

Gran Centroamérica



Overview

Gran Centroamérica is a nation in an alternate history in which a single strong Central and South American federal republic emerges and becomes a force on the national stage. There's really two constituent historical territories that turn into this: [Gran Colombia](#) and the [Federal Republic of Central America](#). In our timeline, Simón Bolívar fought for independence for Gran Colombia which became independent in 1819, and Central America followed soon after in 1821.

However, both fledgling republics had limited success. Gran Colombia found itself drawn into protracted wars with Peru, royalists, and others. The vision for a strong federal republic was mired with infighting, and Bolívar himself became disillusioned with the republic by the end of his life in 1830. It eventually split into the several constituent countries we know of today.

In Central America the ensuing chaos led to independence lasting mere months before being overtaken by Mexican rule. It again became independent in 1823, but by 1840, split off into the constituent countries of Central America.

The point of divergence is that instead of advancing south into South America with military force, Bolívar uses his considerable diplomatic skills to help to the north, and the Central American countries join Gran Colombia as one single federal republic like Bolívar had wanted in the first place, called Gran Centroamérica.

History

In this timeline, Gran Centroamérica coalesces into a federal republic modeled after the United States (which Bolívar admired) in 1821. The independence is respected by the international community and the region has a strong identity, made up of a diverse patchwork of constituent nations but each contributing to the region as a whole. The decisive success of the independence movement generates optimism and cuts down on infighting, and also bolsters the new republic's ability to fend off threats from outside. Fighting with Peru and Mexico is non-existent, who respect the new republic's sovereignty and become fast trading partners with it. The United States, United Kingdom, and even Spain all become trading partners with a vested interest in the region succeeding. Whereas balkanization in our actual timeline weakened each member country and made them vulnerable to threats from inside and out, a strong regional identity starting in 1821 protects Gran Centroamérica from these threats.

The real inflection point happens with the construction of the Panama Canal. In our timeline, the United States is able to carve Panama out of Colombia, basically purely to influence and benefit from the construction of the canal. With a strong federal republic that spans both sides of the Panama Isthmus, this is no longer possible, and the Panama Canal, while still funded in part from American investment, becomes a defining feature of both Gran Centroamérica and the global economy. Gran Centroamérica enters the 20th century as the epicenter of modern development, which attracts people, investment and stimulates a cultural renaissance. The crowning achievement that cements its place on the global stage is when Gran Centroamérica wins the space race and beats both the United States and the USSR to a manned mission to the moon in 1968: its equatorial position makes it ideal for frequent launches and the flagship mission not only makes history but establishes Gran Centroamérica as the center for innovation in the 20th century and beyond.

Geography

The modern countries it comprises include Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela, Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador, Belize, Guatemala, and the state of Chiapas. The borders shown in the map depicted above don't quite match the borders of the two republics that merged in this scenario, but are pretty close. This scenario imagines 11 states in a federal republic modeled after the US, as depicted above, with the 10 member countries, and the Mexican state of Chiapas as the 11th state.

Demographics & Economy

Shown below is a table of each of the 11 member states with their current population and US GDP in our current timeline.

| State | Population | GDP (USD) |
|--------------|-------------|---------------|
| Colombia | 51M | \$343B |
| Ecuador | 18.2M | \$115B |
| Venezuela | 28.3M | \$82B |
| Panama | 4.3M | \$71B |
| Costa Rica | 5.2M | \$68B |
| Nicaragua | 6.6M | \$16B |
| Honduras | 9.5M | \$31B |
| El Salvador | 6.8M | \$32B |
| Belize | 450K | \$3B |
| Guatemala | 17M | \$91B |
| Chiapas | 5.5M | \$20B |
| Total | 153M | \$872B |

The numbers are impressive: even if united today, 200 years after the unification happens in this scenario, this federal republic would rank 9th in the world in population and 20th in the world in GDP. In this scenario however, both numbers would be much higher. Many member countries have been plagued by infighting, civil war, and crime caused by instability that have decimated population growth, in a way that wouldn't be seen in this scenario. Maintaining regional sovereignty and control over things like the Panama Canal and all of the natural resources in the area would also have a dramatically compounding effect on the economic production of the region.