

They Can Win

by Phillip W. Weiss

My dear fellow Americans: do not take for granted that the United States will survive intact. Nations fragment and sometime entirely disappear. In 1848, Mexico ceded a huge parcel of its territory to the United States. In 1903, Columbia fragmented into two independent nations: Columbia and Panama. By 1918, Austria-Hungary, the German Empire, and Tsarist Russia were gone. In 1938, Austria disappeared. In 1939, Czechoslovakia and Poland disappeared. In 1945, Germany disappeared. In 1947, India split into two independent nations: India and Pakistan. In 1948, the Mandate of Palestine became the State of Israel. In 1971, Pakistan split into two independent nations: Pakistan and Bangladesh. In 1979, the United States fragmented, ceding the Panama Canal Zone, an unincorporated American territory, to Panama. By 1980, the British and French colonial empires were virtually gone, succeeded by a slew of independent nations. In 1990, East Germany disappeared and became part of West Germany, which in turn reconstituted itself into one united Germany. In 1991, the Soviet Union fragmented into twelve independent nations. By 1992, Yugoslavia had fragmented into five independent nations. In 1993, Czechoslovakia fragmented into two independent nations: the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 2011, Sudan fragmented into two independent nations: Sudan and South Sudan.

In most cases, the dissolution of a nation or a radical shift in political power within a nation is preceded by a period of political and social turmoil that

is violent and include street protests. In many cases, these shifts in political power are driven by a cadre of ideologically motivated activists determined to grab power, such as what occurred in thirteen British colonies in North America in 1776, France in 1789, Russia in 1917, Italy in 1922, Germany in 1933, China in 1949, and Cambodia in 1975.

The street protests that are occurring in the United States in the wake of allegations of police brutality is not an historical anomaly unique to the United States but is the same process that has occurred in other countries that subsequently experienced radical shifts in political power. Left unchecked, this process can sweep away our system of government and transform the political character of the nation. Accordingly, it befits everyone to treat the current protests, and the protesters, with the utmost seriousness because, as history has shown, with perseverance and an effective organization, THEY CAN WIN.