

in Mexico City—and in Los Angeles, San Diego, Houston, San Antonio, Phoenix, and other cities in the borderland that will have become predominantly Mexican. The dominant theme will be ethnic Mexicans' rights as American citizens. But some will demonstrate for annexation by Mexico. A small radical faction of Mexicans in the United States will begin carrying out acts of sabotage and minor terrorism against federal government facilities in the region. While not supported by either the Mexican government, the state governments dominated by Mexicans, or most Mexicans on either side of the border, the terrorist acts will be seen as the first steps in a planned insurrection and secession by the region. The American president, under intense pressure to bring the situation under control, will move to federalize the National Guard in these states to protect federal property.

In New Mexico and Arizona, the governors will argue that the National Guard reports to them—and will refuse the order to nationalize. Instead they will order the Guard to protect federal facilities but will insist that the forces remain under state control. The Guard units, predominantly Mexican in these states, will obey the governor. Some in Congress will argue that a state of insurrection be declared. The president will resist but will instead ask Congress to permit the mobilization of U.S. troops in these states, leading to a direct confrontation between National Guard and U.S. Army units.

As the situation gets out of hand, the problem will be compounded when the Mexican president, unable to resist pressure to do something decisive, mobilizes the Mexican army and sends it north to the border. His justification will be that the U.S. Army has mobilized along the Mexican frontier and he wants to prevent any incursions and to coordinate with Washington. In reality, there will be a deeper reason. The Mexican president will be afraid that the U.S. Army will uproot Mexicans in this area—citizens, green card holders, and visa holders alike—and force them back over the Mexican border. Mexico will not want a surge of refugees. Moreover, the Mexican president will not want to see Mexicans in the United States stripped of their valuable property.

When the Mexican army mobilizes, the U.S. military will be placed on full alert. The U.S. military is not very good at policing hostile populations, particularly not those that include U.S. citizens. On the other hand, it is very good at attacking and destroying enemy armies. U.S. space forces and

ground troops will therefore begin focusing on the possibility of confrontation with the massed forces along the Mexican border.

A meeting between the two presidents will defuse the situation, as it will be clear that no one really wants a war. In fact, no one in power will have wanted the crisis in the Southwest. But the problem is this: during these negotiations, however much both sides want a return to the status quo ante, the Mexican president will, in effect, be negotiating on behalf of American citizens of Mexican origin who are living in the United States. To the extent the crisis is defused, the status of Mexicans in the Mexican Cession is being discussed. From the moment the discussion turns to defusing the crisis, the question of who speaks for the Mexicans in the Mexican Cession will be decided: it is the president of Mexico.

While the crisis of the 2080s will subside, the underlying issue will not. The borderland will be in play, and while the Mexicans will not have the power to impose a military solution, the American government will not have the ability to impose a social and political solution. The insertion of American troops into the region, patrolling it as if it were a foreign country, will have changed the status of the region in the mind of the public. Mexican negotiations on behalf of the people of the region will have extended that change. A radical secessionist movement in the region, heavily funded by Mexican nationalists, will continually irritate the situation, especially when splinter terrorist groups begin carrying out occasional bombings and kidnappings—not only within the Mexican Cession but throughout the United States. The question of the Mexican conquest will be opened up yet again. The region will still be part of the United States, but its loyalty will be loudly questioned by many.

Expelling tens of millions of people will not be an option, as it would be logistically impossible and would have devastating consequences for the United States. At the same time, however, the idea that in the region those who are of Mexican origin are simply citizens of the United States will break down. Many will no longer see themselves that way, and neither will the rest of the United States. The political situation will become increasingly radicalized.

By about 2090, radicals in Mexico will have created a new crisis. In a change to the Mexican constitution, Mexicans (defined by parentage and