

# THE SOLOMON SOLUTION

BY CHARLES A. HILLESTAD

With only two viable parties in the nation apparently captured by their extremists and with the sides so close to equal among voters, it's no longer possible to have debate without hate. Compromise, consensus, cooperation and conciliation are now nothing but curse words. No issue is ever settled. Even elections are just excuses for recounts and recalls.

Each side is convinced with unshakable faith that leaders of the other side are lying, thieves bent on destroying the American Way of Life. Since unfortunately there is a lot of evidence they're both correct, tensions climb. Nuclear options are considered perfectly acceptable. "UnAmerican Traitor," is the label/libel smeared on anyone daring to disagree. Four-letter expletives are banded about on the floor of Congress itself. Come to think of it, it wasn't much nastier in the halls of government in 1860 just before the decidedly uncivil Civil War.

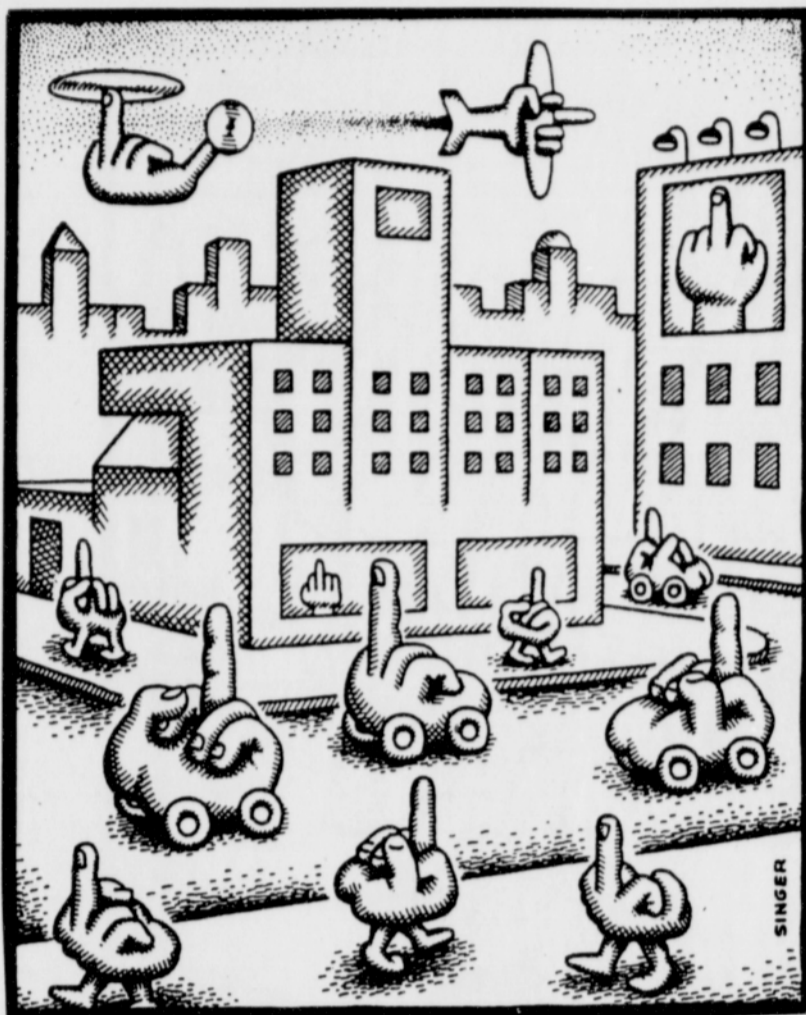
To preclude similar domestic violence from reoccurring, I propose the 'Solomon Solution'. Divide the country in half. A diagonal line drawn from, say, Monterey to Cape May could thereafter separate the nation with all Democrats migrating into Blue USA and Republicans heading for a totally Red USA refuge.

True, many will say Lincoln fought a war to prevent that very thing, but we are still paying the costs of that particular animosity yet today. Besides, our Founding Fathers fought a war in its creation to do the exact opposite of Lincoln's reUnion quest. As Jefferson implied, when in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, just do it.

Think about it. Many good things would have happened if we had just let the South go when it wanted. For example, we at least would not have had the last two compulsive liars as President. Granted, it would have been hard on slaves for awhile until market forces and technology made slavery economically unfeasible. At the same time, we didn't treat the former slaves much equally anyway until fairly recently.

In any event, rather than end up killing each other once again, let's follow what we allow for that other purportedly "sanctified" institution — marriage. In other words, let the two parties divorce on the grounds of irreconcilable difference. It is clearly better than continuing till death do us part by bullets.

The obvious choice would be for the area north of the line to be the new Democrat paradise since north of the line includes most of the Rust Belt states, the Ecotopia states and the older metropolises where most of the Demos are anyway. South of the line captures most of the Bible Belt states, the oily states and the former plantation states, which makes it wonderful territory for the Repubs who already think they own it.



ANDY SINGER, "NEW AMERICAN AESTHETIC"

There would be some dislocations of course. Hollywood, for example — except Charlton Heston, Dennis Miller and the Baldwin Brothers would have to move to Marin County and bunk with George Lucas — but that's where all the movie business is going to be in the future anyway. The greatest sorrow of the Bling Bling crowd most likely would be that convertibles and tanning would be less fun in the daily fog. Similarly, the retired factory workers currently in Florida and Arizona must choose between warmth or comrades.

This proposal however does not actually require that north of the line automatically be Democrat and south Republican. Perhaps Bush and Howard Dean could arm wrestle for which gets which. Better yet, perhaps the Republicans should be forced to buy snow shovels and the Democrats banished south of the line to eat grits. That way, each side gets to try on the others' "shoes."

Whichever way it goes, the relatively few Democrats or Republicans who are on the wrong side of the line would be asked to either relocate or remain forever silent. Yes, that seems somewhat harsh, but for everyone forced to move there will be someone on the other side needing to swap houses. Besides, what is mere freedom of speech and assembly and a home of generations compared to everyone on the respective sides of the line becoming a true unquestioned super-majority.

Either way, there are many otherwise unattainable things that should result when the split happens.

For instance:

~Blue USA would be free to unionize every job and make the minimum wage equal to the CEO's salary. Red USA in contrast would be free to trade every job to Mexico in return for cheaper handbags.

~Red USA would be free to install video cameras in every bedroom to insure no deviant behavior. Blue USA would be free to broadcast live on TV the bedroom videos being made in Red USA.

~Blue USA would be free to ban all guns, plus movies and video games featuring guns. Red USA would be free to finally arm everyone with armor piercing assault rifles so the neighbors will be more polite.

~Red USA would be free to attack any weak little country with dark-hued people any time it jolly well pleases. Blue USA would be free to let the weak but populous countries in the UN decide cows are sacred thereby making high-carb diets verboten.

~Blue USA would be free to legalize all drugs (except alcohol, tobacco, Viagra, steroids, or anything a Republican campaign contributing drug company may choose to produce). Red USA would be free to ban all drugs (except alcohol, tobacco, Viagra, steroids, or anything a Republican campaign contributing drug company may choose to produce).

~Red USA would celebrate full and unfettered religious freedom for all those who want to be evangelical Protestants. Blue USA would celebrate the first witches' coven designated as official cleric to Congress.

~Blue USA would be free to insist on absolutely clean air and water no matter the cost. Red USA would be free to buy all the clean air and water it felt it needed from Blue USA.

~Blue USA would be free to read anything so long as it's the *New York Times*. Red USA would be free to finally declare Fox News as an official branch of government.

~Red USA would never have to listen to thin pompous hypocrites again. Blue USA would never have to listen to fat pompous hypocrites again.

It is time we got on with the division before we discover that the truly nasty irrational foe, the one foaming at the mouth with zealous fervor and backed by nuclear weapons, the one who happens to hate us the most is — us.

*Charles Hillestad is an attorney and lives in Cannon Beach. He is a Vietnam Veteran (101st Airborne Division) and a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War. He writes that the Vietnam experience "permanently affected my attitudes toward entrenched hierarchies in general as well as overbearing authority figures, pettifogging bureaucrats, politicians of all stripes and establishment journalists in particular."*



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