

From Colin Woodard's *American Nations*...

[Note: for those of you who may not have read Woodard's book, you'll see that he uses the word "nations." In his view (and his view is similar to a number of other historians), the "nations" are not the same as the colonies. Woodard believes that when the various colonies were settled they tended to group together in ethnically and culturally similar groups that he calls nations – Yankeedom, Tidewater, The Deep South, Greater Appalachia, New Netherlands, New France, etc. The reasons for these cultural groupings stem from their origins in England beginning in the 1600s. The Puritans of Yankeedom, for example, nearly all came from East Anglia and surrounding counties; the Tidewater Quakers came largely from the North Midlands; the people that settled the Tidewater, both the elites and the common people, came largely from the south and west of England and formed a triangle that pointed up into Oxfordshire – the heart of Norman England. So, according to Woodard and others, the people who settled in the North American colonies were already as different as could be before they even arrived. And once here, they maintained their cultural identity, even to today.]

The event we call the American Revolution wasn't really revolutionary, at least while it was underway. The military struggle of 1775-1782 wasn't fought by an "American people" seeking to create a united, continent-spanning republic where all men were created equal and guaranteed freedom of speech, religion, and the press. On the contrary, it was a profoundly conservative action fought by a loose military alliance of nations, each of which was most concerned with preserving and reasserting control of its respective culture, character, and power structure. The rebelling nations certainly didn't wish to be bonded together into a single Republic. They were joined in a temporary partnership against a common threat: the British establishment's ham-fisted attempt to assimilate them into a homogeneous empire centrally controlled from London. Some nations - the Midlands, New Netherland, and New France - didn't rebel at all. Those that did weren't fighting a revolution; they were fighting separate wars of colonial liberation.

In fact, they sometimes weren't even fighting on the same side, as Appalachia was engaged in a struggle of liberation not against Britain but against the Midlands, Tidewater, and the Deep South. To complicate matters, the elites of the Deep South were ambivalent about the revolt, with many of them changing sides in the course of it. (Georgia even rejoined the empire during the conflict.) The main reason the Deep Southerners joined the "revolution" at all was because they feared they would

otherwise lose control of their slaves. The nations on a whole, the nations on the whole, cooperated with one another only because they saw no other way to overcome an existential threat to the respective cultures. They allied themselves with the enemies of their enemy but had little intention of merging with one another.