

THE CHILL AT APPOMATTOX

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next place to go, Texas had finally arrived as the place to be. The Confederate triumph was of militarism rather than military. When former General Eisenhower was sworn into office in 1953, it was not any more a recapitulation of the swearing in of General Grant than it might have been of the hypothetical swearing in of General Lee. As a youth in Kansas, Eisenhower did not read about the Civil War as he did other wars because it was still news. In the 1890s it was not yet history, much as Viet Nam is for the present generations. But by 1915, after West Point, Eisenhower could rhapsodize on military valor from Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg where he would one day retire to his farm to fade away. The nation was finally reunited with a Southern General as President, the entire nation his plantation. The Civil War was over, and the South had won.

Dwight David Eisenhower was born October 14, 1890, in Dennison, Texas. He was raised in Abilene, Kansas, one of the quintessential cowtowns the Texans took over in their sweep of the West. While Dulles threatened massive retaliation, Eisenhower and his two Texas Rangers presided over the American political scene: Sam Rayburn from Houston, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Lyndon Baines Johnson of Johnson City, the majority leader of the U. S. Senate, were both Texans to the max. Notice it did not make much difference that Ike was a Republican while Rayburn and Johnson were Democrats. The mix of control is Western Republican and Southern conservative. The reputed bastions of opposing political views were virtually indistinguishable at the top, Texan and Southern as they were. This was the informal (and rigid) basis of Lyndon Johnson's insistence on "consensus" later during the LBJ War in Viet Nam. Ike, Sam and LBJ were in agreement on the agenda. Every important American political decision made during the Fabulous Fifties bore the brand: Made in Texas.

Kennedy beat Nixon by somewhat less than one vote per precinct and made approximately the same degree of scant modification in the Eisenhower foreign policy. A freely elected President might have been expected to disown the foreign policy; Kennedy chose to inherit it. One example will suffice, the botched effort to reassert our suzerainty over Cuba. Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee had once been supplicated with mutual eagerness by General Lopez to lead a revolt against Spain there in the 1840s. Lopez was garroted when the revolt failed.

The more recent butchery at the Bay of Pigs was brought on by the one degree of modification Kennedy made in the Eisenhower (CIA and NSC) plans. Kennedy took the bogus unmilitary advice of the UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson to deny the invaders the air support necessary to insure the success of the mission. The last thing you need on a military expedition is diplomatic advice. Kennedy was killed in Dallas, Texas, of course, probably just a coincidence, but it is not coincidental that Texas is central both politically and geographically to the Empire of the United States of America. Next to California, Texas is the best idea the Confederates ever had.

Lyndon Johnson put Texas firmly back in the saddle again for his war in Viet Nam. The war in Viet Nam was preceded by the Confederate election of 1964 between LBJ and Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona. Arizona was not admitted to the Union until 1912. As a territory it was formed in large part as you might recall from land mass ceded to the United States as spoils of the war to make Texas safe for slavery, and in small part by the political engineering of Jefferson Davis in the Gadsden Purchase. It is not well known that in 1861, after the Confederate States left the Union, the Arizona territorial legislature met and voted to support the Confederacy. Goldwater carried Arizona in 1964 in addition to what used to be called the Solid South. He also picked up the fervent support of a movie actor who only a couple of years before had decided to drop out of the Democratic Party and

join the Republicans: Ronald Reagan. Arizona is the home, in other words, of Confederate Republicanism.

Senator Goldwater rationalized the election of 1964 as "A Choice, Not An Echo." The easily duped American public agreed with him and chose LBJ by a landslide. The voting public thought it was a choice between war and peace. Johnson lied. It was a choice between two kinds of war, a choice of Confederates. Even if you agree in your heart that an American Empire over as much of the known world as possible is a great idea, the war in Viet Nam was a mistake. If you think of the United States as a nation, it was even more clearly and certainly a mistake. Lyndon Johnson was the worst President of the 20th Century and quite possibly of all time. No President ever squandered a mandate of such magnitude, botched as many golden opportunities, destroyed the idealism of an entire generation, and told as many lies in the process.

Another great liar, Richard Nixon, who had been Eisenhower's Vice President, alleged he had a plan to end the war and was elected in 1968. Nixon planned to end the war by winning it and the plan turned out to be the Curtis LeMay plan of bombing North Viet Nam into the stone age. It did not work any better than LBJ's plan, especially on Christmas Eve in Cambodia.

Nixon was born in Yorba Linda, Southern California, and educated at Duke University in North Carolina where he graduated third in his class with a law degree. His greatest gift to us was his realization that we were an empire modeling the British Empire. To restore the balance of power he established relations with China and exposed Russia's eastern flank. This was the most important foreign policy initiative of the 20th Century. The rest of our foreign policy behavior, except for some of Jimmy Carter's, has been strictly reactionary. While Nixon ran the Empire, Senator George McGovern, a bonafide war hero and the "soul of the Democratic Party," tried unsuccessfully to reassert the notion of the United States as a nation.

Richard "I am not a crook" Nixon withered on the vine, being hounded out of office during impeachment proceedings. The very hound to seek his resignation was none other than the great Confederate Senator Goldwater. Gerald Ford, the only Northerner besides Kennedy to hold the office in the past forty-five years, and an appointee at that, failed in his election bid.

Ford was beaten by Jimmy Carter of Georgia who was hailed as the first "real" Southerner since the Civil War to be elected President, everybody conveniently forgetting where Eisenhower was born and where his character was formed. The crafty Lyndon Johnson ran as a Westerner, complete with cowboy boots, since the term "Southerner" still had a slightly gamey tang. While Carter certainly is a Southerner, he was no Confederate, and tried several Gorbachevian moves. He refused to support Somoza in Nicaragua, or the Shah of Iran, and renegotiated the Panama Canal Treaty. Self-determination of peoples, just as Woodrow Wilson might have expressed it, is a policy that imagines we are a country and not an empire imposing our will unnecessarily on others. The anomalous administration of Jimmy Carter deserves much more attention and respect than it has received. It will be referred to as a "failed" Presidency only as long as the empire mongers are in power. We can lead without ruling.

The modern period reached its nadir with the man who barely beat Carter, Ronald Reagan. The rise of Reagan was hardly the inevitable event that his admirers claim it to be. He had passed through his political purgatory for twenty years on the rubber chicken circuit railing about the disaster deficit spending was going to be. What he never bothered to add was that he was going to personally deliver the disaster and then leave office just before it occurred. A Southern Californian, a Confederate believer in peonage (the entry level minimum wage, uncharitably referred to by some as the "nigger" minimum wage for anyone still doubting the

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