



## Secession Movement?

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Scotland has voted--for now--to remain a part of the United Kingdom, a move which avoids such huge and thorny decisions as: how much of Britain's national debt would belong to the newly-independent Scottish nation? Would Scotland have to create its own army and navy, or enter into a contract with the UK for mutual defense? What currency would Scottish citizens use--the euro, the pound or some new currency that hasn't been created yet? Would other countries have to set up embassies in the new nation, and would the country have to create its own embassies around the world? And the most interesting question of all: if Scotland leaves the UK, would Northern Ireland and / or Wales follow?

The vote has put the spotlight on a lot of other separatist initiatives around the world. Prominent among these are the French-speaking citizens of Quebec in Canada, the citizens of Spain's Catalonia, Uighurs and Tibetans in China, the Flemish in Belgium, the Istrian Italians in Croatia, the Moravians in the Czech Republic and many others.

Nor is the concept totally foreign to the U.S. Texas Governor Rick Perry started his own separatist movement by publicly talked about the possibility that his state could exit the U.S., and a Texas secession petition garnered 125,000 signatures in 2012. Its backers hope to make Texas what it was for ten years in the 1800s--a sovereign nation.

In case you were wondering, the Scottish nation would have been the world's 42nd largest, behind Finland and ahead of Israel, and secession would have knocked the UK's GDP down a rung from 6th to 7th in the world, behind Brazil. An independent Quebec's GDP would rank 33rd among the world's nations, behind Colombia, comfortably ahead of Denmark. The sovereign nation of Texas would instantly become the world's 12th largest economy, larger than Mexico or Spain. The state's 27 million people would qualify Texas as the world's 44th most populous, behind Venezuela and ahead of Ghana.

Constitutional experts note that, unlike Quebec and Scotland, Texas doesn't actually have the right to vote itself out of its national affiliation. Polls show that 80% of Texas voters prefer to remain American, just as Scottish voters have preferred to remain English and, so far, the Quebecois and Catalonians have voted to stay in their respective countries. But as these votes become increasingly common, it's possible that the world is entering a new era where secession initiatives are becoming more thinkable. Thirty or 50 years from now, the global map--and perhaps the American one as well--might look very different than it does today