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“How Would US Afrodescendants Vote?”

Early on September 19, 2014, the world learned that Scotland residents voted the day before to forego a vaunted opportunity to secede from the United Kingdom (UK).

Yet, just a day before the vote, and irrespective of its outcome, former UK Prime Minister and a Scotsman, Gordon Brown, assured the people of Scotland that they were a nation “yesterday, today, and tomorrow.”¹

What are the implications of the vote for US Afrodescendants?

We have joined with others in arguing that US Afrodescendants, too, represent a “nation within a nation.” Therefore, shouldn’t US Afrodescendants seek to secede, or should they adopt the Scotts’ position perpetually?

Consider that there is a long-standing cry for reparations for US Afrodescendants as compensation for the egregious evils of slavery and an elongated history of racial discrimination in the US. Unfortunately, there is seldom a discussion about Afrodescendants using a reparations platform to initiate nation formation and a drive for secession from the US.

Why is this option absent from the table?

Given a questionable ability to pay reparations in cash due to the very high level of US Government financial indebtedness, and the potential for reparation payments—in whole or in part—in the form of land, nation formation and secession could be logical options.²

Let’s suppose that some significant segment of the US Afrodescendant population awakens to this option and decides to put it to a vote, what would be the outcome?

As in the case of Scotland, there would be questions about the economic implications of secession. Specifically, we would want to know which natural resources would be associated with the lands to be obtained? What about the physical infrastructure that would exist or have to be constructed

¹ See E.J. Dionne, Jr., “A Wistful ‘No’ in Scotland?” *Washington Post*. September 18, 2014. Retrieved from the Internet on September 18, 2014; http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/ej-dionne-voting-for-the-love-of-scotland/2014/09/17/dbe28d56-3e8e-11e4-b0ea-8141703bbf6f_story.html .

² Political advisor and Boston University Professor Laurence Kotlikoff estimates that the US Government now has long-term explicit and implicit contingent financial liabilities that exceed \$200 trillion. See “America’s Hidden Credit Card Bill,” in *The New York Times*, (The Opinion Page), July 31, 2014. Retrieved from the Internet on July 31, 2014; http://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/01/opinion/laurence-kotlikoff-on-fiscal-gap-accounting.html?_r=0.

on the land? Which industries would be operational? What would be produced and exported, versus the goods and services that would have to be imported? What about the value of the currency that would be associated with the new nation state?

All of these are weighty questions that demand answers. Like the Scotts, would US Afrodescendants be deterred from nation formation by answers to these questions?

Keep in mind that, if we consider the mean value of household income for only the top 60%-to-70% of US Afrodescendants, then we find that it compares very favorably with the mean value of household income for all Whites in the US.³ Would the top 60%-to-70% of US Afrodescendant households opt to give up their very comfortable and seemingly certain lifestyle for a probably less comfortable and uncertain lifestyle in a newly found nation?

On the other hand, would the top 60%-to-70% of US Afrodescendant households view secession and nation formation as an opportunity to break away from a potentially declining America, to build real wealth, and to join with rising emerging market nations around the world? Would they recognize the long-term benefits of having their own nation that can be free from racial discrimination, and that permits the eternal extension of US Afrodescendant history, culture, and traditions?

Again, these are important questions that would be answered by the aforementioned vote. We know how the Scotts voted. While we don't know when such a vote will arise for US Afrodescendants, there is good reason to believe that this vote could come at some point in our future. All things considered, how would you vote?

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September 19, 2014
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³ Based on calculations using US Census Bureau aggregated data for 2013, the mean income of the top 60% of US Afrodescendant households is over 90% of the overall mean of White household income. The ratio of the overall mean of US Afrodescendant household income to the overall mean of White household income is just 63%. On the other hand, when we compare the mean value of wealth (net worth) for the top 60%-to-70% of US Afrodescendant households to the overall mean value of wealth for White household, the comparison is not so favorable. Based on 2007 Federal Reserve Board Survey of Consumer Finance data, the overall mean of White household net worth exceeds the mean net worth of the top 60% of US Afrodescendant households by a factor of about 3.