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National Security Threats: The Future of Federalism and Division Concerns

Introduction:

The winds of division are sweeping across the United States, fueled by issues of immigration and border security, posing a challenge that some view as a major threat to American national security and a dangerous harbinger of the dissolution of the union of 50 states. When the state of Texas decided to defy the federal government and refused to deploy federal border patrol agents in the Eagle Pass area on its southern border with Mexico to remove barbed wire that state officials had installed to prevent the influx of migrants - after the governor described them as “invaders” (1) - this signaled that relations between the states and the federal government were facing a crisis, and the possibility of other states rebelling became a reality threatening the unity and integrity of American territory.

Following the rebellion of Texas Governor “Greg Abbott” against the decisions of the federal government and the administration of US President “Joe Biden” regarding the issue of migrants and borders, when he announced the call-up of the National Guard to protect and secure the state from migrants and cross-border crime, and the White House described the governor’s decision as a “bizarre, unsafe political stunt that does nothing to solve the problem” (2), and nearly 25 other states⁽³⁾ - governed by Republicans - announced their support for the governor of Texas, the question arises: ***Is the United States really facing the threat of secession and division?***

Research Problem

Western democratic systems often assume in their interaction with crises that they are the most capable systems for facing and resolving issues efficiently.

This assumption necessitates a reevaluation and analysis of policies and a comparison of the nature of political systems and their preparedness to handle emergent crises. Moreover, crises highlight the failure of many mechanisms through which democracy traditionally proves its effectiveness in enhancing governance efficiency and providing an advantage to the performance of systems described as democratic⁽⁴⁾. Can we discern patterns of authoritarian rule in the response and handling of the “Texas” crisis?

Certain violent measures adopted by the central government have raised numerous questions and challenges, such as their effectiveness, long-term negative repercussions, and whether these measures reflect on the system of democratic values and the mechanisms of political interaction in general, especially regarding public freedoms.



Research Questions:

In light of the current scenario, a set of key questions arises that this paper attempts to answer within the possible reviews of the foundations of the democratic system during crises, particularly those related to forward-thinking and future forecasting, as well as preparations for crisis management that affect the political practices of states:

- How did the state of “Texas” reach this stage in facing the American government? Could “Texas” be the first domino to fall out of the American union, which has been stable since the formation of the union?
- Does this crisis represent the first of its kind in the relationship between states and the federal government, or has the United States experienced similar crises with other states in the past?
- Could the situation in “Texas” lead to an armed military confrontation between federal forces under the command of the president and the National Guard forces under the command of state governors?
- Who is responsible for managing and regulating the issue of immigration and guarding the borders in the United States?
- What about Texas’s claim of being invaded? How did the White House respond to Texas’s actions?
- What triggered the crisis, and are there historical contexts for this state that reinforce the idea of its secession?
- How does such a crisis pose a threat to American national security? What are the potential scenarios in the foreseeable and distant future?

First: The Conceptual Framework of the Study:

A- The Concept of Federalism:

Federalism refers to a form of political organization characterized by an alliance of states or regions that together form a single federal state, based on a legal bond which is the constitution. This constitution delineates

the powers distributed between the central government and the units. The aim of the federal system is to reduce the negative impact of centralization and to promote the preservation of the independence of each state while maintaining the national fabric at the same time.

The distribution of powers between the central government and the units is what allows each state in a federal system to have its own system and specific authorities in governance. This distribution aligns with the requirements of the plurality of peoples, their cultures, aspirations, and achieves aspects of unity and independence simultaneously. Therefore, writings and studies ⁽⁵⁾ point to the advantages of political federalism, which include the ability to achieve social justice, eliminate racism, promote shared democracy, and create opportunities for economic growth. This system requires good organization and coordinated distribution of powers to protect the rights of member states without neglecting or hindering any state.

Federal systems around the world have varied according to the conditions of different countries such as the United States of America, Canada, Switzerland, Mexico, and Russia, among others. The characteristics of a federal state include the constitutional distribution of powers between the different regions and the central government in a precise and constitutional manner, the principle of shared sovereignty, where each region or state has its own characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses, but they all possess shared sovereignty represented in the agreement on the overall design of the federal state they constitute.

Additionally, flexibility and adaptability are key, meaning federal states are ready to deal with new challenges, adapt to changing local and global conditions, and quickly update their policies. Cultural pluralism ⁽⁶⁾ is also a feature, as each region retains its own cultural and historical heritage. Regions under a federal system enjoy local governance that determines responsibilities and competencies at the local and regional levels according to local developments and needs. Moreover, federal

states operate under a democratic system aimed at achieving public interests, ensuring citizens' rights, and providing freedom of expression and political engagement, while ensuring the federal state's independence in determining its internal and external policies. This federal system integrates all regions within the union and unifies common goals and interests at the national level.

Federalism was established in countries around the world following the guidance of the founding fathers of American federalism - "James Madison" and "Alexander Hamilton". Both specified two essential conditions for the formation of a federal state: first, the need for several states or regions to have a historical bond that allows their inhabitants to feel a shared sense of nationality; and second, the desire for national integration while maintaining the independence of each region ⁽⁷⁾ with flexibility in determining its policies and applying them in a manner more suited to community needs.

The implementation of the federal system faces numerous challenges and obstacles, the most prominent of which include the issue of the compatibility of the units or regions working within the federal system, and the balance between central and local authorities. This system requires adherence to the constitution and legal systems to avoid any conflicts or contradictions in laws ⁽⁸⁾.

B- The Establishment of American Federalism:

Before its independence, the United States of America consisted of 13 colonies, all located on the western shore of the Atlantic Ocean, with a population of no more than two million. These colonies were under the British rule, as Britain had managed to control the eastern coast of North America and imposed several taxes and measures on the settlers. These included the monopoly of English ships on transporting colonial goods, taxes on goods imported from Britain, and taxes on agricultural land. This led the colonists to oppose these policies and demand equality with British citizens. Britain rejected their demands, prompting the colonial representatives to meet in 1776 and declare their

independence from the British crown on July 4, 1776, with the Declaration of Independence issued in Philadelphia ⁽⁹⁾. Each colony then became a free and independent state. Britain subsequently waged war on the Americans, who elected George Washington as the leader of the liberation war. They triumphed at the Battle of Yorktown, forcing the British to recognize the independence of the United States in 1783.

These new states realized that they could not continue the war against Britain, achieve victory, and maintain independence without forming a confederation treaty. Under this treaty, the thirteen states pledged to assist each other, coordinate their foreign policies, and organize their military affairs. To this end, a congress was convened in Philadelphia on March 14, 1787, with 50 delegates participating, led by key federalists like George Washington, who chaired the convention, James Madison, known as the father of federalism, and Alexander Hamilton⁽¹⁰⁾. After arduous efforts, the consensus shifted towards forming a union rather than merely reforming the confederation. On September 17, 1787 ⁽¹¹⁾, the federal constitution was approved, establishing the United States of America.

Subsequently, waves of European immigration flowed into the United States, driven by political persecution, economic crises, or the pursuit of wealth. This influx contributed to the social and sociological development of the states. With the growing population, westward expansion occurred, encouraged by the federal government, which purchased some areas and seized others by force. This expansion came at the expense of the indigenous population (Native Americans), most of whom faced displacement and genocide ⁽¹²⁾. As a result, the number of states increased, and the country's territory expanded throughout the nineteenth century to encompass most of North America.

In succession, the United States adopted a national constitution in 1787, establishing a republican parliamentary system. This federal system allowed each state the freedom to choose its government and internal laws, while the central government—comprising the



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president, the administration, and Congress—oversaw common affairs such as foreign policy, defense, and security matters (13). The constitution stipulated the structure of the federal government based on the principle of separation of powers: the legislative branch, exercised by Congress, consisting of two houses: the House of Representatives, with members proportional to each state's population, and the Senate, with two members from each state; the executive branch, headed by the president elected for a four-year term, accountable to the people rather than Congress, with powers to command the military, sign treaties, and appoint ambassadors; and the judicial branch, exercised by the Supreme Court, comprising a chief justice and eight judges appointed by the president. The court's responsibilities include resolving disputes between states and ensuring the constitutionality of federal laws.

C- Revising the assumptions of Federalism:

If we agree that the central authority's primary task within any state is to manage the affairs of individuals to achieve their interests across the state's regions within a framework of justice and equality, the unified state's form, where all central powers are concentrated, typically involves security protection, legislation and enforcement of laws, economic resource management, and the development of education and growth plans, usually centered in one region. The distribution of roles between the center and the regions is based on several implicit assumptions:

First Assumption: The problems facing the state's regions are similar, and thus the center can formulate unified policies and solutions through its central agencies to address these issues.

Second Assumption: The center is capable, through the regions, of identifying the necessary priorities for development and reform, and then adapting the general policies issued by the center to serve the reality of each region in accordance with its needs.

Third Assumption: Regarding the issue of wealth distribution and the fairness in dividing

it, considering what the state collects from regional resources and various fees, the central agencies are capable of efficiently and fairly distributing these public funds to the regions through their central and branch offices.

Fourth Assumption: The general culture is similar across the state's regions, enabling the central authority to enforce unified cultural rules on citizens across these regions, such as official dress codes and holiday celebration methods.

Fifth Assumption: The public administration at the state's center responsible for making and implementing public policies is neutral, free from any biases or political inclinations.

Upon reviewing these assumptions, we find a fundamental flaw in the basic idea underpinning the unified state, especially in large countries; because the problems and priorities across the state's regions are not usually similar (14). Additionally, the general culture and religious perspective may vary significantly from one region to another, meaning that the central authority's imposition of specific cultural policies could be a form of cultural dominance that might lead to a desire to break away from the political unity. Similarly, the assumption of economic justice in central decisions regarding the extraction, management, and distribution of income from regional resources may reveal economic favoritism towards the center due to the broad political powers concentrated in the capital and the proximity of the central region's inhabitants to the center of economic and political decision-making. Furthermore, policy analysis shows that a significant problem for policymakers is their weak ability to comprehend the importance of fundamental issues related to resource distribution, belonging, income inequality, and immigration issues.

It is worth noting that the aforementioned problems, which can easily reveal their political flaws in the long term in a unified state, can be mitigated by administrative decentralization systems. These systems aim to delegate powers to elected councils from each region's inhabitants, applicable only in unified states that implement elections at both the national and local levels to ensure councils reflect the desires of each

region's residents. For example, France is a unified state where political decision-making powers are concentrated in Paris. However, administrative decentralization emerged due to electoral systems that determine who manages the region, as French cities have directorates and elected councils with legal personalities. These councils have elected presidents, and the president of the council in large cities is called the mayor, who has the authority of a governor and municipal head. These local administrative units have extensive competencies, yet French administrative units follow the central authority in political matters, while local issues and essential services are handled through decentralized methods. Similarly, in the United Kingdom - a unified state - the government in London has allowed the establishment of local governments and councils across Britain⁽¹⁵⁾.

It can be concluded that evaluating the effectiveness of federalism depends on the existence or absence of electoral systems to represent popular inclinations in the regions and work on fulfilling them through elected legislative councils. It also depends on the extent of administrative powers delegated to these elected bodies. In the absence or weakness of such systems and initiatives, the concentration of powers in the political capital region leads to economic, administrative, and cultural dominance by the central region. Additionally, the political trajectory and lawmaking will, due to accumulated and concentrated power, favor the interests of the political capital region, potentially leading to political discontent and opening the door to fragmentation and division, whether due to internal factors or external intervention.

Second: areas of influence:

A- The Relative Importance of Texas:

According to federal laws, no region can be considered more important or have greater powers than another. However, in light of the current crisis in the relationship between Texas and the central government, it is essential to highlight the state's history and its unique historical and economic characteristics. Texas is located in the southwestern United States,

covering an area of 696,241 square kilometers, making it the second-largest state by area after Alaska. It is bordered to the south by the Gulf of Mexico, to the north by Oklahoma, to the east by Arkansas and Louisiana, to the south by the Gulf of Mexico and Mexico, and to the west by New Mexico.

Historically:

Texas was originally home to various Native American tribes: the Apache and Comanche in the west, the Tonkawa in the center, the Karankawa along the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caddo in the east. The term "Six Flags over Texas"⁽¹⁶⁾ refers to the numerous nations that have ruled over this land. Spain was the first European country to govern Texas, and France also established a short-lived colony there. Mexico controlled the area until 1836, when Texas gained its independence and became an independent republic. After nine years of independence, in 1845, it joined the United States as the 28th state⁽¹⁷⁾. This annexation led to a series of events that triggered the Mexican-American War in 1846.

Economically:

Texas is considered the "Crown Jewel of America" due to its size and natural and geological features. It is a significant agricultural hub, with vast expanses of farmland and diverse food crops. The state's agricultural abundance is supported by its numerous rivers. Additionally, Texas is a major oil state, holding approximately 33% of the United States' oil reserves, meaning more than a third of the nation's oil production comes from Texas. The state also leads several major industries in the U.S., including agriculture, petrochemicals, energy, electronics, aerospace, and medical sciences. These industries bolster Texas's strong commercial sectors, comprising retail, wholesale, banking, insurance, and construction⁽¹⁸⁾.

B- What Happened in Texas?

Texas is a state where Republicans enjoy significant popularity and is currently governed by Republican Greg Abbott. The geographical prominence, demographic concerns, and escalating political and ideological competition,



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especially with the approaching presidential election nominations, are key drivers of the current crisis. During President Trump's term, warnings about the influx of migrants from South American countries were raised, and efforts were made to build a wall to prevent illegal immigration. However, the situation changed significantly under President Biden, who has allowed more immigration, particularly as data indicates that migrants from the Middle East and Asia are entering the U.S. daily through the Mexican border⁽¹⁹⁾.

According to the state governor's office⁽²⁰⁾, Texas has sent over 100,000 people to other states as part of a program to relocate illegal immigrants from its territory, leading to a conflict with federal authorities over border security measures. This prompted the state to "defend" itself against what some have called the "invasion of outsiders"⁽²¹⁾ by reinforcing its borders with more barbed wire, high gates, and various surveillance cameras.

The crisis escalated politically when Greg Abbott accused President Biden of destroying the country due to the federal government's stance on illegal immigrants. Additionally, Abbott authorized the police to arrest migrants crossing the U.S. border illegally and granted local judges the power to issue orders for their deportation. On December 19th, the governor signed a bill criminalizing illegal entry into the state, which conflicts with federal authority.

In response, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit on January 4th against Texas to prevent state officials from arresting and deporting illegal immigrants. Assistant Attorney General **Vanita Gupta** stated, "Under the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution and long-standing Supreme Court precedent, states cannot enact immigration laws that conflict with the framework established by Congress"⁽²²⁾. Based on this claim, the Supreme Court ruled on January 22nd, by a majority 5 to 4 votes, to allow federal border agents to remove the barbed wire installed by Texas officials at the border, prompting Texas to reject the measure and deploy the National Guard to the Mexican border. The situation became more complicated

when the Republican governor decided to send migrants to Democrat-controlled areas, resulting in over 102,000 people being sent to other states⁽²³⁾. The Republican Governors Association expressed solidarity with the Texas governor, supporting his use of "every tool and strategy, including barbed wire fences, to secure the borders"⁽²⁴⁾.

Amid the crisis, a group calling itself the "Army of God" called for a mobilization to Texas on January 29, starting from Virginia and passing through California and Arizona, to support the state against illegal immigrants by force of arms⁽²⁵⁾. In response, federal government forces and the National Guard moved toward the state, raising fears of a potential clash.

On January 25, former President and potential presidential candidate **Donald Trump** called on Republican states to support Texas in confronting the (invasion) of immigrants⁽²⁶⁾. Meanwhile, Oklahoma Governor **Kevin Stitt** described the situation as a "**powder keg that deserves tension**," declaring his support for Texas in defending itself.

Third: Possible Scenarios

Before discussing the potential scenarios that threaten not only the unity of the United States but also the theoretical foundation of democracy, the question arises: Has what is happening in Texas now had no contemporary precedents in U.S. history? The phenomenon of a "rebel state" has indeed occurred before. In 1957, the governor of the southern state of Arkansas refused to integrate Black students with white students in schools, following federal orders. **President Eisenhower** at the time ordered federal troops to escort the students and enforce civil rights laws against the will of the state governor.

In 2019, political and ideological polarization in the United States intensified, leading to unprecedented ideological conflicts that deepened divisions within California and between it and other American states. This ignited at least six attempts to either divide California into smaller states or completely secede from the United States, with the

justification being that the federal government no longer represented California's economic interests. Some believed that a state as large as California could only be appropriately managed if divided into smaller states.

The confrontation has also gained renewed momentum with calls for independence by the "*Texit*" movement, which has faced many setbacks ⁽²⁷⁾, including the failure to secure a referendum on Texas's secession in the upcoming Republican primary. The de facto leader of the *Texit* movement, **Daniel Miller**, stated, "I believe that the path the federal government is on, and the path that Texas is on, will lead to this direction, whether through a conscious decision or the collapse of the federal system and its inability to meet its basic requirements. I believe Texas will definitely become an independent state within 30 years"⁽²⁸⁾.

A- Armed Confrontation:

Could the situation escalate into armed confrontations between federal forces and the state's National Guard? The scenario is complicated, especially with Texas citizens forming quasi-militias to assist the state's National Guard in confronting immigrants. Can these armed militias resist the federal forces, especially with the crisis expanding after the letter signed by 25 Republican governors stating, "We stand in solidarity with Governor Greg Abbott and the state of Texas in using every tool and strategy - including barbed wire fences - to secure the borders. The federal government has abandoned its constitutional duties towards the states, and Texas has every legal justification to protect its sovereignty, and we have the same right to protect our states and nation." Does what is happening in Texas mean that the American right-wing might find a golden opportunity to exploit and a focal point to rally around, especially with the upcoming U.S. presidential elections? Could Texas become the starting point for this scenario?

B- Secession Scenario:

The U.S. Constitution does not recognize the right of states to secede, and there is insufficient evidence to prove that a majority of Texas residents support secession. While secessionist

calls may not lead to immediate results, they carry the seeds of a structural crisis in the United States.

The idea of an American civil war in the foreseeable future might seem far-fetched, but there are indeed some influential voices, both from within and outside America, who have predicted that secession will happen one day. Former U.S. National Security Advisor **Zbigniew Brzezinski** - of Polish origin - was one of those who foresaw the outcomes of secession in the late 1970s and early 1980s ⁽²⁹⁾. Additionally, Norwegian scholar **Johan Galtung**, one of the most prominent political and future studies scholars, previously accurately predicted the dissolution of the Soviet Union ⁽³⁰⁾ and has suggested that 2025 will be a decisive year in the history of the United States.

The important question here is: "Is the United States facing a genuine societal crisis, and will it resort to addressing internal conflicts through military force, as is the case in Texas, or will the Biden administration work to contain dissenters, even if it requires reaching compromises to alleviate fears of division within the country?"

The implications of what is happening in Texas are significant. According to Brzezinski's criteria for maintaining superpower status, social cohesion is essential. However, the current situation in American society reveals a fragmentation between idealists and realists: groups that embrace the melting pot concept and others that reject it, believing in their right to preserve their racial roots, cultural definitions, and ideological constants.

Writer **James Piekerton** penned an article in *Newsweek* on December 23 ⁽³¹⁾, in which he noted that the Supreme Court's decision to remove barbed wire barriers sparked further calls for Texas's secession. He referred to the *Texit* movement led by **Daniel Miller**, who believes that federal policies will lead to Texas's independence within three decades.

There is a democratic institutional division governed by laws and regulations, and there is a soft power advocating for more national freedoms. Yet, at the same time, other forces



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might act if any imbalances threaten federal unity. The demographic makeup within the United States is not conducive to such racial calls.

C - Possible Outcomes of the Previous Scenarios:

What happened in Texas indicates an individual attempt by some states to usurp the federal authorities' powers. However, it is too early to talk about secession and the beginning of the state's disintegration, despite the significantly heightened stakes. The level of division between conservatives and liberals - Republicans and Democrats - has already reached the point where what happened cannot be dismissed as a random incident, and thus the importance of events in Texas cannot be understated.

In the context of party competition between Republicans and Democrats with the upcoming U.S. elections, the Republicans' "game" has two goals:

The first goal is to force Biden to choose between closing the borders, which would result in losing the sympathy of a large portion of his voters of Latin American origin, and escalation, where he increasingly appears to be destroying the United States. Additionally, adopting a radical (anti-U.S.) stance would also bring

previously undecided or neutral voters into the Republican camp, strengthening Trump's position in the Republican Party. Therefore, it benefits Republicans to make the confrontation more radical and escalate the risks, although it would be a controlled escalation aimed at continuing to undermine Biden, who is weak on the border issue.

The second goal is to demonstrate Republican strength before the elections, signaling that if Trump is somehow removed from the election, Republicans have responses, including armed confrontation.

Given these observations, the likelihood of a clash in the coming months is low, thus ruling out armed confrontation or secession scenarios. However, we can say that the beginnings of (civil) confrontations have already started, with the main barrier preventing them from heating up being that neither side has yet faced a definitive defeat at the federal level. Nonetheless, events in Texas significantly add to the deterioration of the U.S.'s international standing, especially after the loss in Ukraine.

In general, the Texas crisis marks the beginning of an internal political crisis, the consequences of which remain difficult to predict.

Conclusion:

The solution to the refugee problem does not lie in racism but in studying and securing the borders optimally, especially since the real issue at the U.S. borders is primarily a security problem before it becomes a refugee crisis. The United States has reached a stage where individual states are attempting to position themselves against federal authority. This trend will continue to grow regardless, and the losing side in the 2024 elections will elevate the conflict to a "states vs. federal government" level. We now have a precedent for this. These signs might reflect the beginning of the disintegration of the United States, although the timing of the completion of this process remains unclear in the foreseeable future.

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National Security Threats: The Future of Federalism and Division Concerns

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Abstract:

The United States is witnessing internal political tensions after escalating confrontations between the State of Texas following the refusal of the state governor to comply with the government's decision to remove barbed wire along borders with Mexico, which raises fears of the possibility of the breakout of an armed conflict within the United States of America.

Many questions are raised including, for example, is the secession of Texas a scenario that could occur and cause an economic crisis? Can other states do the same and follow Texas' secession?

The "Texit" movement called for the independence of Texas from the United States. Still, despite the support this movement found, it faced many setbacks, as it failed to obtain a referendum on Texas secession on the upcoming Republican primary ballot. Could the Texas crisis represent the beginning of the unraveling of the federal union, which extends for more than two hundred years since the founding of American Federalism by the founders of the United States?

Keywords: Federalism, Separation, Texas

تهديدات الأمن القومي الأمريكي: مستقبل الفيدرالية ومخاوف الانقسام

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أستاذ العلوم السياسية بكلية الاقتصاد والعلوم السياسية بجامعة القاهرة

وكيل كلية الاقتصاد والعلوم السياسية لشؤون خدمة المجتمع وتنمية البيئة بجامعة المستقبل

المستخلص :

تشهد الولايات المتحدة توترات سياسية داخلية بعد تصاعد التوترات بين ولاية «تكساس» والحكومة الفيدرالية الأمريكية، عقب رفض حاكم الولاية الامتثال لقرار الحكومة بإزالة الأسلاك الشائكة على طول الحدود مع المكسيك، ما أثار المخاوف من احتمالية نشوب نزاع مسلح داخل الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.

أسئلة كثيرة تطرحها مستجدات على الساحة الأمريكية، منها على سبيل المثال، هل انفصال «تكساس» يُعد سيناريو يمكن أن يحدث ويسبب أزمة اقتصادية؟ وهل يمكن لولايات أخرى أن تفعل الشيء نفسه وتحذو حذوها؟

أعادت مواجهة الزخم مجدداً إلى دعوات الاستقلال عن أمريكا، التي كانت تنادي بها حركة «تكسيت»، التي خلصت إلى أن «تكساس» يجب أن تستقل عن الولايات المتحدة، ورغم الدعم الذي وجدته هذه الحركة، فإنها واجهت العديد من الانتكاسات، ليس أقلها الفشل في الحصول على استفتاء على انفصال «تكساس» في الاقتراع التمهيدي الجمهوري المقبل.

فهل يمكن أن تمثل أزمة «تكساس» بداية لانفراط عقد الاتحاد الفيدرالي الممتد لمدة تخطت المائتي عام منذ تأسيس الفيدرالية الأمريكية على يد المؤسسين الأوائل للدولة الأمريكية؟

الكلمات المفتاحية : الفيدرالية، الانفصال، تكساس