

The Clash of the Clans in the British Divorce

Authors : Samuel Gary Beckton

Abstract : Ever since the Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014, there has been a threat of a second referendum. However, if there was another referendum and the majority favoured independence, it is highly likely to be by a small majority. In this paper, it will look into the hypothetical situation of what could have happened if Scotland had voted in favour of independence in 2014. If this occurred, there would be many Unionists within Scotland, including devoted supporters of the Better Together campaign. There was a possibility of some Scottish Unionists not willing to accept the result of the Referendum unchallenged and use their right of self-determination through the UN Charter for their region to remain within the United Kingdom. The Shetland and Orkney Islands contemplated of opting out of an independent Scotland in 2013. This caught the attention of some politicians and the media, via confirming the possibility of some form of partition in Scotland and could have gained extra attention if partition quickly became a matter of 'need' instead of 'want'. Whilst some Unionists may have used petitions and formed pressure groups to voice their claims, others may have used more hard-line tactics to achieve their political objectives, including possible protest marches and acts of civil unrest. This could have possibly spread sectarian violence between Scottish Unionists and Nationalists. Glasgow has a serious issue of this kind of sectarianism, which has escalated in recent years. This is due to the number communities that have been established from Irish Immigrants, which maintain links with Northern Irish loyalists and republicans. Some Scottish Unionists not only have sympathy towards Northern Irish loyalists but actively participate with the paramilitary groups and gave support. Scottish loyalists could use these contacts to create their own paramilitary group(s), with aid from remaining UK (RUK) benefactors. Therefore, this could have resulted in the RUK facing a serious security dilemma, with political and ethical consequences to consider. The RUK would have the moral obligation to protect Scottish Unionists from persecution and recognise their right of self-determination, whilst ensuring the security and well-being of British citizens within and outside of Scotland. This work takes into consideration the lessons learned from the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. As an era of 'Troubles' could occur in Scotland, extending into England and Northern Ireland. This is due to proximity, the high number of political, communal and family links in Scotland to the RUK, and the delicate peace process within Northern Ireland which shares a similar issue. This paper will use British and Scottish Government documents prior to the Scottish referendum to argue why partition might happen and use cartography of maps of a potential partition plan for Scotland. Reports from the UK National Statistics, National Rail, and Ministry of Defence shall also be utilised, and use of journal articles that were covering the referendum.

Keywords : identity, nationalism, Scotland, unionism

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