⁴ Framed in wartime rhetoric and fueled by federal money, both federal and state agencies developed paramilitary

³¹ Joel Dyer, *Harvest of Rage: Why Oklahoma City is Only the Beginning*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press 1998), 2.

³² Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*, 4.

³³ Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*, 4–5.

³⁴ Wright, *Patriots, politics and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, 97–113.

capabilities. Federal actions at Ruby Ridge, Idaho and Waco, Texas fulfilled and reinforced the prophetic warnings that had been issued by anti-government groups. In response, militias grew at a rapid rate. Distrust and fear were further cemented with the September 1994 passage of the assault weapons ban.

2. Conduct

Existing anti-government movements such as the Posse Comitatus capitalized on vulnerable rural farmers to grow their organizations. Given the economic nature of the farm crisis, anti-government conspiratorial rhetoric offered answers to frustrated farmers. When the federal government conducted militaristic and deadly operations at Ruby Ridge and Waco this lent the rhetoric credibility. Anti-government actions can best be characterized as uncoordinated and haphazard. Activity ranged from coercion, intimidation, and paper terrorism to pipe bombings, bank robbery, and the Oklahoma City bombing. With the exception of the Oklahoma City bombing, these actions were predominantly tactical guerrilla acts without operational or strategic effect. The 1990s anti-government movements lacked broad appeal as they were associated with racist ideology and extreme religious beliefs. With the public's condemnation of the Oklahoma City bombing, the improving economy, and failure of the anti-government movement's millennial predictions to materialize, the budding insurgency declined. Additionally, the federal government was responsive—in part thanks to the outcry over its aggressive actions at both Ruby Ridge and Waco. For instance, corrective procedures put in place after Waco resulted in a peaceful ending to the 1996 Freemen standoff in Jordan, Montana.

3. Outcome

After the Oklahoma City bombing, anti-government forces experienced a significant decline in membership and failed to achieve significant political gains.

Among key lessons to be drawn from this example: the threatened identity group accepted and used violence, but was too small and disunited to effectively wage an insurgent campaign against the federal government. Government repression had a significant mobilizing effect for the anti-government forces, but extremist rhetoric

permeated the movement and was not congruent with most Americans' point of view, therefore never attracted sufficiently broad support. Opportunistic leaders did not have the capacity to keep the movement alive. Uncoordinated and haphazard guerrilla tactics, lack of strategic political vision, and a backlash on the part of the public all contributed to the eventual decline of these particular anti-government movements.

G. OBSERVATIONS

Looking into America's past, we can see that insurgencies have occurred. Support for these insurgencies varied, as did their results. Nonetheless, a common attribute of each insurgent period was the threat felt by an American group that believed it would lose its identity if it lost power. The threatened groups thus accepted and perpetrated violence in order to retain power. Actions undertaken by the government—perceived or real—exacerbated the insurgent response. Government action itself, of course, was read as a threat by these groups, thus forcing them into an uncompromising position, from which insurgency was the result.

Insurgent responses ranged from low level terrorism to conventional conflict, but in all instances guerrilla operations played a role. The examination of the causes in each case should help highlight the challenges the U.S. federal government could face when dealing with future insurgencies as well.

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III. PRECIPITATING CONDITIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

What contemporary and future conditions might precipitate the mobilization and recruitment of potential insurgents in the United States? This chapter examines the potential uses that can be made of globalization, demographic changes, the culture wars, and U.S. government policies (specifically militarization). Each subsection below seeks to identify who might feel disaffected by these issues, thus making them vulnerable to recruitment. To varying degrees, the trends I identify have been in progress for some time—in fact, for decades. Although not the only sources of potential mobilization available, the threats generated by each of these four conditions could be made to appear to converge at some point in the future. They could be used to further fan frustrations and tensions with the federal government already felt by some Americans.

Identifying a specific identity group that would be most susceptible to recruitment is a challenging task. Second- and third-order effects of long-term actions are always difficult to predict, and are subject to change thanks to unforeseen circumstances. Even so, we would be short-sighted to assume that there will not be an anti-government movement that develops the cognitive ability to seize on these potential trends, that then tries to manipulate or capitalize on these precipitating conditions to further its goals.

From the perspective of at least some white non-Hispanic Christian males already, current and projected trends appear to be squeezing them into an uncompromising position. Worse, when it comes to perceived threats, the federal government can be made to seem complicit, if not outright guilty in helping to create threatening conditions. This includes the federal government's dismissal of rightwing extremists as reflecting a fringe element, and not as the protectors of American identity which is how some anti-government activists surely see themselves.

The aim of this chapter is to offer an emic view of how four catalysts for frustration, disenfranchisement, alienation, and anger could be used to convince a sub-set of Americans that the perfect storm is heading our way.

B. PRECIPITATING CONDITIONS

1. Globalization

In the forefront of many Americans' minds is the status of the U.S. economy. The economic recession and joblessness are easy to blame for the difficulties and stress many are experiencing. The recession's pervasiveness, compounded by perceived job losses due to globalization, has the potential to exacerbate existing divisions in society.³⁵ A large fundamental shift in America's economic paradigm has the potential to destabilize affected identity groups. The question remains as to what exact effects globalization is having on the U.S. population. "Globalization does not benefit all people"³⁶ and there will be winners and losers. It is the size and mobilization potential of the losing demographic that the federal government needs to be concerned with.

Globalization's preliminary shock waves were felt during the farm crisis of the 1980s as the U.S. farming paradigm shifted from family-owned to corporate. In *Harvest of Rage*, Joel Dyer documents the susceptibility of the farming community to non-state actor, anti-government rhetoric. Extremist right-wing organizations capitalized on the stressed farming communities to radicalize and build their organizations.³⁷ Stuart Wright's, *Patriots, Politics and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, attributes this effort by the anti-government movements to a threat/opportunity spiral, with one consequence being the Oklahoma City Bombing. The father of Terry Nichols, Timothy McVeigh's accomplice, was affected by the farming paradigm shift.

In 2006, an article in the *Trumpet*, the Philadelphia Church of God publication, warned of the effects globalization were having on U.S. manufacturing. The article highlighted that U.S. manufacturing jobs, as a percentage of the U.S. economy, decreased by 30 percent from 1988 to 2004. It left its readers with a warning:

³⁵ Anna Simons, "Anthropology of Conflict," (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, November 3).

³⁶ Marcus Berger, "The Rise, Transformation and Future of the Nation-State System," (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, September 7, 2010).

³⁷ Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*, 75.

Admirers of globalization contend that freer access to foreign markets and cheap labor increase corporate profits and thereby benefit the U.S. economy. While this argument may superficially sound compelling, it ignores the dangerous long-term effects of manufacturing losses. In reality, outsourcing makes Americans poorer over time, because America's wealth and technology slowly migrate to other nations.³⁸

Similarly, a September 2006 U.S. Government Accountability Office report on offshoring points out that U.S. information technology jobs are moving overseas to developing countries, mostly to Asia, to capitalize on low wage costs.³⁹ A July 31, 2008 CRS Report to Congress recognized that globalization will create winners and losers and attributes worker insecurity to job losses, outsourcing, and low wage prospects.⁴⁰ Both blue-collar jobs and white-collar jobs have been flowing from the U.S. Even more damning is the perception that the federal government is complicit and has helped bring about this hardship.

With globalization, U.S. workers are losing while multinational corporations are winning:

Despite employing less than one percent of the global work force, 200 of the largest multinational corporations (MNCs) have sales equivalent to almost 30% of the world's GDP. Given their sheer economic might it is unsurprising that, in a period where economic growth is considered a panacea for development success, governments increasingly adopt pro-market policies and facilitate commercial activity. The result is a firmly established mutual-interdependence between corporations and governments, a phenomenon which is most evident in the United States which increasingly undermines a truly democratic representation of public interest.⁴¹

Multinational corporations exert a tremendous influence over U.S. politics thanks to lobbyists who promote legislation that benefits their ability to obtain profits. Although MNC lobbying is legal according to U.S. federal law, corporate loyalty is to their

³⁸ Robert Morley, "The Death of American Manufacturing," *Trumpet*, February 2006.

³⁹United States Government Accountability Office, *OFFSHORING: U.S. Semiconductor and Software Industries Increasingly Produce in China and India*, September 2006.

⁴⁰ Raymond J. Ahearn, *CRS Report for Congress: Globalization, Worker Insecurity, and Policy Approaches*, July 31, 2008.

⁴¹ Rajesh Makwana, *Multinational Corporations (MNCs): Beyond The Profit Motive*, October 3, 2006.

shareholders and overshadows loyalty to any nation. U.S. government support of economic globalization can be portrayed as stripping the nation of industrial and technical jobs.

Compounding the stress of job loss through globalization is the 2008 credit crisis and resulting recession. Unemployment is hovering just below 10 percent and future forecasts for economic growth are discouraging. People are finding themselves out of work longer than during any previously recorded period. With chronic unemployment, some are warning of a lost decade or jobless era that will linger for several years and have profound negative effects on society.⁴² The demographic with the highest numbered unemployed is white males, 16 and over.⁴³

The federal government's attempts to jumpstart the economy through stimulus spending and reduced interest rates are not having the desired effects. The argument here is that government support for globalization, along with the government's ineffective economic policy, could well make white males especially susceptible to non-state anti-government rhetoric and mobilization on the grounds that their loss is someone else's gain.

2. Demography

Current demographic projections indicate a fundamental ethnic power shift in the United States by 2050.⁴⁴ The most significant finding is that "The non Hispanic white population will increase more slowly than other racial and ethnic groups; whites will become a minority (47%) by 2050."⁴⁵ There are several factors that are affecting this demographic shift in the United States. Ethnic group birth rates and immigration, both legal and illegal, are high. "About 83 percent of the U.S. population growth since 2000 was minority, part of a trend that will see minorities become the majority by midcentury.

⁴² Don Peck, "How a New Jobless Era Will Transform America," *Atlantic Magazine*, March 2010.

⁴³ Bureau of Labor and Statistics, *Household Data Annual Averages: Employment status of the civilian non institutional population by sex, age and race*, 2010.

⁴⁴ 2010 U.S. census data was not available at time of this report. As with all projections there is a level of error but based on past norms and trends the potential exists for a dramatic shift of power.

⁴⁵ Jeffery S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "U.S. Population Projections: 2005–2050," *Pew Research Center*, February 11, 2008.

Across all large metro areas, the majority of the child population is now nonwhite.”⁴⁶ The 2006 CRS report for Congress identifies these factors, but fails to see how the demographic shift could threaten a shift in power. Instead, the report identifies additional tensions produced by these issues as assimilation difficulties, income disparities, and poverty.⁴⁷ Notably, the report highlights the challenges, but does not make the connection to political power.

Yet, one natural side-effect of a shift in political power is that political policies are bound to shift in favor of resolving those issues that matter most to constituents like income disparities and poverty. When this takes place, at least some white non-Hispanics will rightly or wrongly feel others are benefiting more than they are. After over 200 years of political privilege or parity, the attention that will seem to go to Hispanics will not be easily accepted and will lead to increased ethnic tensions and frustration. As Audrey Cronin explains, individual frustration is one potential factor in who resorts to terrorism and the psychology of falling off of the top results in frustration.⁴⁸

Early warning signs exist. By 2016, it is projected California will be predominantly Hispanic. Lower birth rates of whites and white migration to find out-of-state affordable housing are said to be responsible for this trend.⁴⁹ But, is looking for cheaper housing really the reason? Why would nonwhites not also be searching for the same lower cost housing out-of-state?⁵⁰ One potential underlying reason at the moment for out-migration is that some non-Hispanic whites must feel they have the choice and the means to leave. As their political power decreases, some whites appear to be deciding to leave instead of fighting. If and when it becomes less possible to leave, whites may feel

⁴⁶ Associated Press, *White Flight: Suburbs Home to More Minorities*, May 10, 2010

⁴⁷ Laura B. Shrestha, “The Changing Demographic Profile of the United States,” *CRS Report for Congress*, updated May 5, 2006.

⁴⁸ Audrey K. Cronin, “Sources of Contemporary Terrorism,” *Attacking terrorism: elements of a grand strategy*, ed. Cronin and Ludes, (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 24.

⁴⁹ Justin Berton, *Whites in State ‘below the replacement’ Level*, June 5, 2010.

⁵⁰ Since the 2008 economic recession, there have been signs that illegal immigration has slowed. However, it is still estimated that there may be as many as 11–12 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S.. Tara Bahrapour, “Number of illegal immigrants in U.S. drops, report says,” *Washington Post*, September 1, 2010.

their very identity threatened. Anna Simons has noted that often an identity group whose very existence is threatened will fight by any means necessary.⁵¹

Fast forward to 2030. The United States may potentially start to resemble Europe in terms of the ethnic tensions now flaring up between some whites and growing numbers of Muslim immigrants. Authors such as Mark Steyn and Patrick Buchanan point out the inevitable outcome of unsustainable white birthrates and uncontrolled immigration in both old Europe and in the United States of America.⁵² Steyn highlights the social and political tensions generated by Muslim immigrants and their lack of assimilation. In a like manner, Buchanan outlines the Hispanic illegal immigration threat to American society and its negative impact on the United States. He highlights the economic stresses being placed on U.S. health and welfare systems, Hispanics' failure to assimilate, and some Hispanic radicals' desire to regain the southern United States for Mexico.⁵³

The majority of Americans, to include Hispanics, support tougher immigration policies.⁵⁴ Both political parties strive for increased political power and need Hispanic votes. In 2004, Republican President George W. Bush unsuccessfully proposed immigration reform to allow illegal immigrants to remain in the United States under a guest worker program.⁵⁵ In 2010, Mexican President Felipe Calderon earned a standing ovation from a Democratic Congress when he spoke out against the state of Arizona's immigration law.⁵⁶ Although the Arizona law simply enforces the U.S. federal

⁵¹ Anna Simons, "Making Enemies: An Anthropology of Islamist Terror, Part 1." *The American Interest*. Vol. 1. No. 4. (Summer 2006), 17.

⁵² Patrick J. Buchanan, *The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002).

Patrick J. Buchanan, *State of Emergency: The Third World Invasion and Conquest of America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

Mark Steyn, *America Alone: The End of the World As We Know It*. (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2006).

⁵³ There are any number of pundits, political commentators and even established academics like Victor Davis Hanson, author of *Mexifornia*, who make similar arguments.

⁵⁴ Dave Gibson, "New poll shows that minorities want tougher enforcement against illegal aliens," *Examiner*, March 2, 2010.

⁵⁵ Fox News, *Bush Calls for Overhaul of U.S. Immigration System*, January 7, 2004.

⁵⁶ Arizona Senate Bill 1070

immigration law, Arizona is being sued by the federal Department of Justice and a federal judge has suspended key enforcement portions of the law. The perception among some non-Hispanic whites is that the federal government is not preventing their political demise.

3. Culture Wars

From the perspective of Americans on both sides of the political spectrum, the United States is in the midst of an ongoing struggle to maintain its moral bearings. The conflict is over whose definition of morality should prevail, and hence there is a struggle between competing ideological worldviews. Christians are the largest U.S. religious demographic.⁵⁷ Yet, not all Christians agree about who should be considered a Christian. Among those who worry about the erosion of what they consider to be Christian values and American identity, Christianity can seem as though it is under attack by both state and federal governments. Although very factionalized, many Christians do share certain core tenets that sometimes reverberate across the various denominations. The ability to coalesce large number of self-identifying Christians around key issues has been proven at the ballot box on numerous occasions.

For those Christians troubled by the ongoing secularization of the United States, secularists' avenues of attack are seen to be gay marriage, abortion, attacks on Christian institutions, and perceptions that the U.S. government will do more on behalf of Muslims than Christians.

For some Christian activists, homosexuality is at the forefront of today's moral controversy. Many view homosexuality as an abomination and direct rebellion against God.⁵⁸ According to their gospel, they should love the sinner but cannot condone the sin. Even though numbers of homosexuals as a percentage of the U.S. population is said to be

⁵⁷ Barry A. Kosmin and Ariela Keysar, *American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS 2008): Summary Report March 2009*, (Hartford, CT: Trinity College). Attribute the largest religious demographic and not threat to Christianity.

⁵⁸ For many Christians, someone who supports gay marriage cannot be considered a true Christian

around 2–3%, they appear to be making huge gains in terms of social acceptance.⁵⁹ Since the 1970s, homosexuals have advanced their agenda in multiple venues. Television shows depicting homosexual characters, gay-friendly programs in government public education, and gay marriage legislation are increasingly seen to be pushing homosexual behavior as mainstream. Supporting their aims, mainstream media outlets sensationalize acts of violence against homosexuals while downplaying the opposite, namely, predatory homosexual attacks on nonhomosexuals.⁶⁰ Although initiatives to legalize gay marriage are consistently defeated in state ballots, the federal judiciary and executive are advancing the homosexual agenda in the federal government. Federal hate crime legislation and administrative policies further advance the protection of homosexuals. As a consequence, at least some Christians fear this legislation infringes on their right to profess their beliefs, and they worry they will suffer possible prosecution. For them, the sanctity of marriage is ordained by God. They believe they have also learned the hard way that once a framework of support has been established in the U.S. government for a certain policy it is extremely difficult to reverse this. A reminder of this difficulty can be found in the issue of abortion.

With *Roe v. Wade*, abortion became legally available to every woman in the United States. Proponents of this decision hailed it as a milestone in women’s reproductive rights. Since abortion became legal in 1973, more than 45 million unborn children have been aborted.⁶¹ The sanctity of life is sacred in Christianity, with many Christians believing life begins at conception and only God can take it away. Christian anti-abortion advocates argue that new technological advances, such as three dimensional sonograms, support their beliefs and the *Roe v. Wade* decision should be revisited. However, the likelihood that abortion will be readdressed is slight. Right now, tax dollars do not go to fund abortions. But the fear among at least some Christians is that

⁵⁹ Jennifer Robison, *What Percentage of the Population is Gay?* October 8, 2002. I chose to use the middle ground figure.

⁶⁰ Judith A. Reisman, *Crafting “Gay” Children: AN INQUIRY INTO THE ABUSE OF VULNERABLE YOUTH VIA GOVERNMENT SCHOOLING & Mainstream Media*, August 7, 2001, (Crestwood, Kentucky: The Institute for Media Education), 6–7.

⁶¹ The Alan Guttmacher Institute (AGI), *In Brief: Facts on Induced Abortion in the United States*, May 2010.

this might change with the federal government's healthcare legislation. To them, the idea of Christians' tax dollars being used for federally subsidized abortion is abhorrent. Already, indications are that this issue will be inflammatory once the health bill is fully implemented in 2014. A federal subsidy to Pennsylvania, for instance, will be used to fund abortions; federal legislation also seems poised to permit abortions in Department of Defense health facilities. This will ensure continued opposition over an issue about which at least some Christians will refuse to compromise.

From the perspective of some Christians already, numerous core beliefs are under continuous assault. Christmas, the celebration of Jesus' birth, is annually assailed by secular Americans. The mainstream media seem to relish it whenever a Christian religious display is deemed unacceptable by government. Acceptance of the United States of America's Christian beginnings, with clear Protestant influences, is deemed to be unacceptable by the federal government. Federally mandated public education is increasingly viewed as de-emphasizing the Founding Father's convictions, despite the fact that many of their original writings are suffused with Christian references.⁶² President Barack Obama, for instance, has said the United States of America does not consider itself to be a Christian nation.⁶³ To counter this, more Christians are opting to home school their children rather than subject them to secular assaults on their beliefs. Homeschooling has increased 36% since 2003, with religious and moral instruction given as the primary reason.⁶⁴

Heightening sensitivity for those Christians who believe Christianity is under assault is that, to them, it appears that secular attacks on Christianity are considered acceptable, but attacks against Islam are not. The recent controversy over the Ground Zero Mosque and the threatened burning of the Koran in Florida both gained national attention with the country's political leaders defending the rights of Muslims. At the same time, there has been no equivalent government outcry when Christian symbols have

⁶² WallBuilders. <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?cat=HD> (accessed September 26, 2010).

⁶³ John Eidsmoe, "Obama: America Not a Christian Nation," *New American*.

⁶⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Institution for Education Sciences National Center for Education Statistics, *Fast Facts*.

been attacked, such as the National Endowment for the Arts' sponsorship of "Piss Christ," a Christian crucifix submerged in urine.⁶⁵

If the recent past is any indication, Christians who already consider themselves beleaguered could well find themselves feeling politically isolated and lacking in sufficient representation. Even after the November 2010 elections, the Democrats remain extremely powerful.⁶⁶ Their social policies run largely contrary to the beliefs of those who want to see more openly Christian values espoused and promoted. The Republican Party has proven cornerable to the moral majority vote in the past by advocating social issues congruent with many Christians' beliefs. Yet, recent economic concerns are fueling a grassroots movement, dubbed the Tea Party. The Tea Party contends that its members seek to change federal economic policy. Many Tea Party activists seem to be Libertarians, which means they favor economic conservatism and social liberalism. Libertarians point to Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged* as an example of how the United States should be run; Ayn Rand was an avowed atheist.

Naturally, Republicans, as the party out of power, want to capitalize on the Tea Party movement's gains. Thus, the social issues that led members of the moral majority, Evangelicals and other self-described Christians to steadfastly support Republicans in the past may turn out to be secondary to the Republican Party of the future. Some Christian leaders have seen this and voiced their concerns to Republicans, "Leaders of the religious right are warning Republicans not to abandon social issues."⁶⁷ If the Republicans abandon or downgrade these issues, the lack of anyone in Washington who will take seriously Christian social beliefs could lead those for whom these matter from frustration to alienation to action.

⁶⁵ University of Southern California, *Piss Christ*, <http://www.usc.edu/schools/annenberg/asc/projects/comm544/library/images/502.html> (accessed September 26, 2010).

⁶⁶ Although the Congressional election results were favorable to Republicans, it is too early to tell if they can effectively represent Christian social concerns. Democratic control of the Executive branch maintains veto power over Republican initiatives

⁶⁷ Abbey Phillip, "Social conservatives warn Republicans not to abandon social issues," *Politico*.

4. Militarization of the United States

The September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon had profound effects on the United States. The nature of the attackers—foreign operatives living, training, and executing their terrorist mission within the United States—justified heightened homeland security. However, as the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq continue to have unanticipated second- and third-order effects, the potential exists for increased agitation against the federal government’s expansion of internal surveillance. Protests over increasingly intrusive-seeming Transportation Security Administration (TSA) procedures are just one symptom of Americans’ discomfort about what some fear is an overly zealous federal government.⁶⁸

Historically, the federal government has grown significantly in times of war. Bruce D. Porter outlines the explosive growth of state power during the U.S.’s involvement in all wars, but especially during World War Two. The bureaucracies built during that emergency largely remain in place today. U.S. history is replete with the suspension of civil liberties during times of crisis. Without an existential threat to keep the polity united, Porter believes the United States has the potential to fracture.⁶⁹ The federal government’s reaction to 9/11 confirms Porter’s thesis that central power grows in times of crisis.

With the Global War on Terror came the passage of the Patriot Act. In 2002, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) were both established. With this much centralization of power in, and by, the federal government, the potential for domestic civil abuse in the name of national security only increases. Warrantless wiretapping, increasing surveillance, intrusion of privacy, increased state secrecy, and presidential authorization of the targeting of U.S.

⁶⁸ Bruce Siceloff, “Pat-downs anger RDU fliers,” *Raleigh News and Observer*, December 14, 2010.

⁶⁹ Bruce D. Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*, (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 243–296.

citizens for kill/capture operations are some of the results.⁷⁰ Andrew Bacevich, in his book *Washington Rules*, echoes Porter's explanation for how U.S. militarization perpetuates the need for an enemy. Bacevich identifies the benefactors of increased militarization:

The Washington rules deliver profit, power and privilege to a long list of beneficiaries: elected and appointed officials, corporate executives and corporate lobbyists, admirals and generals, functionaries staffing the national security apparatus, media personalities, and policy intellectuals from universities and research organizations.⁷¹

It would be a logical deduction that the same category of individuals who benefit from our militarization overseas likewise benefit from the increasing militarization of the U.S. homeland. For instance, DHS is using grants to establish 72 intelligence-sharing fusion centers and provide funding for state-based First Responders. It also has provided \$3.8 billion to fund the purchase of paramilitary equipment and training for state and local police forces.⁷² *Time* magazine reporter Amanda Ripley, reporting from the Homeland Security Tradeshow, highlights where the money is being spent and cites war-like preparations already in progress.⁷³

As if to further justify its need to know what Americans are up to, the 2009 DHS intelligence assessment on domestic rightwing extremism warned of a future increase in the strength of rightwing radical extremism. Curiously, the report generalizes the threat to a blanket indictment of anyone who has economic troubles or who questions where the country is headed on issues like abortion, same-sex marriage, gun rights, illegal immigration, and globalization. The report also expresses concern about returning

⁷⁰ American Civil Liberties Union, *Top Ten Abuses of Power since 9/11*, September 6, 2006, (accessed September 26, 2010). The abuses above are related to National Security Agency wire tapping and Federal Bureau of Investigation National Security Letters targeting non-terrorist linked individuals. Anwar al-Awlaki, a US citizen, has ties to Al Qaeda and is targeted for kill/capture. Currently, a federal judge is hearing arguments for a lawsuit brought forth by the ACLU.

⁷¹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2010), 228.

⁷² U.S. Congressional Hearings, *Nine Years After 9/11: Confronting the Terrorist Threat to the Homeland*, Secretary Janet A. Napolitano testimony, 5-7.

⁷³ Time video report, *Homeland Security Tradeshow*, April 23, 2008.

military veterans who might be prone to radicalization.⁷⁴ The report emphasizes that DHS needs to gather more data from state and local law enforcement. One report that offers such data is a February 2009 Missouri Information Analysis Center document which claims most militia group members support third party political groups and leaders like Ron Paul. Members of such groups, it says, might display the Gadsden Flag (now associated with the Tea Party).⁷⁵

NORTHCOM's mission is to provide command and control of Department of Defense (DOD) homeland defense efforts, and to coordinate defense support to civil authorities.⁷⁶ What is unique and alarming to some is the assignment of an active U.S. Army Brigade to support NORTHCOM in its mission. This seems to reflect an overall acceptance that the war on terrorism is not going to end, and indeed the government continues to emphasize that this struggle will be characterized by an enduring period of conflict.⁷⁷

In actuality, this is the second iteration in the militarization of law enforcement in the United States—the War on Crime and the War on Drugs facilitated the first. These two “wars” intensified what Stuart Wright identifies as the threat/opportunity spiral between anti-government non-state actors and government forces, later exemplified by the rise of the militia movement in the 1990s. Government funding of the militarization of law enforcement and the consequent abuses at Ruby Ridge and Waco contributed to anti-government mobilization and Timothy McVeigh's counter-attack at Oklahoma City.⁷⁸

Today, the federal government seems to be identifying at least some segments of the population as potential terrorists and is moving to establish a large internal security apparatus to counter the threat they pose. In response, those being targeted—or those

⁷⁴ U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Intelligence and Analysis, *Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment*, (April 7, 2009).

⁷⁵ Missouri Information Analysis Center, *The Modern Militia Movement*, February 20, 2009.

⁷⁶ NORTHCOM, <http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html> (accessed September 26, 2010).

⁷⁷ Mohit Joshi, *Military only part of the solution to win war on terror: Admiral Mullen*.

⁷⁸ Stuart A. Wright, *Patriots, Politics and the Oklahoma City Bombing*, 34–37.

who think they might fall into this category—will naturally take actions to defend themselves. Thus, eventually the federal government and those who feel their identity is being threatened will find themselves in a confrontation in which the risk of violent actions will only increase.

C. OBSERVATIONS

The precipitating conditions examined in this chapter have the potential to be used to attract recruits into an anti-government movement. A capable, anti-government militia /movement *could* focus its unifying message in ways that reinforce some of the fears people already have. Its message could take into account the fact that, from certain angles, it can be made to seem that the largest United States demographic segment—of white non-Hispanic Christian males—is under assault on multiple fronts, to include actions taken by the U.S. government against them. For example, globalization was already costing this segment jobs prior to the recession; the realization that the jobs might be gone for good and that the federal government has been complicit in the loss could help set the federal government up as the villain. The federal government’s role in the erosion of white political power at the expense of other groups promises an even bleaker future, especially since whites are expected to be outnumbered by Hispanics in the near future. What can be presented as continuous anti-Christian rhetoric, along with anti-Christian policies, is another mobilizer, especially for those Christians who no longer see areas of potential compromise over issues like abortion or gay marriage. Finally, the fear of the internal security state that can be construed as treating white non-Hispanic males as a potential threat and the government’s presumed build-up of a militarized capacity to deal with them could prove to be the final straw.

IV. HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO

A. INTRODUCTION

Predictions of the eventual demise of the United States are not new. But nor are the predictions necessarily as far-fetched as some might presume, since history is replete with the rise and fall of great powers such as the Greek and Roman empires and the recent collapse of the Soviet Union. Russian academic Igor Panarin forecast the United States breaking up into regional entities by mid-2010 due to a civil war caused by economic decline, mass immigration, and moral degradation.⁷⁹ An obscure author, Thomas Chittum, wrote a book entitled *Civil War II*, in which the United States descends into an all-out “Balkan style” ethnic civil war with the country breaking up along ethnic lines into regional ethnic enclaves: whites in the north, blacks in the South, and Hispanics in the Southwest.⁸⁰ The controversial *Turner Diaries*, written by William Pierce, offers another potential future scenario of an insurgency created in response to an oppressive central government.⁸¹ The common undercurrent in each of these accounts is the all encompassing cataclysmic scope of the demise. Each scenario focuses on civil war, rather than on small insurgent actions to break away—regionally—from the federal government.

On a smaller scale, a plan outlined in Kenneth W. Royce’s (pen name Boston T. Party) fictional book *Molon Labe*, outlines a long-term secessionist movement centered in the state of Wyoming. The secession plan he describes entails coordinated groups of disenfranchised libertarians emigrating to Wyoming following a preplanned timeline, taking political control of the state, county by county, until they vote in their pre-selected candidate for Governor. With their political leadership in place, Wyoming would then

⁷⁹ Andrew Osborn, “As if Things Weren’t Bad Enough, Russian Professor Predict End of U.S.,” *The Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 2008.

⁸⁰ Thomas W. Chittum, *Civil War Two: The Coming Breakup of America* (Las Vegas, NV: Geodesics Publishing, 1996).

⁸¹ William Pierce, *Turner Diaries* (Washington, D.C.: National Alliance, 1980). I am not attempting to downplay the racist overtones throughout Pierce’s book but want to note it did have a cult-like following during the 1990s, and therefore is still familiar to people.

proceed to implement Libertarian Utopian policies resulting in increased economic development and social freedom, while at the same time Wyoming would begin defensive preparations to repel potential military intervention by the federal government. Ultimately, by acquiring nuclear warheads located within the state, the fictional Wyoming government would ensure federal nonintervention. The state would continue along the utopian path with neighboring states lining up to join it given its success. In the appendices of the book, the author lays out the plan in detail, with implementation by 2014.⁸²

In an eerie reprise, in 2003, the Free State Project, a Libertarian organization, called for and implemented its planned secession of New Hampshire. The Free State Project's goal is to relocate 20,000 people and establish a Libertarian Utopia and peacefully secede from the United States.⁸³ The Free State Project's website currently lists 10,467 supporters, with only 868 located in New Hampshire.⁸⁴ Similarly, Libertarian movements for Free State Wyoming⁸⁵ and the Free State Alliance, which includes Montana, Idaho and, Wyoming, have been initiated and maintain websites on the World Wide Web.

Yet another example of a secessionist movement is Christian Exodus, founded in 2003 in Tyler, Texas to encourage Christian constitutionalists to move to South Carolina. Not all has worked quite according to plan, as their website today explains:

This project continues to this day, with the ultimate goal of forming an independent Christian nation that will survive after the decline and fall of the financially and morally bankrupt American empire. We have learned,

⁸² Kenneth W. Royce, *Molon Labe: Come and Take Them* (Javelin Press, 2004).

⁸³ Jon Dougherty, "'Free State Project' seeks to restore liberty," October 14, 2002, *WorldNetDaily*.

⁸⁴ Free State Project, <http://www.freestateproject.org/> (accessed October 29, 2010).

⁸⁵ Free State Wyoming. Founder's statement- this is not a secessionist movement to the state of Wyoming.

however; that the chains of our slavery and dependence upon godless government have more of a hold on us than can be broken by simply moving to another State.⁸⁶

The movement now advocates personal secession from the grips of a morally degenerate government.

One question worth asking is: why have these movements been so unsuccessful thus far? One potential answer: conditions in the United States have not been deemed sufficiently threatening by enough Americans that Americans in any number believe insurgent action is justifiable.

This chapter consists of two sections. In the first section I will review the preconditions for a Perfect Storm of mobilizing factors and identify the population most likely to feel sufficiently threatened that if it did resort to insurgent action it might succeed. I am not arguing here that an insurgency *could* succeed. But instead, my point is that if enough recruitable members think it could, they could foment violence and cause problems for the federal government and state authorities that could pose the country serious problems. In keeping with this argument—that if people believe they could succeed they might actually try and secede—I will identify the geographic location in the contiguous 48 United States where an insurgent movement would most likely seek to base itself. Thus, the second section of this chapter examines the attractiveness of the Pacific Northwest and I present one kind of diversionary action that could be executed easily enough to make it *seem* to the insurgents that they could potentially succeed.

B. PERFECT STORM

Using the preconditions described in Chapter III—the adverse effects of globalization, the demographic pressure on white non-Hispanics, the culture wars forcing large groups into uncompromising positions, and increasing domestic militarization—one should be able to see how agitated certain Americans might become. As these trends intensify and then converge, the United States could experience a “Perfect Storm” of

⁸⁶ Christian Exodus, http://christianexodus.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=9&Itemid=37 (accessed October 29, 2010).

mobilizing factors. Also, those who think they could mount an insurgency and succeed could themselves cause problems with unforeseen second- and third-order effects that themselves could feed back into more mobilizing factors. For instance, militarization is one precondition that could be easily manipulated to try to trigger an overreaction by the federal government, thereby galvanizing support for the insurgents.

In the perfect storm scenario, as the United States suffers from the long-term effects of a deep economic downturn, U.S. globalization policies would be easier to blame. Those who have lost out given the shifts in the economic paradigm would be more prone to believe the government has been co-opted by the multinational corporations. Effects may be felt hardest in blue collar manufacturing jobs, but a high proportion of white collar technical workers also face a bleak future. The consequence of a nonexistent immigration policy can make certain areas of the southwest seem increasingly Hispanic and Hispanic-dominated. After dominating the political scene for over three centuries, white non-Hispanic males *could* be convinced they are now besieged.

If, meanwhile, the U.S. government continued to advance a moral agenda, as well as social beliefs and values that are not congruent with those held by self-identifying Christians, the latter could potentially be convinced to place their religious beliefs above the federally law. Protests might well occur and if there were enough arrests and prosecutions, this could be deemed equivalent to persecution. Whenever the federal government builds up its bureaucracy and power, certain Americans always begin to chafe.

The easiest antidote to much of this is to simply move to an area of the country that is still doing alright economically, that has not seen a large influx of Hispanics, where Christianity is not thought to be belittled, and where there has always been a healthy skepticism of the federal government. One could make the case that a slow migration in this direction has been already occurring.

C. CAPABLE DEMOGRAPHIC

One demographic likely to think it would be capable of helping to support a successful insurgency in the United States would be those who come from rural America. Rural America is predominantly white non-Hispanic, and Christian. Many in rural America would say they have the additional qualities of self-reliance, ruggedness, independence, and strong convictions. This is the segment of the population that views itself as staying determined even during trying periods. But, also rural Americans are likely to believe they would still stay committed if their insurgency took an excessively violent and costly turn. Dmitry Orlov, an author who predicts a future societal collapse of the United States, contends that the rural poor will be most able to adapt to such a collapse.⁸⁷ Accepting this, then members of a demographic who would be more willing to sacrifice for their beliefs and values are likely already to be found in the West, the South, and Texas. Populations in these geographic regions are predominantly rural and agriculture-based. Politically speaking too, rural Americans are typically not well understood by individuals who reside in urban political power centers.

Joel Dyer points to just these sorts of urban-rural divides in the United States. According to Dyer, rural Americans do not adjust well to the destruction of their way of life. While Dyer was describing conditions pre-2000, the urban focus of the federal government has not really changed.⁸⁸ As Dyer puts it “Our nation’s politicians realize that the collapse of rural America is an inevitable result of a global economy, and as such, it would be a waste of time and money to bail it out.”⁸⁹ This proclivity to view rural America as the lesser subculture still permeates our politics. In the 2008 presidential election campaign, then-presidential candidate, Illinois Senator Barack Obama proclaimed:

But the truth is, is that, our challenge is to get people persuaded that we can make progress when there’s not evidence of that in their daily lives. You go into some of these small towns in Pennsylvania, and like a lot of

⁸⁷ Long Foundation, *Dmitry Orlov: Social collapse best practices*.

⁸⁸ Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*, 70–71.

⁸⁹ Dyer, *Harvest of Rage*, 17.

small towns in the Midwest, the jobs have been gone now for 25 years and nothing's replaced them. And they fell through the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration, and each successive administration has said that somehow these communities are gonna regenerate and they have not. So it's not surprising then that they get bitter, they cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren't like them or anti-immigrant sentiment or anti-trade sentiment as a way to explain their frustrations.⁹⁰

Although some in the media interpreted this description as reflecting empathy for rural Americans, the election results reveal something different. Minus a few counties with large urban population centers, not many rural Americans voted for the current president. Figure 1 provides a clearer picture of rural sentiment during the 2008 presidential election, while Figure 2 highlights the lack of political power rural America can exercise when it comes to influencing the political direction of the Executive branch of the United States. Electoral College results reveal the political dominance of the western and northeastern urban population centers.

Although, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution, rural America receives representation in the Legislative branch, in times of national emergencies and war it is the Executive branch that wields the most power and authority. Worth noting, too, is that the political party rural Americans have aligned themselves with recently—the Republican Party—is likely to focus more on the country's economic problems than important social issues until the economy improves. This has the potential to leave rural Americans feeling that their concerns receive too little representation or attention. Feeling betrayed by both political parties, this bitter political pill is also not likely to go down well among people who have strongly supported the United States' venture into today's enduring wars.

⁹⁰ Mayhill Fowler, "Obama: No Surprise That Hard-Pressed Pennsylvanians Turn Bitter," *The Huffington Post*, April 11, 2008 06:43 AM.

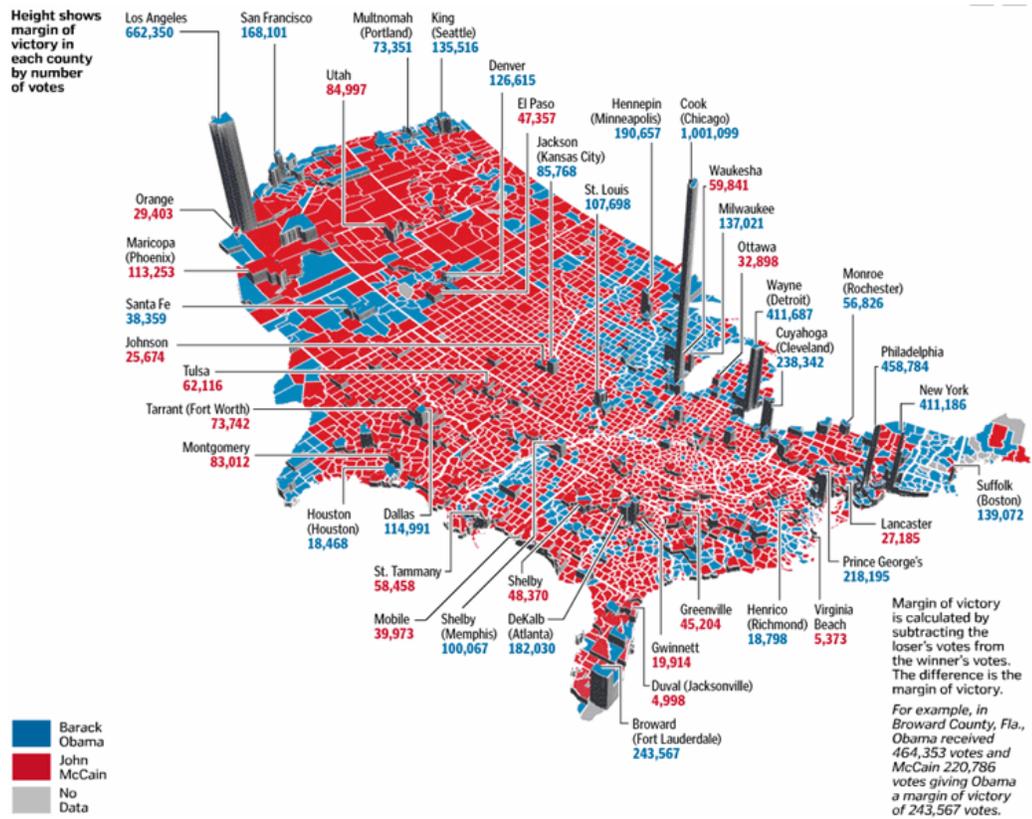


Figure 1. Presidential election: winners by county⁹¹

⁹¹ Political Maps.org, *Washington Post*, November 5, 2008.

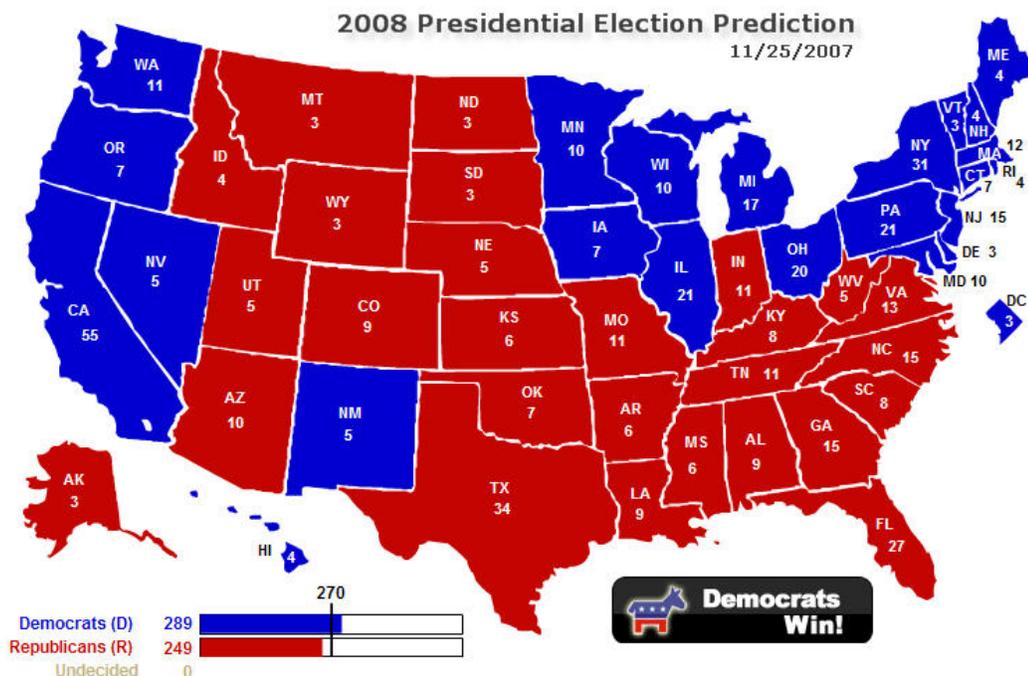


Figure 2. 2008 presidential election results prediction map⁹²

A Heritage Foundation Report on volunteers who enlisted in the military during the period 2006–2007 hints at the type of individual an insurgent movement would do well to recruit. The report is revealing in regard to the composition and beliefs of the volunteer members of the armed forces—especially since the period of the report correlates with the period when Operation Iraqi Freedom was at its low point and U.S. casualty rates were high (peaking in 2007).⁹³ Additionally, the report came out before it could capture any of the effects of the financial stress that developed in late 2008, thus it cannot reflect large numbers of volunteers joining the military for purely financial reasons. The report finds that members of the military come predominantly from the middle and upper middle class, which should serve as further evidence that people do not volunteer purely for financial reasons. The regions that were over-represented based on their population density coincide with rural regions of the United States: the South

⁹² Political Maps.org, *2008 Presidential Election Prediction* November 25, 2007.

⁹³ Iraq Coalition Military Fatalities By Year, <http://icasualties.org/> (accessed November 3, 2010).

(which includes Texas and Arkansas), and the Pacific Northwest. Those who are underrepresented tend to come from areas of the United States with large urban centers.⁹⁴

As for why so many youth from the South and Northwest volunteer, one might infer that these regions are filled with individuals more apt to believe that the use of force is an acceptable means of supporting one's beliefs and values. Also, the more rural character of these areas may produce individuals who have traits congruent with the traits desired by the military. Individuals from rural communities often are more comfortable in the same kind of primitive, more austere environments in which the military habitually operates. Skills developed through activities such as camping, hiking, and hunting develop self-reliance. For instance, hunting skills are highly applicable to service in the combat arms. Hunting requires knowledge of firearms, camouflage and deception techniques, and intelligence techniques such as pattern analysis. For those who seek adventure and challenges, the military offers an opportunity. It also enables people to get to fight for their ideological beliefs.

Why this demographic would be attractive to those fomenting an insurgency should go without saying. Naturally, military skills learned in the service can contribute to an insurgency's defensive and offensive needs. Many service members have firsthand experience dealing with lawlessness and the effects of government repression on a population. Many have significant practical experience in denied terrain operations and the mobility challenges that come when fighting in restrictive terrain against a determined enemy. Individuals experienced in guerrilla tactics, techniques, and procedures offer an insurgent organization the ability to expedite the building of its military capabilities. Additionally, veterans' military experience means they understand the need for teamwork required to achieve mission objectives. Also, if/when the military is ever assigned to confront an insurgency populated by former soldiers, and especially when those former

⁹⁴ Shanea J. Watkins and James Sherk, *Who Serves in the U.S. Military? The Demographics of Enlisted Troops and Officers* (The Heritage Center for Data Analysis, Washington, D.C.: August 21, 2008), 8.

soldiers are “defending” the region from which current soldiers come, the federal government may have an even more difficult time dealing with a domestic insurgent threat successfully.

An important axiom for many rural Americans is “Live and Let Live.” Many seek limited or no government interference. Thus, a certain degree of active and passive support for an insurgency will seem as though it can be found in areas filled with individuals who share this philosophy—to include, on occasion, sympathetic members of local and state government. As a result, it may well seem possible to mobilize somewhat strange-seeming bedfellows: individuals and groups with nonextremist ideologies; separatists or those espousing anti-government, racist, and/or religious ideologies; as well as survivalists. It is important to reiterate that not all these groups share the same beliefs and that grouping them together in the same sentence in no way infers they do. But, there are certainly occasions in the history of insurgency when broadly labeling people as extremists causes them to join together.

For instance, survivalists come from various religious backgrounds and espouse self-reliance as opposed to racist or secessionist ideologies. Survivalists are often drawn to rural areas because they can live the way they deem necessary. Separatists and racists, such as members of the Aryan Nation, Christian Identity and Montana Freeman, are drawn to the same areas for the same reasons. The latter groups would probably have limited utility to those trying to foment an insurgency since they tend to be too dedicated to their beliefs. Such groups have exhibited militant anti-government beliefs openly and organize themselves in guarded compounds. While their radicalized members might be able to help exacerbate conditions favorable to a broader insurgency’s goals, too many potential recruits would likely find their extremist ideologies repulsive. Federal counterinsurgent strategy will also likely make use of these extremist ideologies to create opposition and stir up a backlash against any insurgency that has members of these groups as participants. Also, because these groups have their own agendas, allying with them is fraught with risk and complexity; thus, further consideration of them is beyond the scope of this thesis.

D. GEOGRAPHIC QUALITIES

Geographic locations conducive to an insurgency in the United States require the following attributes: a border with Mexico or Canada; restrictive terrain; productive capacity to economically and/or agriculturally sustain the population; and low retention value to the United States.

Contiguous borders with another country offer insurgents the ability to escape to a sanctuary. The length of the U.S. border with Canada is 3,987 miles and that with Mexico is 1,933 miles.⁹⁵ Lengthy borders are difficult to completely seal. A porous border provides insurgents with access to regions where U.S. cooperation requires prior coordination with a third party. The third party's sovereignty complicates U.S. coordination and the conduct of counterinsurgent operations. Whether a neighboring country is cooperative or not, the issue of sovereignty challenges U.S. pursuit operations. Complete isolation of the insurgents' area of operations becomes largely impossible. For perspective, consider U.S. military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan; insurgent forces use the porous borders adjacent to Iran and Pakistan to facilitate their operations. The Afghanistan/Pakistan border is only 1,510 miles long,⁹⁶ while the Iraq/Iran border is even shorter at 962 miles.⁹⁷

If armed conflict erupts, nothing is more advantageous to insurgent operations than restrictive terrain. Restrictive terrain favors the defense. It channels mobility and enables control of sanctuary areas. Restrictive terrain is conducive to guerrilla operations and limits the technological and maneuver advantages possessed by federal forces. Mountainous terrain is the most advantageous restrictive terrain there is.

The area the insurgents occupy must be also able to sustain them politically, economically, and agriculturally, independent of outside assistance. Economically, the region should be well enough off that it can support itself, but not so well off or containing something so valuable that the government would risk all out war to retain it

⁹⁵ Janice Cheryl Beaver, *U.S. International Borders: Brief Facts*. (Texas1241, New Mexico179.5, Arizona 372.5, California140.4)

⁹⁶ Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook: Afghanistan*.

⁹⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, *World Factbook: Iraq*.

E. ACHIEVABLE GOALS

If insurgents' primary goal is to achieve a sovereign territory within the continental United States, then peaceful secession would be the primary method used with the expectation that the federal government would respond militarily. Given lessons learned from past American struggles, it is likely that would-be leaders would initiate covert defensive preparations long before any declaration of secession. Prudence alone suggests actions would be taken in advance to prepare for a protracted guerrilla struggle. The timeline for complete secession would be determined by the responses of the federal government. The most prudent insurgents would likely enter into such a struggle with the expectation that it might take them a generation to achieve success.

F. PACIFIC NORTHWEST

For the purposes of this thesis, the Pacific Northwest region includes Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, and portions of Washington, Oregon, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Utah. The circled region in Figure 3 offers an approximation of the defined region.



Figure 3. Map of the United States⁹⁸

⁹⁸ United States Map, <http://www.united-states-map.com/tabloid.htm> (accessed November 7, 2010).

1. Region Demographics

The majority population in the Pacific Northwest region consists of white non-Hispanics. Montana is 87.6% white non-Hispanic⁹⁹, Idaho 84.5%¹⁰⁰, Wyoming 86.2%¹⁰¹, North Dakota 89.1%¹⁰², Utah 81.2%¹⁰³, Washington 74.6%¹⁰⁴, and Oregon 79.6%.¹⁰⁵ Christianity is the major religious affiliation of the people in the region.¹⁰⁶ Because the region is comprised of predominantly small rural communities, both the homogenous nature of many towns, along with natural small town suspiciousness, would seem to offer an edge in counter-intelligence penetration. Many of the rural, independent, self-reliant individuals comprising this region have a demonstrated desire to be left alone.¹⁰⁷ This philosophy has influenced those Christian personalities who now recommend this area as the last redoubt for individual freedoms.

For instance, this is the view of Chuck Baldwin, a Florida Baptist minister identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center as one of the 35 most influential anti-government Patriot militia and movement leaders.¹⁰⁸ Chuck Baldwin was the Constitution Party's presidential candidate in 2008. The Constitution Party platform resists U.S. participation in the United Nations and in world government, seeks the abolishment of the Department of Education, seeks for the United States to stop being the world's policeman, is anti-abortion, is pro-2nd amendment gun rights, is anti-Patriot Act,

⁹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Montana"

¹⁰⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, "Idaho"

¹⁰¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "Wyoming"

¹⁰² U.S. Census Bureau, "North Dakota"

¹⁰³ U.S. Census Bureau, "Utah"

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, "Washington"

¹⁰⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Oregon"

¹⁰⁶ Pew Forum on Religious & Public Life, *US Religious Landscape Survey*, February 2008, 97, 99.

¹⁰⁷ Misty Showalter, "Unplugged Christians living off the grid," *CNN*, May 27, 2010.

¹⁰⁸ Southern Poverty Law Center, "Meet the 'Patriots'," *Intelligence Report, Summer 2010, Issue Number: 138*. To gain an understanding of the organization's bias, the site mocked Baldwin's Christian fundamentalist belief of the rapture of the church prior to the tribulation as described in the Christian Bible's book of Revelation.

and proposes anti-globalist tariff protections to protect American interests.¹⁰⁹ Just recently, Chuck Baldwin moved to Kalispell, Montana.

Pastor Chuck Baldwin (who recently relocated from Florida to near Kalispell, Montana) has updated his survival recommendations. It is noteworthy that Baldwin is just one of dozens of people I've encountered who have mentioned that they felt **a strong conviction to move to the Inland Northwest**. When you ask them why they moved, they almost invariably give a one word answer: "God." Like Baldwin, I predict that Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Utah will be bastions of liberty in the years come. These states will also be relatively safe places to live, as the U.S. economy continues its death spiral. ...This is indicative that there is a move afoot!¹¹⁰

Politically, some residents in the Northwest already resist interference from the federal government and often communicate this sentiment through state legislation. This has been recently demonstrated with the April 2009 passage of Montana's House Bill 246, the Montana-made gun bill. This bill exempts Montana-made firearms from federal regulation and enforcement. Although the bill has minimal impact on the rest of the nation, its intent is to warn against what Montanans view as increasing federal power. As Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer explained, "It's a gun bill, but it's another way of demonstrating the sovereignty of the state of Montana."¹¹¹ In a sign of solidarity, eight states enacted similar state legislation, of which four (Wyoming, South Dakota, Idaho, Utah) fall within the Pacific Northwest region.¹¹²

Political leaders' unfavorable view of the federal government permeates the region's politics. State sovereignty is paramount and social tensions are mounting over federal government intrusion and meddling in internal regional affairs. For instance,

¹⁰⁹ Baldwin/Castle 2008, <http://www.baldwin08.com/indexold.cfm> (accessed November 12, 2010).

¹¹⁰ James Wesley, Rawles, *Survival Blog*. This is a comprehensive survivalist/preparedness site with archived data and reference sections on topics ranging from fortification of survival retreats to self-defense, long-term food storage, self-reliance techniques, etc. According to the site visitor counter there have been over 24 million hits since July 2005, with over 220,000 unique hits per week. This reflects a significant number of individuals seeking preparation advice for coming future challenges. The site recommends specific geographical rankings for the best preparation states. The site does not contain racist or secessionist material as all posts are edited for inappropriate content.

¹¹¹ Kahrin Deines, "New gun law aimed at asserting sovereignty," *Associated Press*, April 16, 2009.

¹¹² Bob Unruh, "Gun fans looking forward to challenging feds," *WorldNetDaily*, September 7, 2010.

federal environmental policy regarding wolf management is galvanizing anti-federal sentiment. Initiated in 1974, the Endangered Species Act placed the gray wolf on the endangered species list in North America.¹¹³ In April 2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the wolf from protected status. The wolf's removal from protected status was overturned by a federal judge in August 2010, along with Idaho's management program. This reignited public sentiment against federal interference. At the heart of the matter is the increasing damage wolves are doing to livestock industry operations and whether states should be permitted to manage their internal affairs. A USDA report on confirmed wolf predation on livestock in Idaho documents increasing rates of predation since 2003.¹¹⁴ U.S. Senators from Idaho, Wyoming, and Utah have co-sponsored legislation to eliminate protection of the wolves under the Endangered Species Act.¹¹⁵ Idaho is refusing to enforce the federal Endangered Species Act. Idaho's Governor, Butch Otter, made this decision after 15 years of frustration and broken promises by the federal government.¹¹⁶

Historically, communities in the Northwest are no stranger to the heavy hand of the federal government. During the 1990s, the Pacific Northwest experienced the actions of militarized federal agencies. Federal government missteps at Ruby Ridge, Idaho had a significant impact on the rightwing movement.¹¹⁷ In Montana, the Freeman sovereign citizen movement was involved in a standoff with federal agents. Although the standoff ended peacefully, the experience of the federal government's intrusion still resonates. Although extremist groups' ideological beliefs are certainly not well received by everyone, or even many in the region, and their presence will be used against any

¹¹³ Jim Beers, *Wolves: They're Not Just for Rural Americans Anymore, Part I*.

¹¹⁴ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *USDA-APHIS IDAHO WILDLIFE SERVICES WOLF ACTIVITY REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2009*, 9.

¹¹⁵ Ben Neary, "Proposed bill would exempt wolves from federal protection," *Associated Press*, September 30, 2010.

¹¹⁶ Rocky Barker, *Otter Halts Idaho wolf Management*, October 19, 2010.

¹¹⁷ Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism and Homeland Security* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2009), 373.

insurgency by the federal government, there are local and regional issues that could be used to unite enough people that citizens might think they stand a chance against the federal government.

2. Region Geography

The Pacific Northwest shares a 1,327 mile-long border with Canada, enabling the movement of men and materiel to a cross-border sanctuary. Dominating the terrain are the Rocky Mountains. This terrain and climate would favor a defensive guerrilla force. As the U.S. government's recent experience in Afghanistan demonstrates, mountainous terrain can make it relatively easy for guerrillas to stymie an invading/occupying force. The redoubt potential of the Rocky Mountain range could seem to offer a significant advantage to an insurgency.

Survivalists and secessionists agree with this assessment. SurvivalBlog founder, James Rawles, cites retreat location criteria and rates those states that are most likely to weather a future cataclysmic event. A former U.S. Army intelligence officer, Rawles conducted a detailed Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)/country assessment that takes into account state gun laws, population density, growing seasons, taxes, crimes rates, and nuclear fallout patterns. Survivalblog ranks the Pacific Northwest at the top of its list: "1 Idaho, 2 Montana, 3 Oregon, 4 Washington, 5 Wyoming, 6 Utah, 7 South Dakota, 8 North Dakota, 9 Arizona, 10 Colorado, 11 Nebraska, 12 Kansas, 13 Texas, 14 Nevada, 15 New Mexico, 16 Arkansas, 17 Oklahoma, 18 Louisiana, 19 California"¹¹⁸ In the same manner, Kenneth Royce, a.k.a. Boston T. Party, conducted a separate study of the region to determine which state would be the best candidate for secession. Wyoming was his selection, with Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota all possessing favorable runner-up attributes. Among other criteria, he considered brushfire potential--namely, the number of contiguous states and Canadian provinces that might join a successful insurgency.

¹¹⁸ SurvivalBlog.com, *Retreat Areas*.

Canada is important because its provinces could serve as legal or illegal logistic conduits.¹¹⁹ South Dakota is interesting for different reasons. It already is home to a group with its own threatened identity—Sioux Indians.

The Republic of Lakota is a Native American movement that seeks sovereign territory within the contiguous United States. In December 2007, the Republic of Lakota (ROL) unilaterally withdrew from the United States, citing numerous treaty violations. This group established its Republic on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.¹²⁰ The movement's leader, Russell Means, advocates peaceful separation. But Means is known for his past violent activities on the same reservation in 1973. Means and 200 armed followers of the American Indian Movement (AIM) engaged in a 71-day standoff with federal law enforcement, resulting in the death of two AIM followers.¹²¹

The Republic of Lakota justifies the threats posed to its population by pointing to low mortality rates, health epidemics,¹²² high unemployment, high suicide rates, high rates of incarceration, and the fading identity of Native Americans. On its website, this group documents the federal government's betrayal and loss of Lakota land (see Figure 4). Located along the eastern periphery of the Northwest, the ROL could seem to be a good potential candidate for an alliance. First, the Lakota are hardened against the federal government. Second, they are threatened to the point where they fear for the extinction of their way of life. Third, they have nothing to lose. If guaranteed national autonomy and protection by insurgents in the Northwest, some might be convinced to add to the complexity of the situation for the federal government.

¹¹⁹ Royce, *Molon Labe*, 378–384.

¹²⁰ Republic of Lakota. <http://www.republicoflakotah.com/> (accessed November 10, 2010).

¹²¹ PBS Documentary, *We Shall Remain*, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/the_films/episode_5_trailer (accessed November 10, 2010).

¹²² For more information on the health challenge facing the Sioux Indians the attaché Congressional report reveals the extent. <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/nahealth/nabroken.pdf>

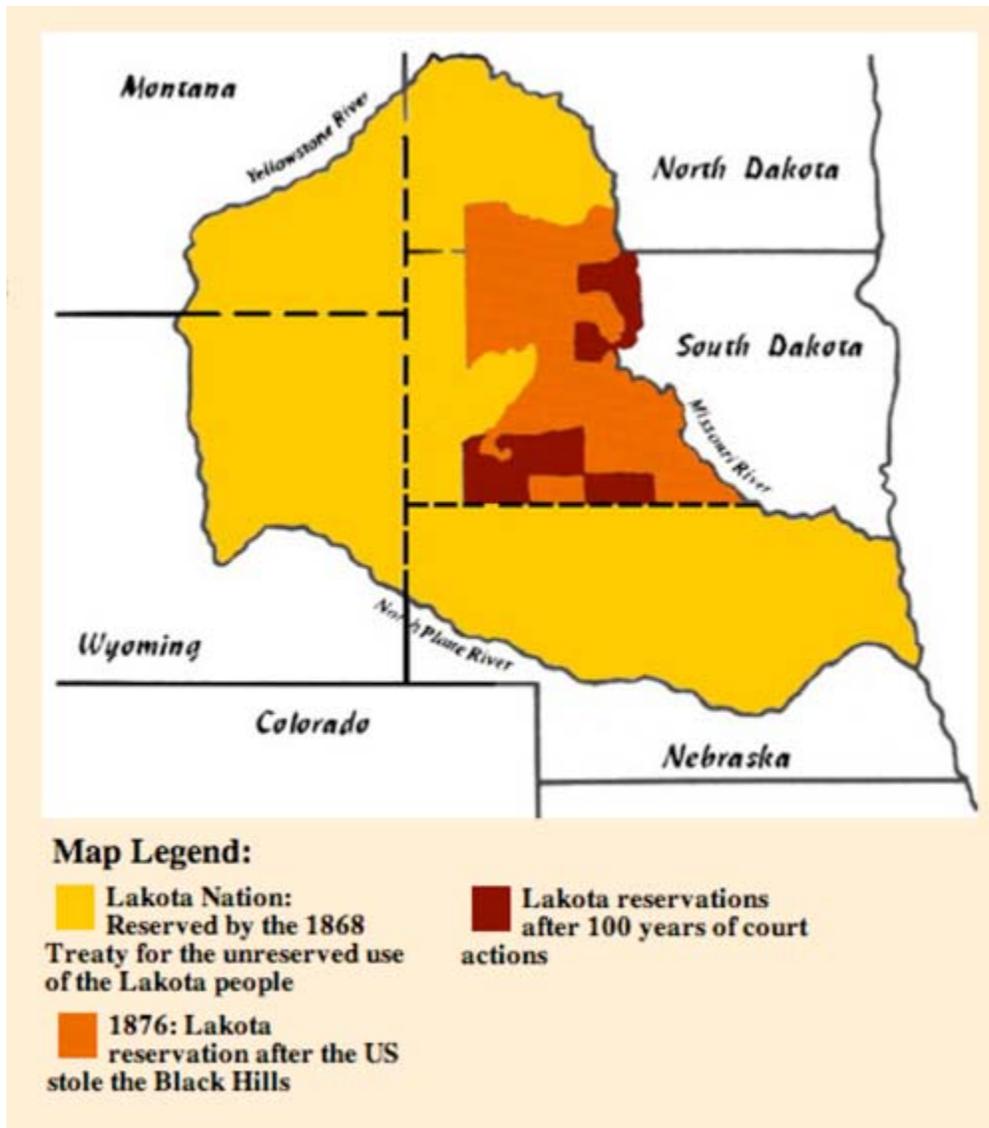


Figure 4. Illustration of federal government encroachment on Lakota Nation¹²³

The ability of the Pacific Northwest to sustain itself is equivalent to, if not substantially better than, that of the United States. *Forbes* ranks the states that are best for business as: 1-Utah, 5-Washington, 6-Oregon, 11-North Dakota, 12-Idaho, 17-South Dakota, 24-Montana and 27-Wyoming.¹²⁴ In regard to per capita debt, these states are

¹²³ Republic of Lakota, (accessed November 10, 2010).

¹²⁴ Kurt Badenhausen, *Table: The Best States For Business And Careers*, October 13, 2010.

performing better than most.¹²⁵ Although they have natural resources to export, states in this region do not represent an economic powerhouse. Montana's Gross State Product (GSP) was \$27 billion, Wyoming \$21 billion, Idaho \$44 billion.¹²⁶ In other words, the region is well off, but from the point of view of federal decision makers, it has little to no value in regard to federal tax revenue or political capital. The decision might be that if people in the Northwest made the area unlivable for those who don't agree with them, and thus ungovernable by Washington, Washington might find it easier to let go rather than retain it by force. They might even go so far as to argue that letting the region go would have minimal effect on future elections as the three largest states account for only ten Electoral College votes. That number might increase with a net immigration gain into the region, but in the eyes of the federal government that change would still hardly be significant. Additionally, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming are beneficiaries of federal tax expenditures. For every \$1.00 Montana sends to the federal government it receives \$1.46. South Dakota, North Dakota, and Utah are likewise beneficiary states; only Oregon and Washington are not.¹²⁷

3. Diversionary Opportunity

To increase the probability of success for the idea of an insurgency based in the Pacific Northwest, it would help to distract the attention of the federal government. Ideally, something done to increase militarization and violence along the southern border would incite second- and third-order effects in areas of the United States not yet directly affected by strife there. For instance, sufficient violence along the U.S.-Mexico border could trigger a militarized response from both border states and the federal government sufficient to threaten Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) elements already within the United States. Presumably, MS-13 elements would fight back against more effective border enforcement and the crackdown that would follow. This, in turn, would lead to problems throughout the United States. A narrative that might be used to generate support for the

¹²⁵ CNN Money, *Your Share of the Debt*.

¹²⁶ Badenhausen, *The Best States*.

¹²⁷ Tax Foundation, State Tax and Spending Policy, <http://www.taxfoundation.org/research/topic/9.html> (accessed November 13, 2010).

idea of insurgency could be that through simple deception and minimal investment, insurgents in the Pacific Northwest could set the conditions so that they fly below the radar and become the federal government's least worrisome problem.

As unrealistic as all of this may seem now, eventually the rival drug cartels in northern Mexico will sort out their dominance issues. When this happens, the winning cartel will have the ability to focus its efforts on its drug and human trafficking operations in the United States. Always clever opportunists, cartel bosses will work out business opportunities with the largest Hispanic gang in the United States. MS-13 is a violent transnational South American gang that has substantially increased its criminal operations in the United States. Some estimates place MS-13 strength in the United States as high as 50,000,¹²⁸ while the 2008 FBI MS-13 threat assessment places its strength at 6,000 to 10,000.¹²⁹ Yet, in the same 2008 FBI threat assessment, MS-13 was reported to be conducting activities in 42 states and the District of Columbia. MS-13 has its highest concentrations in the Southwest and in the Northeast, and is increasing its strength in the Southeast and Northeast.¹³⁰

As gang violence and spillover violence from Mexico poses a greater and greater threat, the border states will have to increase their control measures in order to defend their citizens. This will lead to increasing tension with the federal government, as we are already seeing with the federal lawsuit against the state of Arizona. Increased border enforcement operations by states, such as Texas' Department of Public Safety's counterinsurgency operations, will apply pressure on the drug cartels and opportunities for a flashpoint will only increase.¹³¹ Paramilitary vigilante groups have already ramped up their efforts to combat the criminal invasion. One such group, Secure America

¹²⁸ Mandalit Del Barco, "The International Reach of Mara Salvatrucha," *NPR*, March 17, 2005.

¹²⁹ Federal Bureau of Investigation, *The MS-13 Threat: A National Assessment*, January 2008.

¹³⁰ FBI, *The MS-13 Threat*, 2008.

¹³¹ Jennifer Griffin, "America's Third War: Texas Strikes Back," *Fox News*.

Forever (SAFE), patrols the border and advocates militarizing it. According to the SAFE website, “SAFE is America’s only full-spectrum warfare organization dedicated to permanently securing America’s borders.”¹³²

This situation presents numerous opportunities to individuals who seek to exacerbate violent confrontations along the southern border in order to further their aims elsewhere. Their thinking would likely be that once violence begins to spiral out of control it should be easy to keep it at levels that necessitate Homeland Security intervention and resources. Again, this would directly affect MS-13’s criminal operations in the United States. The second-order effect of a crackdown along the border would be MS-13’s likely response: to militarize its operations to relieve the pressure along the border. As MS-13 gang members begin targeting federal and state law enforcement officials in urban areas in the northeast and southeast, the third-order effect would be the dissemination of violence. The United States federal government would then likely need to react in such a way that there would be a civil backlash to federal heavy handedness in localized areas. At this point, the federal government would not be able to deal effectively with secession by the Pacific Northwest.

G. OBSERVATIONS

Cataclysmic civil wars in the United States or secession by a single state or nonthreatened identity group are unlikely events. *Regional* secession might not seem very likely either. However, to those who see converging conditions, through the lenses described in this thesis, secession could look just viable enough to try, especially since white non-Hispanic Christians are already shifting into a region that is ideal for waging a protracted guerrilla conflict: namely, areas of the Pacific Northwest.

¹³² Secure America Forever, <http://secureamericaforever.com/>. (accessed on November 19, 2010).

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V. CONCLUSION

A. CONCLUSION

Despite what many contemporary strategists focus on, the most difficult future threat to the United States may not come from a hostile near-peer competitor. The threat could instead come from an internal secession struggle wrought by a politically disenfranchised new minority. The likeliest identity group to think it might have a reasonable chance of success would likely be composed of white non-Hispanic individuals who self-identify as Christian. Convincing members of this demographic that they are being assailed economically by the combined effects of globalization and recession, threatened by the loss of future political power due to declining birth rates and unchecked immigration, attacked for their religious beliefs, and targeted by the federal government which is in the early stages of militarizing the homeland, might not be terribly difficult. As a consequence, it could be possible in the near future to persuade just enough white non-Hispanic Christians to attempt to escape their seeming inability to control their future by looking to leave the nation that they have been convinced abandoned them. Of course, the best course of action to avoid any such thing would be for the federal government to pay greater attention to the rhetoric being used to mobilize this demographic *before* anti-government non-state actors feel sufficiently self-encouraged to take advantage of the conditions they believe the federal government is helping to create.

Recognizing that others might see the latent insurgent potential in this demographic is just the first step. The preconditions outlined in this thesis are likely to keep squeezing people who will then seek an explanation for their situation. Paying attention to what could galvanize them is essential. Otherwise, here is what might result: people who think they can successfully secede might try to do so. They might well foment trouble outside the area where they live and where they have little public support. This could lead them to engage in terrorism. That, in turn, could initiate a cycle of

violence within the United States akin to the threat/opportunity spiral in which both sides intensify their responses to a higher level. No doubt, the unfortunate effects of such violence would not be good for the nation.

As unlikely as successful secession appears to be in the United States, it would be imprudent to be dismissive of the possibility of a group of Americans, who think they can succeed, and would then attempt to use violence as a means to achieve their goal. Nor is it prudent to be dismissive of the fact that a group of Americans could be mobilized to believe successful secession is a viable option to alleviate their troubles. Preemptive counters to potential mobilizing conditions may be a better alternative than the United States government enacting ill—prepared reactive measures in response to violence perpetrated by any such group.

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