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The United States of America

- ★ 2009-2011
(2008 election results)
President Stewart (D), in her first term, and a Democratic house battled a Republican senate. The Republican senate refused to even consider the supreme court nomination of the Democratic president for the entire two years, and frequently tried to shut down the government to prevent Democratic bills from passing.
- ★ 2011-2013
(2010 mid-term election results)
The Democrats won back the senate, and kept the house. President Stewart (D) and the Democrats had a trifecta of control.

The presidential election ended in an Electoral College tie between Democratic incumbent President Stewart, and Republican candidate Turner. Turner (R) won the popular vote, but the Democrats maintained control of both the senate and house. The Democratic house got to break the Electoral College tie and selected the incumbent Democratic President Stewart to be president for her second term, and the Democratic senate selected the incumbent Democrat to be Vice President for his second term, ignoring the mandate of the popular vote. They considered it payback for Republican refusal to consider President Stewart's Supreme Court nominees, as well as the past election where the conservative Supreme Court had handed the presidency to the Republican during a contentious recount, despite the results of the recount later showing that the Democrat had won.
- ★ 2013-2017
(2012 election results)
President Turner (R) won the presidency in his second election campaign attempt. The Democrats maintained control of both the house and senate, but barely. Washington screeched to a halt as President Turner vetoed nearly every bill and the congress didn't have enough votes to override them. Two Republican congressmen, one from New York and one from New Jersey, introduced a bill to turn the Grand Canyon into a land fill for garbage, earning them the nickname "The Congressmen from New Jerk".
- ★ Nov. 2016
(2016 election)

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★ Nov. 2020
(2020 election)

President Turner (R) won the presidency again for his second term. This time, however, the Republicans won back both the house and senate. The Republicans had a trifecta of control. One of the freshman Republicans in the house, Representative Rupert Skrelin, won his seat by means of a campaign filled with xenophobic vitriol focused on scapegoating Democrats and Cubans as evil Communists. Skrelin began a new era of McCarthyism. He was obsessed with Cuban communism, and seemed to think Cuba was the source of all evil, as well as the source of all the drugs that the Republicans had declared war on.

★ 2021-2025
(2020 election results)

Representative Skrelin (R) continued the divisiveness of his campaign into his term as congressman, and started gaining support for his xenophobic hysteria and new McCarthyism. Calls for partitioning the United States grew louder and louder during President Turner's second term.

★ 2020

The Renaissancity.com online massively multi-player virtual utopian society game, designed by a group in San Francisco led by Michael Debroux, was released. It was part game, involving collaboratively building a virtual online city and society with all of the other players, and part sociology experiment. It provided escapism from the ridiculous reality that had enveloped the United States in a cloud of doom, and gave people an opportunity to feel like they were doing something productive in a futile, corrupted political system. The game quickly became extremely popular with the many people disillusioned by how extremist their government was becoming.

Debroux, whose politics were only slightly left of center, was already tired of partisan bickering in Washington, and after witnessing Skrelin's campaign he set the game in a virtual Cuba in response to Skrelin's anti-Cuban and anti-Democrat rhetoric.

The game had multiple releases to deal with various problems the designers encountered. One such problem was dealing with players who had rebellious personalities, the rebels without a clue who enjoyed trolling anonymously in online comment sections. Initially they protested against the game's strict rules of acceptable behavior that kept getting their avatars thrown in virtual prison or kicked out of the game. Debroux's team created a sub-game, a virtual penal island, modeled on the Cuban "Isla de Juventud", where the rebel's avatars would be ostracized but they could continue playing the game without the strict rules of behavior, to mollify the rebels.

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The rebels were mostly satisfied with this solution, but every once in a while a talented hacker in the group would attempt to break into the code to allow their avatar to “swim” to the mainland and rejoin the original game.

- ★ 2021 The Renaissancity movie began production: The Hollywood movie industry was another group vehemently opposed to Skrelin’s divisiveness. They cherished the Renaissancity game, and collaborated with Debroux to make a movie based on it.
- ★ 2022 The Republican senators from New York and New Jersey were given the nickname “The senators from New Jerk” after they introduced a bill to turn the Grand Canyon into a landfill.
- ★ Summer, 2022 The Renaissancity movie was released.
- ★ Feb. 25, 2023 Michael Debroux gave an Oscars speech for the Renaissancity movie. It was well known that the award was more political than meritorious.
- ★ Feb. 3, 2024 **President Turner (R) signed the partitioning bill (nicknamed “The Treaty of Paris, part 2”) that split the United States into two different countries: Western United States (WUS), where the liberals went, and Eastern United States (EUS) where the conservatives went.**

The Mississippi River was generally the dividing line between the two new countries. To the north where the Mississippi branched west into Minnesota, the border switched to follow the Saint Croix River to maintain state borders between Wisconsin and Minnesota. To the south where the Mississippi slices off the toes of boot-shaped Louisiana, the WUS border crossed east of the river to maintain Louisiana’s border.

The conservative Republicans chose to go east because they wanted to preserve the great American history and heritage, and merely rewind the geographical clock back to before the Louisiana Purchase. They wanted to keep Washington D.C. as their capitol. They wanted Plymouth Rock, the Revolutionary War battle sites, and the site of the first permanent English colony, Jamestown, all under their control. The liberals also trusted the global climate change scientists who were predicting that the east coast would face far more severe flooding in the next few decades as a result of climate change than the west coast, and were happy to let the conservatives who rejected the science lie in the east coast bed they had made.

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Mitosis: EUS and WUS

At first the general response of the American public to the partitioning was mostly indifference. A small handful of patriotic protesters were outraged that “the greatest country in the world” was dissolving. A slightly larger minority of political extremists were overjoyed that “those people” would no longer be a part of “their country”. The overwhelming majority of people however just didn’t care. Most people didn’t grasp the magnitude of the impact that the split would have on their lives.

The first few years after the split life went on relatively uninterrupted, just as it had in past years when they went to war with Syria, when they went to war with Tunisia, and when eleven senators were found guilty of using tax dollars to build personal vacation homes in Florida. The only thing that would rattle these peoples’ cages was personal economic turmoil. As long as they had a job and steady income, and as long as their favorite TV show wasn’t canceled, who cared what went on in politics?

After a few years however, the liberals living in EUS started migrating west and the conservatives living in WUS started migrating east. At first it was a slow trickle, only the people who held relatively strong political opinions left their homes. As time passed, more and more people became frustrated enough with the changes in law to move to the country that better suited their political beliefs. Everyone has their tipping point, and the political climate continued on an upward trajectory of extremism and a downward trajectory of diversity until most everyone’s tipping point had been reached.

The EUS government began its political cleansing by making acts of homosexuality a crime. It resulted in an exodus of homosexuals. Next they made English the official national language, and Christianity the official national religion. This resulted in an exodus of former immigrants and non-Christians. They began government funding of Christian churches. They made abortion illegal and capital punishment legal. They dropped affirmative action and many social programs, initiated a flat tax system, and increased spending on the military. Journalism was decimated until all that remained was a government propaganda machine, and the arts and entertainment industries quickly withered away.

The WUS government began their political cleansing by raising taxes, especially on the wealthy, to pay for social programs and to build a new capitol in San Francisco. This led to the exodus of wealthy conservatives. Next they passed a series of laws called “cultural sensitivity laws” that effectively made it a crime to not be “politically correct”. These laws drove thousands of people east as more and more protected groups were covered by special laws, leading to lawsuits claiming discrimination against them.

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According to the year 2030 census data in the two countries, 98% of the EUS population was conservatives and 95% of the WUS population was liberals. Only 2% of eastern liberals and 5% of western conservatives clung desperately to their homes. The mass migration was relatively peaceful, especially when compared to other historical mass migrations, such as when Pakistan separated from India in 1947 and up to a million people were killed in riots and local fighting. In the division of the United States, it was difficult to tell there was a mass migration until viewed in hindsight over the course of many years. At first there were some protests, but public apathy muted them. The protesters started to become more rowdy and violent in an attempt to gain attention, but realized fairly quickly that theirs was a lost cause, and their efforts would be better spent on development of their new country.

⇒ Feb. 3, 2024 – Nov. 2024 President Turner (R) continued out the end of what had been his second term as president of the USA, as interim president of EUS.

⇒ Nov. 2024 In EUS's first presidential election, not wanting to change horses mid-stream, establishment Republican President Turner was elected to what some called his "3rd term". He became the first elected president of the new country of EUS. During this term, with the Democrats mostly eradicated from EUS, Representative Skrelin distilled his anti-communist venom from a combined anti-Democrat and anti-Cuban crusade to a crusade focused purely on the Cubans. Establishment politicians weren't terribly concerned about communism, but they had campaigned with the drug war as one of the main components of their platform, and Cuba had become a hotbed of drug trafficking, making anti-Cuban sentiment rampant. Meanwhile WUS began building a new national capitol in San Francisco.

⇒ Jan. 2025 Texas split from WUS and became its own country, The Republic of Texas.

⇒ Nov. 2028 President Turner ran for a second term as EUS president. Representative Skrelin ran for president against Turner, and refined his rhetoric to focus on anti-Cuban and anti-establishment-Republican messages. His speeches contrasted Turner's establishment vision versus his own radical, non-establishment vision, claiming that Turner was in the past and had a "pre-partitioning mentality".

⇒ Jan. 2029 President Skrelin took office. His Neo-McCarthyism was distilled into a singular anti-Cuban crusade. His leadership style quickly turned into that of a hard-liner, egomaniacal psychopath with a Napoleon complex.

Internet Only Appendix A History Timeline**Bay of Pigs Avenged**

⇒ Mar. 2029 Under President Skrelin's command, and with a culture and system of government set up for compliance with the president, EUS invaded Cuba. Skrelin was hell-bent on proving that the EUS had not been weakened by its split with the WUS, and was eager to make an example of someone. On the Cuban front he had the rest of the country primed to follow his lead.

Cuba made an easy target to demonstrate EUS's power, and not just because of the anti-communist and anti-drug fervor in the EUS. Russia, Cuba's protector during the original 1960's Bay of Pigs calamity, had abandoned its interest in Cuba due to the continued weakening of the Russian communist party since the 1990's along with economic hardships leaving Russia with insufficient funds to protect a communist government so far from it. China, which had become the most powerful Communist nation at this time, felt no bonds with Cuba due to such divergent brands of communism and culture. Cuba was also nice and close to the EUS so they wouldn't have to overextend themselves with a distant war. Cuba was also extremely militarily weak, and made an easy target.

The Cubans were sucker-punched. Ramón García, the hand-picked successor to Fidel Castro, was the dictator running Cuba at the time. President Skrelin had a personal grudge against President Garcia, because their personalities were so similar, and that type of iron-fisted personality repels similar personalities. During Skrelin's election campaign the two traded escalating insults via the media, but President García had no idea that public resentment towards Cuba was growing so quickly in the EUS, or that President Skrelin would escalate things beyond verbal insults. For decades before the resurgence of McCarthyism the Americans had ignored Cuba, thinking of it as a poverty-stricken non-threat. When the first wave of attacks began in March, García quickly made his home in an underground bomb shelter. Little did he know that it wouldn't be protection enough from what was coming.

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Media outlets around the world had a field day. One journalist, who knew a thing or two about American History, dubbed the invasion “Bay of Pigs Avenged”. Other journalists scrambled to come up with similar catchy hooks like “Bay of Pigs Part 2” or “March: In like a lion, the slaughter at Cuba”. Of course every TV news program had invasion theme music and an invasion trademarked graphic to go along with their over-sensationalized updates. For EUS citizens it was entertainment: distant, detached, and seen only through the filter of propaganda video on TV.

⇒ July 2029 **EUS dropped numerous nuclear bombs on Cuba, obliterating the country.**

The invasion hadn’t gone as smoothly as desired. Cuba had too much land area for the destruction of drug crops to be effective using conventional weapons, and President García had eluded capture and assassination. In the United States before partitioning Republicans had always placed a high value on hierarchy and duty, and those values not only carried over into the EUS culture, but were amplified by the lack of Democratic resistance to them. In a culture with a tightly hierarchical organization, where rigid conformity and duty are expected and received, a psychologically unstable leader with a grudge in charge of it all can lead to devastating destruction, as there is no mechanism for resistance. Just as Hitler’s commands were executed by faithful minions in Nazi Germany, so were Skrelin’s commands to drop nuclear bombs on Cuba.

Only a few hundred citizens who happened to be on the eastern slopes in the southeastern mountains of the Sierra Maestra region survived to be rescued by the United Nations. Similarly, nearly all vegetation and animal life was destroyed. The entire country was reduced to an uninhabitable radioactive wasteland. Radiation problems were exacerbated by the destruction of a couple of cheaply and hastily constructed nuclear reactors that President García had constructed in an attempt to modernize Cuba’s energy system.

The world was shocked. There were calls to attack the EUS and to assassinate Skrelin, but no one dared. The EUS had plenty more nuclear weapons, and no one wanted to provoke him and risk being Skrelin’s next target. The EUS media propaganda machine continually stated that the bombing was a necessary part of the war on drugs, and posted polling statistics claiming that the majority of

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EUS citizens agreed. No one knew whether the statistics were phony or accurate, but if they were accurate, how do you tell a nation of dangerous psychopaths that they are wrong? The United Nations finally resorted to sanctions and cutting off all political and economic ties with the EUS.

⇒ Jan. 2030
 The EUS establishment politicians, who Skrelin had convinced his fellow citizens to abandon during his election, saw their opportunity to regain control as the sanctions began to take effect, convincing their colleagues to impeach Skrelin and begin making amends.

Renaissancity.com and Puerto Paz

◇ July 2030
 The Renaissancity Coalition bought Cuba and began bacteria neutralization of radioactivity: After the nuclear annihilation of Cuba, the EUS claimed control of the land as occupiers. The soil was radioactive, making the entire country uninhabitable, so EUS had no interest in redeveloping the land, and after Skrelin's impeachment the EUS's establishment leadership was eager to appease United Nations demands to relinquish control of Cuba in order to lift sanctions. Both the EUS and the United Nations were at a loss as to what to do with Cuba though. The Cuban survivors, who numbered less than one thousand, had all been resettled in other countries. The land was unusable. In stepped Michael Debroux and a conglomeration of wealthy Hollywood elites. The Renaissancity Coalition, as they called themselves, offered to purchase Cuba from the EUS. The EUS had just finished paying retribution damages to the Cuban survivors, and had spent a tremendous amount of money restocking its military after the Cuban invasion, and was desperate for new sources of income that didn't involve breaking their pledges to keep taxes low. They were eager to offload Cuba, and in July of 2030 they relinquished it for a bargain price.

Most observers of the deal assumed that the Renaissancity Coalition, especially since it involved so many Hollywood filmmakers, was purchasing the country to film it and create a documentary memorial to shame the EUS and provide tribute to those who had perished. These observers were partially correct, as the coalition did indeed create such a documentary; however their goals extended far beyond merely filming the land. Shortly after the filming of Cuba concluded, the coalition announced plans to try spraying Cuba with an experimental bacteria that had been engineered to digest and neutralize radioactivity. By December of 2032 the experiment was declared a success.

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- ◇ Dec. 2032 The Cuban island was habitable again. The Renaissancity Coalition investors began construction of Puerto Paz’s capital city of New Athens, based on the Renaissancity virtual game. The Renaissancity Coalition now had a 42,426 square mile blank slate, and twelve years of virtual utopian sociology experiment data from which to build a new country from scratch.

Construction of the capital city began nearly immediately based on the Renaissancity game. City planners, architects, engineers and other professionals had spent countless hours playing the game in past years, making the game’s virtual city as realistic as possible, which accelerated the final design phase that preceded groundbreaking. Funding of construction was opened up to a diverse group of idealistic investors and entrepreneurs from around the world, who all were screened and required to take a pledge of anonymity for the first decade to avoid pay-for-play favoritism. The world was eager to see Cuba rebuilt.

The Coalition didn’t want to confuse the virtual game with the real country or capitol city, so they selected new names for the new country. Drawing on the Spanish-language origins of Cuba, and their desire for peace to blossom from the ashes of vile destruction, they chose to call the new country “Puerto de Paz”, Spanish for “Peace Port”. A referendum quickly shortened the name to the alliterative “Puerto Paz”. The new capitol city, which received the vast majority of funding, design, and effort in the first decade of Puerto Paz’s existence was named “New Athens”, in reference to the ancient Greek city of Athens, the birthplace of democracy and a center of literature, philosophy, engineering, and the arts.

- ◇ 2042 New Athens was flourishing, and development of secondary cities in Puerto Paz was progressing too. The young Puerto Paz government was flooded with applications for citizenship from people around the world seeking a better society.

Marcus and Dylan

- Friday, June 20, 2053 Marcus and Dylan, a pair of 17 year olds, began their journey in New Rochelle, NY, EUS.

Internet Only Appendix B
Author's Comments Regarding Climate Change in this Story

In this story, I have mentioned some impacts of climate change on life in the year 2053, however, in order to make the story workable, I had to reduce much of those impacts to less than what scientists actually predict for the year 2053. Flooding is really the only impact that I've tried to portray true to predictions, but even my portrayals in this story may underestimate the flooding we'll actually experience.

97% of climate scientists believe that climate change is real, and by far the consensus is that it is caused by humans (among many potential resources, see <https://climate.nasa.gov/scientific-consensus/>).

If you and your family went to 100 doctors, and 97 of them said that, although your symptoms are relatively minor at the moment, tests show that you and your spouse and children all have lung cancer caused by your smoking cigarettes, but that if you switched to a different product that produced the same effects as nicotine but was 100% safe and healthy then you could eliminate the cancer in everyone in your family, what would you do? Claim that the 97 doctors are all lying, or don't know what they are talking about? Or that your smoking habit funds jobs in the tobacco industry that are critical to the economy (even though the safe alternate could provide jobs too)? Why would you not switch to the safe alternative in order to save yourself and your family?