



**20%+ of
Vermonters
now support
a 2VR**

PLAN ‘V’

**Toward a
2nd Vermont Republic (2VR)**

*To all who champion a 2VR.
You know who you are.*

PLAN ‘V’

Designing a 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR)

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www.vermontindependent.org

1. Declaration

“The gods of the Empire are not the gods of Vermont!”

Welcome to Plan ‘V’.

‘V’ for Vermont.

Our 21st century vision for life, liberty, and the pursuit of our collective happiness here in the Green Mountains of Vermont.

Imagine peace.

Secure civil liberties.

Small towns, small farms, and small businesses.

“Human Scale”—community life lived in face-to-face contact with neighbors.

Awe-inspiring yet inhabitable landscapes—mountains and meadows, streams and forests, lakes and rivers—collectively managed as our “commons” with enough room for all creatures.

Decentralized renewable energy networks powered by water, wind and sunlight.

Affordable public financing for Vermont’repreneurs, enterprising farmers, and aspiring students.

Healthy locally grown food.

Child-centered public education.

A well-trained and well-armed citizenry, providing for “homestead security” and the common defense.

Basic health care for all.

Democratic debate, decentralized decision-making, and government transparency embedded in our “town meeting” tradition, with every Vermont citizen a legislator.

“Live and let live tolerance” for all citizens of good will, regardless of race, religion, caste, or color.

A local food revolution—featuring some of the world’s tastiest cheese, ice cream, maple syrup, organic vegetables, grass-fed meats, and craft beers.

Imagine a 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR), right here in the Green Mountains of Vermont.

To create our 2VR, we have only one viable option.

Vermonters must peaceably secede from the United States of Empire.

The 2017 Vermonter poll, conducted by the University of Vermont’s Center for Rural Studies, indicates that more than 20% of Vermonters now believe that the time has come to consider the creation of a 2nd Vermont Republic.

Let’s look at what nonviolent secession and the creation of a 2VR mean.

The United States and the “Problem of Empire”

“Instead of union, let us have disunion now. Instead of fusing the small, let us dismember the big. Instead of creating fewer and larger states, let us create more and smaller ones.”

— Leopold Kohr, *The Breakdown Of Nations*, 1957

Secession? Isn’t that crazy, not to mention unconstitutional?

Quite the opposite. Secession is every American’s birthright. Secession is the core principle at the heart of the 1776 Declaration of Independence. 19th century New Englanders embraced secession as a constitutional option at the 1814 Hartford Convention in Connecticut. As Americans, secession is embedded in our founding DNA.

An “Empire?” The United States? Are you mad?

Read on.

If you are awake, you know we live in a critical time for human civilization—peak oil, climate change, seemingly endless war, the threat of nuclear Armageddon, and a global Empire that seems to be spiraling out of control.

Yes. The United States. US.

“We are a monster country,” observed veteran US statesman George Kennan in 1993, “and there is a real question as to whether ‘bigness’ in a body politic is not an evil in itself, quite aside from the policies pursued in its name.”

If you are paying attention, you know that US imperial realities are well documented. Here are ten interlocking “big picture” problems.

- 1) The financial sector’s debt-driven predatory capitalism, featuring a global economy driven by Wall Street, unaccountable monied institutions like the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, and the “Deep State” imperial matrix.
- 2) The Pentagon’s pursuit of destructive policies: “full spectrum dominance,” geoengineering of our skies, massive global arms sales, drone warfare, sequential energy wars, and aggressive creation of “failed states” in the greater Middle East and around the world.
- 3) The gutting of the US Constitution and the Bill of Rights in the name of “Homeland Security.”
- 4) Electoral Dysfunction—our votes as US citizens are no longer accurately counted.
- 5) A massive Orwellian surveillance apparatus—think Facebook meets Google meets the NSA - which spies on us all.
- 6) A bankrupt two party political system that serves only the rich and powerful.
- 7) A mass media network controlled by for-profit multinational corporations that distracts and divides us.
- 8) A US neo-colonial “empire of bases”—as many as 1,000 - that

seeks to exercise control over the entire Planet and outer space, a space-age exercise in “imperial overreach.”

9) A collective inability to face the civilizational challenges that confront US—climate change, peak oil, and the threat of nuclear Armageddon.

10) Catabolic collapse—the Mother of all Dilemmas - systemic breakdown of a complex civilization that has overextended itself, a problem that has ultimately possessed and consumed every Empire over the past 10,000 years of world history.

We US citizens are all feeling the burn—of Empire.

Simply stated - the United States is an Empire simply too big, too centralized, too corrupt, and too militaristic to be reformed or fixed by any person, program, platform, or party.

Now consider the 2016 Trump revolution, which has dramatically accelerated events.

As the 21st century unfolds, two elite imperial factions are wrestling for control of the US of Empire’s helm.

Neoliberal pro-corporate globalists, fronted by the Democratic Party, and given voice by the Clintons and Obamas.

Fascist pro-corporate and fundamentalist ultra-nationalists, fronted by the Republican Party, and given voice by Trumpian kleptocrats, thinly disguised as populists.

Both political parties are deeply compromised by the Deep State, US-based multinational corporations, and their network of financial allies.

Both political parties pursue policies that enrich the 1% at the expense of the 99%.

Both political parties pursue only three bankrupt “solutions”—privatization, financialization, militarization—to any and all problems they confront.

Both political parties, finally, seek to maintain the imperial status quo, regardless of the consequences for ordinary citizens here and abroad, our global commons, and the health of our planet.

How do we know this? The signs are all around us.

Consider just one, well researched.

A 2014 Princeton University study, which baldly concluded that the US is now an oligarchy.

“When a majority of citizens disagrees with economic elites and/or with organized interests, they generally lose. Moreover, because of the strong *status quo* bias built into the US political system, even when fairly large majorities of Americans favor policy change, they generally do not get it,” explain Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page. “We believe that if policymaking is dominated by powerful business organizations and a small number of affluent Americans, then America’s claims to being a democratic society are seriously threatened.”

In plain English?

“The wealthy few move policy, while the average American has little power.”

The inconvenient truth? The US is now an Empire uninterested in the needs and concerns of its citizens.

To quote master US imperial strategist Karl Rove from 2004:

“We’re an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you’re studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we’ll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that’s how things will sort out. We’re history’s actors...and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.”

When confronted with the reality of the US of Empire, the time for action is now.

Let’s explore our options.

The “Problem of Empire:” Eight Options

*“If the scale of the country renders it unmanageable,
there are two possible responses.
One is a breakup of the nation; the other a
radical decentralization of power.”*

— Gar Alperovitz, *The New York Times*, 2007

When confronted with the “Problem of Empire,” we face several options.

Consider eight.

- 1) **DENIAL:** Many choose to ignore the Empire and pretend that all is fine and well. Clap along, ‘cause I’m happy.
- 2) **DETACHMENT:** Many simply tune out the Empire. Let someone else worry. I am too burdened with my own problems. Apathy. Anomie.
- 3) **COMPLIANCE:** Many accept their fate, turn on the “Walking Dead,” and simply comply. McDonalds and Netflix binge’ing. Wal-Mart and Amazon shopping. Movies and video games. Pornography. Social Media. Endless distraction.
- 4) **IMPLOSION:** A very real possibility. See the falling of Germany’s wall, the peaceful “velvet” separation of the Czech and Slovak republics, and the Soviet Union’s almost overnight and mostly peaceful collapse.
- 5) **REFORM:** A favorite option of liberal Democratic “statists” in the US Empire can be fixed. Tinkered with. Adjusted. If we just support the right candidates, vote harder, or march in the streets enough. #FeelTheBern.
- 6) **REVOLUTION:** A very few suggest a violent confrontation with the Empire. This surely seems a suicidal prospect, given the awesome power of the US techno-fascist state.
- 7) **REBELLION:** More are engaged in sustained acts of rebellion

to challenge the imperial status quo. Witness the Dakota Access Pipeline protests of fall 2016, in which 10,000 protesters from around the world temporarily halted the construction of an oil pipeline. Think the #Occupy Wall Street movement, systematically shut down by the Obama administration over one weekend. Rebellion is vital and necessary, but it cannot be sustained indefinitely, and it offers no alternatives beyond resistance to the imperial status quo.

8) **SECESSION:** Our preferred option, in which we peacefully, lawfully, and constitutionally detach ourselves from the US of Empire and regionally reintegrate ourselves with neighboring states and provinces.

Consider options #7 and #8.

Rebellion and secession.

“So far, the level of dissent within the US has not reached the point of rebellion or secession,” observed *Human Scale* author Kirkpatrick Sale in 2010, “thanks both to the increasing repression of dissent and escalation of fear in the name of ‘homeland security,’ and to the success of our modern version of bread and circuses—a unique combination of entertainment, sports, television, internet sex and games, consumption, drugs, liquor and religion that effectively deadens the general public into stupor.”

But global Trumpism has proved a game-changer, accelerating events, laying naked the Empire as never before, and awakening US citizens from their slumber.

Witness but two emerging stories.

#Calexit - California citizens’ emerging referendum plan to peaceably secede from the United States, gathering steam in the former Bear Flag Republic.

New Hampshire’s Free State Project - designed to elect representatives to the N.H. legislature who support a more independent and decentralist White Mountain State. “Live Free or Die.”

Here in Vermont, now is the time for Plan ‘V.’

Secession, Independence, and the 1st Vermont Republic (1VR)

What’s In A Name?

“Only in Vermont was the concept of a state as a self-constituted political community fully and radically tested. In this sense, Vermont was the only true American republic, for it alone created itself.”

— Peter S Onuf, *The Origins Of The Federal Republic*

To fully understand our Plan ‘V’ proposal for a 2nd Vermont Republic, we must travel back in time.

We Vermonters have a unique history as the only state of 50 to self-conceive as an independent and sovereign country.

The original 18th century Republic of Vermont (1777-1791) was born out of a complex continental struggle, with the British Empire, indigenous Abenaki, wealthy New Yorkers, and a rebellious thirteen English colonies all in the mix.

Most Americans, even in today’s Empire, are well versed in the famous language of inalienable rights from the second Continental Congress’ 1776 Declaration of Independence—“life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Many Americans can still recite from memory Jefferson’s provocative call in 1776 for secession, independence, and self-governance: “Whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.”

Few Americans, however, are familiar with Vermont history.

Few Americans know that even before the 13 English colonies successfully seceded from Great Britain and established themselves as a new country by 1783 treaty, our Green Mountain ancestors had established the Republic of Vermont (1VR), complete with their own constitution, a unique alchemy of self-reliance and communitarianism.

Here's a taste.

"That we will, at all times hereafter, consider ourselves as a free and independent state, capable of regulating our internal police, in all and every respect whatsoever," declared Vermonters in their January 15, 1777 declaration of independence, "and that the people on said Grants have the sole and exclusive and inherent right of ruling and governing themselves in such a manner and form as to their own wisdom they shall think proper."

Revolutionary Outlaws historian Michael A. Bellesiles offers this summary of the unique and small "d" democratic 1st Vermont Republic's 1777 constitution and governance structure:

"Vermont's constitution [of 1777] demands attention for the way it lived up to its theoretical assertions, creating the most democratic structure of its time. It clearly established and protected certain basic rights: freedom of speech, print, and public assembly, a modified freedom of religion, the right to a fair and open trial before a jury, and the people's right to form new governments as they saw fit."

"The state's voters controlled every branch of government, electing the state's executive officers and judges, as well as representatives of the unicameral legislature."

"Vermont failed to institute a separation of the branches of government. The governor and council of Vermont could NOT veto legislation."

"To maintain civic participation, the constitution required public legislative sessions and forbade the passage of any bill into law the same year it was proposed, mandating its printing for the public's information."

“A septennial Council of Censors was to review all legislative and executive acts to ensure that the constitution was being fulfilled. The Council of Censors could amend the constitution by calling a popularly elected convention allowing ‘posterity the same privileges of choosing how they would be governed’ without resort to ‘revolution or bloodshed.’”

In summary, the Republic of Vermont’s 18th century founding was an act of “radical democracy,” concludes author Adrian Kuzminski in his book about the “history of populism, ancient and modern.”

And Vermonters, true 18th century populists, tied their political experiment to an egalitarian economic culture that tried to balance liberty and property, community and commons, in equal measure.

Here’s Kuzminski again.

“Vermonters in their hills were able to achieve widespread ownership of land as independent farmers and artisans without reckoning with an established wealthy elite in control of most resources, especially financial ones, and the government.”

“Vermont came into existence from the ground up, wholly on the local level, farm by farm, and town by town—almost a textbook case of a free society founded in a state of nature.”

“Vermonters were able to realize the populist vision, reconciling freedom and property in a locally rooted radical democracy.”

In sum, 18th century Vermont’s populist approach to both political and economic life provided the foundations for the 1st Vermont Republic (1VR).

Here’s the 1VR creation story in a nutshell.

“During the fourteen years between Vermont’s Declaration of Independence (January 15, 1777) and its acceptance into the union (March 4, 1791),” writes Jim Hogue in *Most Likely To Secede*, “Vermont convened an elected assembly, adopted a constitution, coined its own money, operated a postal service, conducted military operations

and diplomatic relations and trade, recruited and commanded its own militia, and wrote its own laws in a legislature elected at town meeting.”

Sounds like the blueprint for a 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR).

One last voice from the past.

In March 1791, after 14 years as an independent country, Vermonters met to consider the question of whether the independent Vermont republic should join the new United States. After much debate, the majority of Vermonters present cast their votes in favor of union.

One farmer from the town of Norwich, Daniel Buck, cast his vote in opposition, and rose to speak from the floor. His remarks are worth quoting at length as 21st century Vermonters look ahead towards the collapse of the U.S. of Empire.

“It is necessary to consider the original cause of all government,” Buck explained to his fellow Vermonters in spring 1791.

“Government is formed by ‘compact’ in order ‘for a man to enjoy the blessings of society, security of his person, liberty and property.’”

“To form a compact creating a government, ‘each individual of the community must necessarily sacrifice a part of his natural liberty, his interests, and his privileges, so as to coincide with the common interests of the whole; yet this sacrifice must be in some measure proportional to the diversity of interest to be found in the several parts of the community—that the sacrifice of the individuals of a small community must be less than those of a large one, where the interest must be supposed more diverse.’”

“Vermont has a ‘uniformity of interest,’ it has ‘no mercantile or landed interest,’ ‘lord and tenant were not known.’”

“The affairs of government were managed, as it were, under the eye of the people, and the machine was so small that everyone could look and see how the wheels moved, and for this reason it was observable, that the people were all politicians.”

“In the union, Vermont would ‘would be bound to the interests of the union’ with its greater and clashing interests.”

“A few would benefit, but ‘this number must be but small, while on the other hand the affairs of government being at such a remove from the eye of the people, they could have no knowledge of their transactions, and would naturally degenerate into a state of ignorance.’”

“All extensive governments have a natural tendency to destroy that equality among the people, which was necessary to keep one part of mankind from oppressing the other.”

Prophetic words, Mr. Buck. Prophetic words.

“The people were all politicians,” and “the machine was so small that everyone could look and see how the wheels moved.”

Small “d” populist participatory democracy fused with Vermont’preneurialism.

“Small is Beautiful” here in the Green Mountains.

Plan ‘V.’

2. Blueprint

“All power to Vermont in its effort to distinguish itself from the US as a whole, and to pursue in its own way the cultivation of its own tradition.”

— George Kennan, May 1, 2002 letter to the 2VR

As the US of Empire lumbers into the 21st century, Vermonters have managed to preserve much of our culture of entrepreneurialism, direct democracy, egalitarianism, political independence, and nonviolence.

We celebrate our town meeting tradition, our unique history as an independent republic (1VR) before joining the United States, and our pioneering “freedom and unity” spirit and culture of “live and let live” tolerance that lives on here in our Green Mountain communities today.

Since the 18th century, our Green Mountain towns, farms, and businesses have served as laboratories for forward-thinking ideas and innovative solutions.

With each passing day, more and more 21st century Vermonters may be ready to roll up their sleeves and work for a 2nd Vermont Republic.

Now it is time for Plan ‘V.’

Resilience and Resistance.

Sovereignty and Secession.

Here is a blueprint—presented as twelve interdependent initiatives.

1) **FINANCE:** Establish a Vermont Public Bank or equivalent financing mechanisms to promote expanded access to credit, support for entrepreneurial initiatives, learning opportunities, and job creation for Vermonters.

2) **FUEL:** Power a Vermont-wide decentralized town-by-town networked electricity grid by harvesting renewable energy from

participating Vermont businesses and residences, and aggressively promote public transportation alternatives to the current fossil fuel status quo.

3) **FOOD:** Grow Vermont's diverse working landscape by legalizing hemp and cannabis, make credit available through public finance mechanisms for young agri'preneurs interested in expanding Vermont's agricultural opportunities, and promote permaculture techniques for more resilient Green Mountain communities.

4) **EDUCATION:** Promote personalized learning plans (PLPs) for every young Vermonter, and create a "communiversity" in every Vermont high school supporting citizen-taught courses in self-reliance, self-improvement, community resilience, Vermont'repreneurialism, and civic participation. Support publicly-funded education for all Vermont citizens through 12th grade, and affordable public college and graduate school education.

5) **GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY:** Combine new digital tools with traditional Vermont "town meeting" democracy to create more open, participatory and transparent governance at the local and state level.

6) **ELECTION INTEGRITY:** Protect and expand the time-honored Vermont town tradition of voting through hand-counted paper ballots in full public view by local boards of civil authority.

7) **SURVEILLANCE-FREE CITIZENRY:** Champion legislation banning all forms of corporate and state electronic surveillance in Vermont, including the use of spy drones and the illegal monitoring of Vermonters' private electronic correspondence (including but not limited to email, text and phone messages), as well as explore encryption options for the protection and privacy of all Vermont citizens' electronic information.

8) **PUBLIC ELECTION FINANCING:** Support "rank choice voting" for elections, outlaw private campaign contributions, and dedicate an annual 2 dollars per Vermonter to two separate public trust election

accounts—one maintained by the county (\$1) and the other by the state (\$1)—with the fund being divided into equal parts for each eligible candidate running for public office, ensuring that elections are powered by ideas, rather than money.

9) **HOMESTEAD SECURITY:** Support Vermont’s tradition of hunter safety by promoting regular, accessible and appropriate training and safe use of firearms for Vermont’s citizenry.

10) **COMMONS CREATION:** Advocate the creation and maintenance of a Vermont “Commons” to protect all that we Vermonters share in common: our air, our water, our land, and our property, both individual and communal.

11) **ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY:** Affirm that Vermont’s natural environment is the basis of the unique high quality life we enjoy, and protect the integrity of our natural communities, ecosystems, waters, climate, air, land and soils, plants, and wildlife. Champion the “precautionary principle” to guide development decisions, fully fund protection and restoration measures already enacted.

12) **“SANCTUARY NATION”:** Protect civil liberties and promote “live and let live” tolerance for all hard-working Vermont citizens and guests of good will, regardless of race, gender, caste, creed, or religious affiliation.

The beauty of Plan ‘V’?

It is already underway.

With every new solar panel and wind turbine Vermonters deploy.

With every Vermont residence and business that harvests its own energy and feeds it back to a decentralized networked energy grid.

With every Vermont public school that converts its heating system from imported fuel stocks to more local biomass energy.

With every acre of abandoned dairy farm land Vermonters reclaim and

re-plant to create a truly diverse working landscape, including hemp and (soon) cannabis.

With every financial transaction that shifts Vermont investments out of corporate commercial banks from “away” and into local, Vermont-focused entrepreneurial investment opportunities.

With every weekly school board, select board, and zoning board meeting.

With every annual town meeting featuring face-to-face dialogue, debate and discussion amongst Vermont neighbors about our collective future.

With every public discussion in every committee room among citizen legislators and Vermont citizens at the Vermont statehouse—the “People’s House.”

Plan ‘V’ can form the foundation for a 2nd Vermont republic, and a 2VR can help recreate the U.S. of Empire as a new re-confederated regional UNTied States of America.

So lift your glasses to a 2nd Vermont republic, and join with us in proclaiming:

“The gods of Vermont are not the gods of the Empire!”

3. FAQ

“I love Vermont because of her hills and valleys, her scenery and invigorating climate, but most of all, because of her indomitable people. They are a race of pioneers who have almost beggared themselves to serve others. If the spirit of liberty should vanish in other parts of the union and support of our institutions should languish, it could all be replenished from the generous store held by the people of this brave little state of Vermont.”

— U.S. President (and Vermonter) Calvin Coolidge, Sept. 21, 1928

Q. What is the 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR)?

A. First founded in 2004, the 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR) is an open source nonpartisan network of citizen Vermont’repeneurs seeking to peaceably secede from the “deep state” imperialism of the U.S. government, the domination and corruption of the national political process by US-based transnational corporations, and the economic monopolies and dysfunctional concentrations of wealth that are hallmarks of neoliberalism and corporate globalization as practiced by the same.

Q. What is the 2nd Vermont Republic’s (2VR) mission?

2VR is committed to restoring Vermont to its status as an independent republic, as it was from 1777-1791, freeing Vermonters to pursue life, liberty and happiness unimpeded by the demands of a rapacious and disintegrating US of Empire. We embrace “Freedom and Unity,” Vermont’s communitarian state motto, as well as Vermont’s unofficial creed of “live and let live” tolerance. We oppose both Empire building and state-sponsored institutional racism in all of its forms, While we welcome dialogue with decentralist organizations, we do not affiliate with any other secession movement that promotes racism, xenophobia, or intolerance, such as the League of the South (LOS) or Italy’s Northern League (to name but two).

Q. How many Vermonters support the creation of a 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR)?

The 2017 Vermonter poll, conducted by the University of Vermont's Center for Rural Studies, indicates that more than 20% of Vermonters now believe that the time has come to consider the creation of a 2nd Vermont Republic (2VR).

Q. What is the *Vermont Independent*?

First founded in 2005 as *Vermont Commons: Voices of Independence*, the *Vermont Independent* is a multimedia news forum for exploring the idea of Vermont independence – political, economic, social, and spiritual. We are solutions-oriented, non-partisan, and interested in promoting ongoing and vigorous debate about a more resilient future for the once and future republic of Vermont. We are unaffiliated with any other organization or media, and interested in all points of view. Read more at www.vermontindependent.org.

Q. What is the *Vermont Independent*'s mission?

The Vermont Independent publishes articles, interviews and opinion written by citizen Vermont'preneurs doing the good work required of us on a wide variety of fronts – finance, fuel, food, agriculture, governance, arts and media, and beyond. Some of our writers advocate nonviolent secession and others do not. All of our writers are fierce champions of localism and decentralization. Our visionary thinkers are helping us imagine a more sustainable and self-reliant Vermont future into which we can invest our time, energy, and financial and spiritual resources as the US of Empire moves into catabolic collapse.

Q. What is the *Vermont Independent*'s approach?

We have eight core foundational ingredients:

1) **VERMONT COMMONS-FOCUSED:** We are deeply interested in this place called "Vermont," and we publish content focused on our commonwealth, all that we Vermonters share in common—our air, our

water, our land, and our shared economic and political resources and destiny.

2) **MULTI-MEDIA/MODAL:** We recognize that individuals learn and share stories in a variety of ways, and “news” is no exception. We embrace a wide variety of “news” story-sharing platforms: traditional/ analog print, electronic “print,” social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram—each with its own global communities and unique pros and cons), digital video, and (soon) audio podcasting.

3) **CIVICALLY MINDED:** We provide publishing spaces which are independent of both state and commercial influence, spaces that 20th century philosopher Jurgen Habermas called, collectively “the public sphere.” Imagine a Vermont-focused 21st century electronic multimedia coffeehouse or pub. That’s us.

4) **SUBJECTIVE:** We have a clear, consistent, and transparent point of view—resistance, resilience, and greater independence for our 21st century Vermont communities. (To get wonky for a sec—“Objectivity” with a capital O does not exist and never has existed. Rather, we suggest that high quality “news” has SIX ingredients: information that is a) recent, b) relevant, c) reliable, d) multi-perspectival, e) historically and hegemonically contextualized, and f) inclusive of clearly-sourced multiple points of view.

5) **NON-PARTISAN:** We support no specific political party, platform, person, or program, but rather endorse what we call Plan ‘V,’ a series of overlapping initiatives for making more Vermont more resilient in our emerging 21st century, based on our conversations with forward-thinking Vermonters since 2005.

6) **COLLABORATIVE:** We seek and enjoy mutually supportive partnerships with other Vermont individuals and organizations. For example, we work with a) University of Vermont’s Center for Rural Studies on statewide polling, b) the Vermont community cable television community to produce and deploy our “Plan ‘V’-TV” television program, c) Vermont-based documentary filmmakers (we currently have 2 Vermont independence documentaries in production), and d) various college and university classrooms of students interested in producing Vermont-focused content as part of their emerging

interest in independent multi-media journalism. We also teach a wide variety of critical media literacy education and journalism tools, concepts and approaches at the University of Vermont, and share them for free under our Creative Commons license.

7) **ENTREPRENEURIAL:** We are constantly innovating and seeking creative ways to move forward our efforts, funding our work through one-time and regular donors, 2VR/VI merchandise sales, forward-thinking philanthropic individuals and organizations, crowd-funding and other creative means.

8) **EDUCATIONAL:** We approach our content production through a critical media literacy lens, in conjunction with organizations like the Action Coalition for Media Education.

Q. Is the 2VR in contact with other U.S.-based secession efforts like #Calexit and the New Hampshire's Free State Project?

Loosely. Every decentralist and secession movement has its own unique brand of politics, and, as we've demonstrated here, Vermont has its own unique history.

Q. Does 2VR support the creation of a Vermont independent political party?

Not at this time. Instead, we champion an open source nonpartisan network for all Vermonters of good will, a network that dialogues with our elected legislators. We believe that the United States is no longer a republic governed by its citizens, but an Empire that is immoral and essentially ungovernable. We believe that a sovereign state's right to nonviolently secede, first championed in the United States by the citizens of 19th century New England, is a right that demands re-exploration in the 21st century. We believe that, working in concert with our neighbors and the rest of the world, Vermont may better be able to feed, power, educate and care for its citizens as an independent 21st century commonwealth than as one of fifty states within the US Empire. Political parties are but one of many ways to achieve these goals.

Q. Why does 2VR want Vermont to peaceably secede from the United States?

The United States has become militarily, agriculturally, politically, economically, culturally, and environmentally unsustainable. US foreign policy is based on the doctrine of full- spectrum dominance, which is immoral, illegal, unconstitutional, and extravagantly expensive. US agricultural monoculture is dependent upon unpredictable and privately owned genetically modified life forms. US politics is entirely captured by corporate special interests that defend their incumbent privilege at all costs. The US is economically dependent upon the pixel wealth of the finance industry which creates a simulacrum of productivity and value out of thin air by issuing and repackaging debt and then making bets on it, to the detriment of investment in real production, innovation and progress.

US environmental regulations support and encourage polluters and place no value on our Commons: our air, our water, our soil, and the other shared resources our communities hold dear.

Q. Why does 2VR think Vermont can do better as an independent republic?

First and foremost, the government of an independent Vermont will be able to respond to the needs and desires of its citizens better than it can if Vermont remains a part of the US Empire. Because it is dependent upon the US imperial machine for its livelihood, Vermont suffers greatly from blatant institutional capture by outside corporate special interests. Citizens of Vermont do not get a complete and fair vetting of ideas regarding the highest and best use of our government and treasure, because we are limited by the narrow menu of options served up by the federal government and their corporate partners. This menu of options includes: prosecuting illegal resource wars, subsidizing the planet-destroying fossil fuel industry and agricultural Industry, and allowing Wall Street, in collusion with both major political parties, to siphon away the wealth of the US. This institutional capture limits a full and honest discussion about how government can best serve its citizens.

Secondly, the United States has become an Empire suffering from imperial overstretch, and has become unsustainable politically, economically, agriculturally, socially, culturally, and environmentally. Vermont finds it increasingly difficult to protect itself from the debilitating effects of big business, big agriculture, big markets, and big government.

Third, the US government has lost its moral authority because both political parties—the Democrats and the Republicans—are owned, operated, and controlled by Wall Street and the Deep State.

Fourth, US foreign policy is based on the doctrine of full-spectrum dominance, and is illegal, unconstitutional, and in violation of the United Nations charter.

Fifth, as long as Vermont remains in the United States, our citizens face curtailed civil liberties, corporate domination, revocation of the social contract, and all of the other challenges that accompany an Empire that is collapsing.

Q. Could Vermont survive economically as an independent republic?

Unquestionably. Vermont has plentiful hydro resources with which to generate electrical power, a rich stock of forestry products with which to build, and a productive and innovative agricultural community that can feed all of us with plenty left over to share with our friends across borders. Vermonters are exceptionally entrepreneurial, creative and well educated. An independent Vermont would not need to be self-sufficient (though we could be), but rather would be a more empowered trading partner with our regional neighbors, including Quebec and the rest of Canada.

Considering the world as a whole, of the roughly 200 independent nation-states in the world, 50 of them have a smaller population than Vermont's 620,000. Five of the ten richest countries in the world as measured by per capita income are smaller than Vermont: Liechtenstein, Iceland, Luxembourg, Bermuda, and Cayman Islands. Independence does not mean economic or political isolation. More

than 600 Vermont firms export nearly 24 percent of the state's gross product. We see no reason why this should change after independence.

Q. Describe the steps necessary for Vermont to become an independent republic.

First things first. We must establish the desire for Vermont independence by providing a steady stream of reliable information to Vermont citizens, and supporting initiatives that strengthen Vermont sovereignty, rather than promoting dependence on the US of Empire.

Example #1. If Vermont can form a public bank that allows ordinary Vermonters to reap the financial benefits, Vermonters will have one less logistical and psychological tie to Wall Street and the Empire it enables.

Example #2. If Vermont can pass educational reform that improves our children's educational experience without federal educational mandates and oppressive standardized testing schedules, then Vermont cuts another psychological tie with U.S. imperial dictates.

Along the way, Vermont will reach a "tipping point" and realize that it doesn't need the US of Empire to "solve" its problems.

Q. Does this mean nonviolent secession for Vermont?

Ultimately, yes.

Q. But isn't secession unconstitutional?

No. As Thomas Jefferson wrote in the 1776 Declaration of Independence, "Whenever any form of government becomes destructive, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government." Just as a group has a right to form, so, too, does it have a right to disband, to subdivide itself, or to withdraw from a larger unit. The US Constitution does not forbid secession. According to the tenth amendment, that which is not

expressly prohibited by the Constitution is allowed. All states have a constitutional right to secede, and secession is every American's birthright. 19th century New England was the first region of the new United States to consider nonviolent secession in response to aggressive U.S. expansionism, decades before southern states seized upon secession to try and preserve a retrograde race-based system of slavery.

Q. Does the 2VR want to take over the government of Vermont?

No. The citizens of the 2nd Vermont Republic will decide how we govern ourselves. Unlike the Free State Project in New Hampshire, our aim is not to take over the government. For that reason, the 2nd Vermont Republic takes no official position on issues such as abortion, gay marriage, school prayer, or legalizing marijuana. These are issues for the citizens of Vermont to consider.

Q. So how would Vermonters govern themselves in a 2VR?

Vermont has a perfectly good state constitution and a long tradition of "town meeting" and direct citizen democracy upon which to build. As a starting place, we suggest a thorough review of Frank Bryan and John McClaughry's 1989 book *The Vermont Papers: Recreating Democracy On A Human Scale* (Chelsea Green Publishing), in which the authors, both well-studied Vermonters, call on the Vermont state government to fund a strategic study exploring how to devolve power from the Montpelier state capital to a "shire system," in which Vermont reconfigures its internal political boundaries along population and bioregional lines to maximize citizen participation in the affairs of government. (Thomas Jefferson proposed a similar system known as "ward republics," writing in 1816 that "the true foundation of republican government is the equal right of every citizen in his person and property, and in their management.") *The Vermont Papers* lays out goals, a strategy, and a timeline for re-creating Vermont's political life under the shire system—now seems like a good time to revisit this proposal. Our 2012 book *Most Likely To Secede* may also be of use.

Q. Is Vermont independence politically feasible?

Yes. Ultimately, Vermont independence is a question of political will. Is the will of Vermont's citizens for independence strong enough to overcome the will of the US government to prevent Vermonters from achieving their goal?

Q. For Vermont independence to be successful, what are the necessary political steps?

The Vermont legislature must be persuaded to authorize a convention of the people to vote on rescinding the petition for statehood approved by the Vermont Assembly in January 1791 and ratified on March 4, 1791. To be credible, the vote should pass by at least a two-thirds majority. Articles of Secession should then be submitted to the US President, Secretary of State, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House. Diplomatic recognition should be sought from Canada, Quebec, Mexico, England, France, and the United Nations. And then the moment of truth—Vermont would start behaving like an independent nation-state. See our petition at <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/920/793/343/convene-a-2027-state-convention-for-vermont-independence/>

Q. What if 2VR and the Vermont independence movement fails?

Vermont will continue to provide a communitarian alternative to the dehumanized mass production, mass consumption, and narcissistic lifestyle that pervades much of the United States. Vermont is smaller, more rural, more democratic, less violent, less commercial, more egalitarian, and more independent than most states.

Q. How can I support a 2VR?

Visit our web site—www.vermontindependent.org—for a complete list of resources and initiatives. We welcome your support, ideas, and involvement.



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