The Reannexation of Alaska, By Russia, Reconsidered

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THE REANNEXATION OF ALASKA BY RUSSIA, RECONSIDERED

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ABSTRACT:
Each house district shall be formed of contiguous and compact territory containing as nearly as practicable a relatively integrated socio-economic area, in paraphrase, the Alaska Constitution (Article VI) enjoins. However, when the current potentate of all that is Russia considers reannexation of all that is Alaska, the results must be calendared accordingly to their respective merits.

KEYWORDS: compact, socio-economic, reannexation.

“The ‘D&D Bar & Grill’ is venerable,” I turn to the assembly. “I lunched here with my comrades from Alaska Legal Services.”

“Technically,” the Governor corrects me, “that’s ‘Bar & Cafe’.”

“And that’s going back a ‘fur’ piece,” Jimmy and Dolley agree.

We wander into the back room and whisk away the flies. An ancient television brays news of fresh disasters.

“If you’re wondering whether Russia will be annexing a second region anytime soon,” the announcer proclaims, “one thing for sure, it definitely will not be Alaska. According to Rasputin, the U.S. state is too cold for his taste.”

“Will we have to give Alaska back to Russia?” the Governor asks. “Tina Fey would never let that happen.”

“I hope you don’t mind if I take off my shirt, do you?” A newcomer settles in and brushes road dust from his trousers.

James and Dolley inspect his torso for wounds.

“You don’t seem any the worse for wear,” Dolley approves. “Sorry about the revolution,” she adds.

“Just to show there are no hard feelings,” Tsarina Alexandra’s top advisor adds, checking out his tan in the full length mirror, “I’m going to give Alaska back to you.”

“To the United States,” I suggest. “If you’re talking reregifting.”
“Actually, Alaska was an independent republic in 1867. The Grand Republic of the North,” Madison applies his own corrective.

“If we may be heard?” an instance of officialdom wishes admittance to our assembly. “We are the Reapportionment Board.”

“You’re not supposed to be meeting until 2020,” I put in.

“We’ve discovered a flaw in the constitution, and you’re just what the Governor ordered.”

“Doesn’t the phrase run ‘what the Doctor ordered’?” Dolley asks.

“Please,” the Governor stays her soulmate. “I respond to all honorifics.”

“The problem begins with this text: ‘Each house district shall be formed of contiguous and compact territory containing as nearly as practicable a relatively integrated socio-economic area’.”

“So?” we chorus.

“That’s the only time ‘compact’ appears in the constitution,” the Chair continues, “but it also appears in the Statehood Act, that is, in the disclaimer of Section 4.”

“The source of all our woe!” the Governor turns to Dolley and Jimmy. “This is a conundrum wrapped up in a dilemma.”

“When legislators are chosen, there is no requirement that they match the socio-economic interests of their constituents.”

“That’s completely unrevolutionary!”

We wave Jimmy the floor.

“Americans were obliged to hire members of Parliament to represent their interests at Westminster. ‘One province, one member.’ That was the principle that obtained under the reign of King George.”

“Everyone was happy, right?” the Chair dabs her brow.

“Because Americans could buy a legislator to get a hearing for their interests,” the Governor supposes.

Dolley eases the crisis.

“If Americans could buy MPs they could count on, then ‘taxation without representation’ – which does make a fine motto for a license plate – would become meaningless as a rallying cry.”

“Does Rasputin have any suggestions?” the Chair turns to our timeless visitor.

“Perhaps you should do what we do in Russia. Nowadays we give constituents the government they deserve. The people should be for the government, of the government and, if necessary, buy – or something like that. And if they don’t measure up, then Siberia!”
“The voters? The legislators?”

“Both,” Rasputin replies. “Which brings me to the solution I have for your flaw in the universe.”

“Why do these things always happen to Alaska!” the Chair moans. “I should have moved to British Columbia.”

“Soon enough, 2020 foresight will be required,” Rasputin checks his pocket diary, “unless we’ve gone back to the Julian calendar by then.”

“Here’s a copy of the Statehood Act,” the members tender Alaska’s pedigree. “Knock yourself out.”

“I have always found that provision to be somewhat odd,” Governor Egan arrives and takes up his duties behind the soda fountain. “How could we ‘disclaim all right and title to any lands or other property not granted or confirmed to the State’? That’s what Section Four says. Emphasis supplied, naturally.”

“Of course there’s a logical problem with writing a law about a state that doesn’t exist. Just ask St. Anselm,” Jimmy explains. “The perfect state must exist, because if it didn’t exist it wouldn’t be perfect.’ So Alaska must be more perfect than it is. Or was.”

“A Princeton degree at work,” Dolley yawns.

“That’s just what Congress had in mind,” Rasputin rubs his chin. ‘Now where did I leave my beard?’ “Yes, that’s it. No one really knew what Alaska was back then. There were no reality shows in 1867. ‘Ice Rink Parking’ or ‘Ship Creek Dock Disasters’ was, like, way in your future. But it must have occurred to Congress that if some of Alaska was lost in the corrupt arbitration over the ‘Panhandle,’ that there might be even more Alaska to lose. After all, international boundaries are pretty much a crapshoot.”

‘We are a northern country,’ the television blares yesterday’s interview with Rasputin. ‘Alaska – is it in the south? It’s quite cold up there. Let’s not be over enthusiastic about it. Because if we have our people there we will have to pay extra to our employees there because they live in the noth.’

“Well that wraps it up and pretty nicely too,” Jimmy pulls up a chair and signals for tableside service. “Can I get extra bacon on my cheeseburger?”

“Speaking only for myself, and not for any other official,” Rasputin doubles down on Jimmy’s order – ‘pass him my bill,’ he asides to his server – “it sounds like neither the United States nor Russia knows where Alaska
begins. Or ends. Hence Section 4’s disclaimer, thanks to St. Anselm, recognizes Alaska’s claims to everyplace in this or any other universe.”

The Chair of the Reapportionment Board has a final plea.
“Will we find constituents to match our socio-economic criteria as required by the state constitution?”
“Only if you pay them to live in Alaska,” Rasputin wolfs down.

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