



Written by [Patrick J. Buchanan](#) on September 12, 2017

Tribalism Marches On!

Recently, a columnist-friend, Matt Kenney, sent me a 25-year-old newspaper with his chiding that my column had been given better play.

Both had run in *The Orange County Register* on June 30, 1991.

“Is there no room for new nations in the New World Order?” was my title, and the column began:

“In turning a stone face toward embattled Slovenia and Croatia, President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker have not only put America’s chips on the wrong horse. They have bet on a losing horse.

“Can the U.S. Government seriously believe that a Yugoslavia of such disparate peoples, all of whom wish greater freedom, most of whose republics wish to be free of Belgrade, is a viable nation?”

The State Department had denounced “these unilateral steps by Croatia and Slovenia” to break free: “As Secretary Baker made clear last Friday, we will neither encourage nor reward secession.”

Croatia and Slovenia are today free and members of NATO.

A month later in 1991, George H. W. Bush, in what Bill Safire dubbed his “Chicken Kiev” speech, warned that Ukraine’s desire to break free of Moscow manifested a “suicidal nationalism.”

Today, Ukraine is independent and the Bush-GOP establishment wants to send weapons to Kiev to fight pro-Russia secessionists.

As nationalism tore apart Yugoslavia and the USSR in the 1990s, and surged to propel British secession from the EU and Donald Trump’s triumph in 2016, that primal force appears on the march again.

Wrote *The Wall Street Journal* Monday:

“Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban barely mentions his political rivals as he campaigns for a fourth term. Instead, he is targeting the European Union and its biggest members. ‘Our fiercest opponents are not in Hungarian opposition parties,’ Mr. Orban said in a speech last week, ‘They are abroad ... Berlin, Brussels.’

“In neighboring Poland,” the *Journal* goes on, “government rhetoric is even harsher. Politicians have one-upped each other in attacking France and Germany, arguing they are forcing multicultural liberal democracy on more traditional Poles.”

Not only in the east of Europe but also in the west, nationalism is surging. Wrote *The New York Times* Friday:



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“The accelerating battle over Catalonia’s status hit warp speed this week. Catalan lawmakers voted to go ahead with an Oct. 1 referendum on separating from Spain. Spain’s constitutional court declared the vote suspended. And Catalan politicians said they would proceed anyway.”

Yesterday, thousands of Catalans paraded through Barcelona under a banner proclaiming “Goodbye, Spain!” It was the Catalan National Day, which commemorates the 1714 capture of Barcelona by Philip V, the first Bourbon monarch of Spain.

Spain’s wealthiest region, Catalonia believes it is being milked by Madrid for the benefit of regions that contribute far less.

The question being raised by Catalonia is one America has faced before. Do peoples in a democratic republic have a right to declare their independence, secede, and establish a new nation, as the 13 colonies did in 1776 and the Confederate States of America sought to do in 1861?

Though America was born of secession, the U.S. establishment since the Cold War has been far more transnationalist and globalist than a great champion of new nations. Perhaps that is because the New World Order proclaimed by Bush I in 1991 envisioned the U.S. as the benevolent global hegemon.

Another ethnonational secession may be declared even before the Catalans go to the polls Oct. 1.

The Kurdistan Regional Government has scheduled a referendum for Sept. 25 — on independence from Iraq. Should it go forward, a massive vote to secede seems certain. And Kurds are relying on U.S. support. For they have sustained many casualties and shed much blood backing us in Iraq and Syria against the Islamic State.

Yet while our sentiments may cheer the cause of an independent Kurdistan, our national interests may call for caution.

For though the Kurds, 30 million in number, are probably the largest ethnic group on earth without a nation-state of their own, creating a Kurdish homeland could ignite a Middle East war the Kurds could lose as badly as did the Confederate States.

Why? Because, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-20 not only left millions of Kurds in Iraq, it left most of them in Turkey, Iran and Syria.

A free and independent Kurdistan carved out of Iraq could prove a magnet for the 25 million Kurds in Iran, Turkey and Syria, and a sanctuary for Kurd rebels, causing those nations to join together to annihilate the new country.

Then, there is Kirkuk, seized by the Kurds after the Iraqi army fled from an invading ISIS. The city sits on some of the richest oil deposits in Iraq.

Yesterday, Massoud Barzani, president of Iraqi Kurdistan, told the BBC that if the Kurds vote for independence and Baghdad refuses to accept it, they will forcibly resist any Iraqi attempt to retake the city.

Tribalism appears to be doing to the Bush New World Order what it did to Mikhail Gorbachev’s Soviet Union.

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Patrick J. Buchanan is the author of a new book, Nixon’s White House Wars: The Battles That Made and



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