



## Dear Mr. Ex-KGB

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I've received so many emails about the WSJ front page article in which the Russian expert, a professor and ex-KGB agent predicts that the US will falter and be split up into five zones (see map below, [here is a link to the original article](#) and [here is a link to his video interview](#)) and each zone will be controlled by another country like China, Canada, Mexico, and EU. Alaska would go to its "rightful" (more like wishful) owner – Russia. You get the gist. I could not contain myself, I had to respond with a letter to Mr. Ex-KGB.



Dear Mr. Ex-KGB,

Desperate times call for desperate measures. No kidding. I understand why you took the collapse of the Soviet Union model, added some wishful thinking and applied it to the United States. The Great US of A is not the Soviet Union; this analogy doesn't work on this country. The Soviet Union was a collection of loosely assembled countries that shared little in common except ... well, actually with the exception of common borders, I cannot think of a single thing that united them. Flag? Hymn? No, they were quick to disembark from the Soviet Union, turn the red flag into a doormat and desperately try to erase the lyrics of the Soviet hymn from their memory. Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Russians had something in common, but Georgians, Armenians, Tajikistanis, and Uzbekistanis were always looked at by Russians as secondhand citizens. Estonians disliked Russia, but don't blame them, they did not join the Soviet Union at will. The former soviet republics were happy to return to the pre-Soviet Union state.

Unlike the Soviet Union, in the US we share similar values, goals and traditions that developed over more than two hundred years. Geographic state borders have little significance, with the exception that in some states you are allowed to carry a concealed weapon; in some, until recently you could not buy alcohol on Sunday - that is just plain wrong, but I still remained in Colorado and did not announce my allegiance to the California Republic, as you would call it; in some food is very spicy - and that is alright; and in some gambling and prostitution are



legal - and this is alright too. America is a melting pot. Sure we make fun of the New Yorkers' fast talk or the Texan's droll. But tolerant we are.

Due to the ease of mobility of employment, we constantly migrate from state to state, and our geographic loyalties don't go further than our Alma Mater's football team. Our geographic preference of habitation is a function of climate, employment, proximity of mother-in-law (it has to be at least two hours away, by a very fast plane if possible) and pure randomness. We have no allegiance to a specific state - we are citizens of the United States. Culture doesn't divide us, like it did the Soviet Union, it unites us.

You discuss the return of Russian dominance. I don't know anyone who takes it seriously, except in Russia, of course. Russia's recent dominance is a blip in time (sorry). Unlike the US, Russia has a very narrow economy that has mostly been driven by natural resources and was brought to life, for a short moment, by a global commodity bubble. If Russia did not have nuclear weapons and a large army, we'd spend as much time talking about it as an election in Mozambique.

Take high commodity prices away and you find ... well, Russia today: limited property rights, corruption, bribery, semi-dictatorship, and government control of the press. Newspapers and television are controlled by the government, and journalists are dropping like flies.

No, Russia is not the United States. The United States has its problems, but these problems are not structural and time will heal them. Despite all of our problems, the US still has the best economic and most stable political system, period. We have peacefully elected our president every four years for over two centuries. I bet if every country in the world opened its borders to unlimited migrations in and out, you'd find the US population balloon and Russia's shrink. People from all over the world want to live here.

Dear Mr. Ex-KGB, the Russian [economy is crumbling](#). To divert attention from the internal problems (and more importantly from himself) Mr. Putin is redirecting attention to the "evil" United States. After all, we created the global economic crisis, sabotaged the oil market, and whatever else wrong taking place in the world, we must have had a hand in it. Now it is even a common belief in Russia that the CIA was responsible for the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

Anti-Americanism is on the rise in Russia. You made an America-fall-apart prediction public almost ten years ago, but it was only recently picked up by Russian (predominantly government-owned) media. You are a superstar in Russia - you get two interviews a day. Unfortunately, predictions that would have been taken as lunacy by most Russians in the past are now turned into wishful

thinking. And wishful thinking is what has forever disappointed the Russian public.

Sincerely,

Vitaliy Katsenelson, CFA  
 Central North-American Republic, formerly known as Colorado

**Note:** [Here is a link](#) to read the story of my childhood in Murmansk, Russia and emigration to the US.



Source: [Wall Street Journal](#)



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