

The Downside Of The Left-Right Civil War That Google And Facebook Created

BY [Malcom Kyeyune](#)

Historically speaking, empires on average last for around 250 years, after which they tend to either slowly — or very, *very* quickly — fall apart due to overreach and internal conflict. Somewhat ominously, the 250th birthday of America is coming up in 2026.

Yet when, towards the end of Trump's presidency, a radical friend of mine told me that he thought America was headed for civil war, I dismissed the argument out of hand. Why? *How?* It takes a unique confluence of mistakes and crises for civil war to appear possible, and an even longer list of mistakes, crises and elite screw-ups for them to happen.

But 2021 is a different world to 2015. Talk of insurrection, secession, civil conflict and civil war is no longer the chatter of the gullible and the mentally ill. It's entering the fringes of polite society. Some support this '[national divorce](#)'; others are opposed to it. Others claim they would actually prefer to declare war on their recalcitrant countrymen rather than let them go their own way unmolested.

None of this morbid interest in civil conflict is irrational, given the times. The year 2021 has thus far been a spectacular year for signs of political decline: the US has now seen all the notable "horsemen of the apocalypse" that historically herald strife and

revolution appear, one after another. Political division among its elites, increasing loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the population, military defeat abroad, and a new and very ominous crisis in the real economy, with no end date in sight.

Any one of these crises would be bad enough on their own; taken together, they represent a truly serious threat to the stability of the current order. Still, the question to be answered at the end of the day is quite simple: how likely is civil war, or national divorce, or a [‘troubles scenario’](#) really? To answer this question accurately, a few misconceptions about it being impossible have to be dealt with.

[More from this author](#)

[Sweden's cultural revolution](#)

Historically speaking, empires on average last for around 250 years, after which they tend to either slowly — or very, *very* quickly — fall apart due to overreach and internal conflict. Somewhat ominously, the 250th birthday of America is coming up in 2026.

Yet when, towards the end of Trump’s presidency, a radical friend of mine told me that he thought America was headed for civil war, I dismissed the argument out of hand. Why? *How?* It takes a unique confluence of mistakes and crises for civil war to appear possible, and an even longer list of mistakes, crises and elite screw-ups for them to happen.

But 2021 is a different world to 2015. Talk of insurrection, secession, civil conflict and civil war is no longer the chatter of the gullible and the mentally ill. It’s entering the fringes of polite

society. Some support this '[national divorce](#)'; others are opposed to it. Others claim they would actually prefer to declare war on their recalcitrant countrymen rather than let them go their own way unmolested.

None of this morbid interest in civil conflict is irrational, given the times. The year 2021 has thus far been a spectacular year for signs of political decline: the US has now seen all the notable "horsemen of the apocalypse" that historically herald strife and revolution appear, one after another. Political division among its elites, increasing loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the population, military defeat abroad, and a new and very ominous crisis in the real economy, with no end date in sight.

Any one of these crises would be bad enough on their own; taken together, they represent a truly serious threat to the stability of the current order. Still, the question to be answered at the end of the day is quite simple: how likely is civil war, or national divorce, or a '[troubles scenario](#)' really? To answer this question accurately, a few misconceptions about it being impossible have to be dealt with.

[More from this author](#)

[Sweden's cultural revolution](#)

[By Malcom Kyeyune](#)

One of the most worrisome aspects of contemporary American political discussion is the sense one often gets that many participants are possessed by a thinly-veiled bloodlust. Sometimes, that bloodlust is not even thinly-veiled; after the unarmed USAF veteran Ashley Babbit was fatally shot through a

locked door in the Capitol building, many anonymous (and some less anonymous) commentators intimated that perhaps the problem with police violence in America wasn't that officers were shooting and killing too many unarmed people — but rather that maybe they just weren't killing enough of them. Following a wave of destructive riots that tore through many cities in the United States last year, this turn toward open celebration of equally useless violence when it is visited on the *enemy team* speaks to a dangerous sort of polarisation.

From this sort of bloodlust flows another very common assertion: that a [civil war](#), if waged on American soil, would be over quickly, and lead to a fairly effortless massacre of any insurrectionists in flyover America. The idea here is that the US military is so advanced, and has so many tanks, gunships, fuel air bombs, and drones, that the federal government is simply assured of victory. As such, a civil war is an unlikely or impossible scenario, given the dramatic imbalance of power between the state and even a numerically large, dissatisfied internal population.

But this is a dangerous misconception. While the US military is indeed powerful and lavishly funded, it is a military designed to fight other states. Warfare between states is bound by rules and regulations; it is based on *consent*. This might seem a strange assertion to make, given that a country cannot just *decline* a war declaration from an enemy, but it holds true. There's a formal or informal understanding of who is an actual combatant and who is not.

In contrast, warfare in primitive or tribal societies does not make any distinction between a civilian and a soldier. There are just

enemies; ambushing and killing a 12-year-old girl drawing water at the creek is seen as normal as killing an adult warrior. This is where the European habit of calling uncivilised peoples “savages” comes from; rather than merely being an expression of racist chauvinism, Europeans were in fact oftentimes shocked by the habit of Native Americans and other peoples to ‘not play by the rules’.

But playing by the rules is a mug’s game. An insurgency in America has about as much reason as the Native Americans once did to follow the rules of their enemies; they are under no compulsion to wear blinking strobe lights to make themselves easier for the drones to target. And that simple fact means that a counterinsurgency effort in the US is almost certainly doomed to fail.

In counterinsurgency warfare, everything that makes the US armed forces great — high-tech weapon platforms with immense destructive power — are not just useless, but counterproductive. A tank parked outside a shopping mall in Idaho will either spend its time shooting at nothing, or be at a very high risk of killing innocent American civilians for the high crime of ‘looking suspicious’. Droning American weddings, like Afghan ones, does very little to advance the goals of a counterinsurgency. If anything, it only makes the relatives of the dead more likely to fight.

[Suggested reading](#)

[How Covid despots humiliated America](#)

[By Jacob Howland](#)

The US armed forces are also at least an order of magnitude too small to do the job effectively. During Operation Banner, the British military deployed at most 20,000 soldiers in Northern Ireland to keep a lid on that wayward province. The US armed forces consist of about 1.3 million active duty personnel, but this is spread out over five branches (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard), and only a small minority of military personnel are actually combat troops. It is thus very unlikely that the armed forces could scramble more than 100,000 regulars willing to do the job of holding an M4 carbine and patrolling down the main street of Anytown, Texas. To put that into perspective, Northern Ireland is about 2% the size of Texas.

Then there's the fact that the most significant political split in America is between rural areas and coastal metropolises, and the armed forces are reliant on the very areas it would be tasked with policing as far as recruiting soldiers goes. Red America is [overrepresented](#) within the armed forces, and this won't change. As such, the US doesn't just have too few soldiers, it has potentially unreliable ones, and the more brutality is used against recalcitrant red states, the more these soldiers will be ordered to fight and kill their own friends and family — a recipe for serious mutiny and disobedience.

Finally, there is an even greater elephant in the room. In the case of an American drone pilot accidentally blowing up a wedding in Afghanistan, the Afghan relatives of the slain have very little recourse. If an American drone pilot blows up an American wedding, however, that drone pilot *and* his or her family lives in the United States. Given the likely unreliability of some significant parts of the armed forces, the names and addresses of the most hated butchers are unlikely to stay a secret for long.

In Northern Ireland, for example, the provisional IRA not only attacked soldiers; they made a habit of assassinating the officers, commanders and politicians both for revenge and as a display of might. From Lord Mountbatten to a near-miss against Margaret Thatcher herself, to a score of less well-known targets, the IRA illustrates just how difficult it is to protect against an enemy that can simply choose to not wear a uniform before their enemies visit.

Now, with that all that said, how likely is it that there will be some sort of civil conflict in the near or mid future for the United States?

Unfortunately, the correct answer here may very well be that it is not terribly *unlikely*. What is significant about America today is not that it's nearing its 250th birthday, but rather the clear and advanced signs of sickness in the body politic. The ranks of America's military are now sullen and battered after 20 years of failed nation-building, while its higher officer corps is increasingly alienated from the world of its grunts, mirroring that same cultural, economic and social divide that is currently poisoning civilian life in the US.

[Suggested reading](#)

[The humiliation of the British Army](#)

[By Aris Roussinos](#)

The legitimacy of its elite has been shaken repeatedly, and faith in the electoral process itself is now rapidly declining among large segments of the electorate. America is currently a malarial swamp of strange new faiths, creeds, soothsayers and itinerant

prophets; from Q to vaccine scientism to various forms of pseudo-gnosticism centered around trans people. To a student of history, this should also be a familiar — and quite ominous — sign: France in the 1780s had its own scientism and mesmerism, and Russia in the 1910s and 1980s was rife with soothsayers and itinerant preachers of new strange faiths.

Most ominously of all, however, looms the growing supply crisis. This crisis would be tolerable if it merely implied a lack of variety at the grocery store. In such a case, 2020s America might just have ushered in a new golden age of Soviet-style political jokes. But it is also creating havoc in the productive economy itself, denying farmers the spare parts to run their harvesters and car manufacturers the metals they need to make cars. The longer the crisis goes on, the more broken the economy will become, and the more painful the necessary reforms will be, once America's elites truly wake up to the danger.

If there is one time throughout history where civil wars are actually likely to occur, it is precisely when a delegitimated elite undertakes necessary reforms after letting underlying problems fester for decades. That is when states are at their weakest, and when they are vulnerable to the worst forms of internal disasters. Sadly, that might just be where America is headed today.

orary American political discussion is the sense one often gets that many participants are possessed by a thinly-veiled bloodlust. Sometimes, that bloodlust is not even thinly-veiled; after the unarmed USAF veteran Ashley Babbit was fatally shot through a locked door in the Capitol building, many anonymous (and some less anonymous) commentators intimated that

perhaps the problem with police violence in America wasn't that officers were shooting and killing too many unarmed people — but rather that maybe they just weren't killing enough of them. Following a wave of destructive riots that tore through many cities in the United States last year, this turn toward open celebration of equally useless violence when it is visited on the *enemy team* speaks to a dangerous sort of polarisation.

From this sort of bloodlust flows another very common assertion: that a [civil war](#), if waged on American soil, would be over quickly, and lead to a fairly effortless massacre of any insurrectionists in flyover America. The idea here is that the US military is so advanced, and has so many tanks, gunships, fuel air bombs, and drones, that the federal government is simply assured of victory. As such, a civil war is an unlikely or impossible scenario, given the dramatic imbalance of power between the state and even a numerically large, dissatisfied internal population.

But this is a dangerous misconception. While the US military is indeed powerful and lavishly funded, it is a military designed to fight other states. Warfare between states is bound by rules and regulations; it is based on *consent*. This might seem a strange assertion to make, given that a country cannot just *decline* a war declaration from an enemy, but it holds true. There's a formal or informal understanding of who is an actual combatant and who is not.

In contrast, warfare in primitive or tribal societies does not make any distinction between a civilian and a soldier. There are just *enemies*; ambushing and killing a 12-year-old girl drawing water at the creek is seen as normal as killing an adult warrior. This is

where the European habit of calling uncivilised peoples “savages” comes from; rather than merely being an expression of racist chauvinism, Europeans were in fact oftentimes shocked by the habit of Native Americans and other peoples to ‘not play by the rules’.

But playing by the rules is a mug’s game. An insurgency in America has about as much reason as the Native Americans once did to follow the rules of their enemies; they are under no compulsion to wear blinking strobe lights to make themselves easier for the drones to target. And that simple fact means that a counterinsurgency effort in the US is almost certainly doomed to fail.

In counterinsurgency warfare, everything that makes the US armed forces great — high-tech weapon platforms with immense destructive power — are not just useless, but counterproductive. A tank parked outside a shopping mall in Idaho will either spend its time shooting at nothing, or be at a very high risk of killing innocent American civilians for the high crime of ‘looking suspicious’. Droning American weddings, like Afghan ones, does very little to advance the goals of a counterinsurgency. If anything, it only makes the relatives of the dead more likely to fight.

[Suggested reading](#)

[How Covid despots humiliated America](#)

[By Jacob Howland](#)

The US armed forces are also at least an order of magnitude too small to do the job effectively. During Operation Banner, the

British military deployed at most 20,000 soldiers in Northern Ireland to keep a lid on that wayward province. The US armed forces consist of about 1.3 million active duty personnel, but this is spread out over five branches (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard), and only a small minority of military personnel are actually combat troops. It is thus very unlikely that the armed forces could scramble more than 100,000 regulars willing to do the job of holding an M4 carbine and patrolling down the main street of Anytown, Texas. To put that into perspective, Northern Ireland is about 2% the size of Texas.

Then there's the fact that the most significant political split in America is between rural areas and coastal metropolises, and the armed forces are reliant on the very areas it would be tasked with policing as far as recruiting soldiers goes. Red America is [overrepresented](#) within the armed forces, and this won't change. As such, the US doesn't just have too few soldiers, it has potentially unreliable ones, and the more brutality is used against recalcitrant red states, the more these soldiers will be ordered to fight and kill their own friends and family — a recipe for serious mutiny and disobedience.

Finally, there is an even greater elephant in the room. In the case of an American drone pilot accidentally blowing up a wedding in Afghanistan, the Afghan relatives of the slain have very little recourse. If an American drone pilot blows up an American wedding, however, that drone pilot *and* his or her family lives in the United States. Given the likely unreliability of some significant parts of the armed forces, the names and addresses of the most hated butchers are unlikely to stay a secret for long.

In Northern Ireland, for example, the provisional IRA not only attacked soldiers; they made a habit of assassinating the officers, commanders and politicians both for revenge and as a display of might. From Lord Mountbatten to a near-miss against Margaret Thatcher herself, to a score of less well-known targets, the IRA illustrates just how difficult it is to protect against an enemy that can simply choose to not wear a uniform before their enemies visit.

Now, with that all that said, how likely is it that there will be some sort of civil conflict in the near or mid future for the United States?

Unfortunately, the correct answer here may very well be that it is not terribly *unlikely*. What is significant about America today is not that it's nearing its 250th birthday, but rather the clear and advanced signs of sickness in the body politic. The ranks of America's military are now sullen and battered after 20 years of failed nation-building, while its higher officer corps is increasingly alienated from the world of its grunts, mirroring that same cultural, economic and social divide that is currently poisoning civilian life in the US.

[Suggested reading](#)

[The humiliation of the British Army](#)

[By Aris Roussinos](#)

The legitimacy of its elite has been shaken repeatedly, and faith in the electoral process itself is now rapidly declining among large segments of the electorate. America is currently a malarial swamp of strange new faiths, creeds, soothsayers and itinerant

prophets; from Q to vaccine scientism to various forms of pseudo-gnosticism centered around trans people. To a student of history, this should also be a familiar — and quite ominous — sign: France in the 1780s had its own scientism and mesmerism, and Russia in the 1910s and 1980s was rife with soothsayers and itinerant preachers of new strange faiths.

Most ominously of all, however, looms the growing supply crisis. This crisis would be tolerable if it merely implied a lack of variety at the grocery store. In such a case, 2020s America might just have ushered in a new golden age of Soviet-style political jokes. But it is also creating havoc in the productive economy itself, denying farmers the spare parts to run their harvesters and car manufacturers the metals they need to make cars. The longer the crisis goes on, the more broken the economy will become, and the more painful the necessary reforms will be, once America's elites truly wake up to the danger.

If there is one time throughout history where civil wars are actually likely to occur, it is precisely when a delegitimated elite undertakes necessary reforms after letting underlying problems fester for decades. That is when states are at their weakest, and when they are vulnerable to the worst forms of internal disasters. Sadly, that might just be where America is headed today.