

culture) who live outside of Mexico, regardless of citizenship, will be permitted to vote in Mexican elections. More important, Mexican congressional districts will be established outside of Mexico, so that Mexicans living in Argentina, for example, can vote for a representative in the Mexican congress, representing Mexicans living in Argentina.

Since so many voters will qualify in the United States—the whole point of the change after all—the Mexican Cession will be divided into Mexican congressional districts, so that there might be twenty congressmen from Los Angeles and five from San Antonio elected to Congress in Mexico City. Since the Mexican communities will pay for the elections out of private funds, it is unclear whether this will violate any American law. Certainly, while there will be rage in the rest of the country, the federal government will be afraid to interfere. So the election to Congress will go forward in 2090—with Mexicans in the United States voting for both the Congress in Washington and the Congress in Mexico City. In a few cases, the same person will be elected to both congresses. It will be a clever move, putting the United States on the defensive, with no equivalent countermeasure available.

By the 2090s, the United States will be facing a difficult internal situation, as well as a confrontation with a Mexico that will be arming itself furiously, afraid that the United States will try to solve the problem by taking military measures against it. The Americans will have a tremendous advantage in space, but the Mexicans will have a tremendous advantage on the ground. The United States Army won't be particularly large, and controlling a city like Los Angeles still will require the basic grunt infantryman.

Groups of Mexican paramilitaries will spring up throughout the region in response to the U.S. occupation, and will remain in place after the troops withdraw. With the border heavily militarized on both sides, the possibility of lines of supply being cut by these paramilitaries, isolating U.S. forces along the border, won't be a trivial matter. The United States will be able to destroy the Mexican army, but that doesn't mean it could pacify its own Southwest, or Mexico for that matter. And at the same time, Mexico will begin to launch its own satellites and build its own unmanned aircraft.

As for the international reaction to this situation, the world will stand aside and watch. The Mexicans will hope for foreign support, and the

Brazilians, who will have become a substantial power in their own right, will make some gestures of solidarity with Mexico. But, while the rest of the world will secretly hope that Mexico will bloody its neighbor's nose, no one is going to get involved in a matter so fundamentally critical to the United States. Mexico will be alone. Its strategic solution will be to pose a problem on the American border while other powers challenge the United States elsewhere. The Poles will have developed serious grievances against the Americans, while emerging powers like Brazil will be stifled by the limits placed on them by the United States in space.

The Mexicans won't be able to fight the United States until they can reach military parity. Mexico will need a coalition—and building a coalition will take time. But Mexico will have one enormous advantage: the United States will be facing internal unrest, which, while not rising to the level of insurrection, will certainly focus U.S. energies and limit U.S. options. Invading and defeating Mexico would not solve this problem. It might actually exacerbate it. America's inability to solve this problem will be Mexico's major advantage, and the one that will buy it time.

The U.S. border with Mexico will now run through Mexico itself: its real, social border will be hundreds of miles north of the legal border. Indeed, even if the United States could defeat Mexico in war, it would not solve the basic dilemma. The situation will settle into a giant stalemate.

Underneath all of this will be the question that the United States has had to address almost since its founding: what should be the capital of North America—Washington or Mexico City? It had appeared likely at first that it would be the latter. Then centuries later it appeared obvious that it would be the former. The question will be on the table once again. It can be postponed, but it can't be avoided.

It is the same question that faced Spain and France in the seventeenth century. Spain had reigned supreme for a hundred years, dominating Atlantic Europe and the world until a new power challenged it. Would Spain or France be supreme? Five hundred years later, at the end of the twenty-first century, the United States will have dominated for a hundred years. Now Mexico will be rising. Who will be supreme? The United States will rule the skies and the seas, but the challenge from Mexico will be on the ground, and—a challenge only Mexico will be positioned to make—inside