

COMMENTARY

The Feds Just Messed With Texas Over Buoys — And Sided With Cartel-Driven Mexico



by Greg Sindelar

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As Washington, D.C., refuses to defend Texas, and even sides with Texas' foreign antagonists over a buoy barrier meant to prevent illegal immigration, it brings to mind when Rome abandoned Britain.

In the violence and decay of late antiquity, with the Dark Ages rushing in alongside the barbarian armies, the far-flung peoples and provinces of Rome turned to the empire for help. Among them were the cities of Britain, for centuries a jewel of the empire, and now menaced by the shadow of conquest, pillage, and rape. An appeal for aid went forth, and in the year A.D. 410, so the historian Zosimus tells us, an answer came back from the Emperor Honorius. The answer was short and simple and laden with doom: You're on your own.

The so-called Rescript of Honorius is the commonly accepted end of Roman rule in Britain, and it is worth emphasizing what it signifies. Britain did not leave Rome; rather, Rome abandoned Britain. The compact of ruler and ruled was broken by the center's refusal to defend its province.

What may seem hyperbolic at first glance is dragged into banal reality by observation of the border-buoy fracas presently unfolding — and by the actions of the United States Department of Justice against Texas, and on behalf of a Mexican state that is at this point largely a cartel-driven syndicate. That characterization of the Mexican state is unfortunately accurate, with the president of Mexico himself in more or less open alliance with the Sinaloa Cartel and a frequent apologist for cartel actions in general. His example is followed down the chain to local authorities, especially on the border: Ask any Texas-side law-enforcement professional (and we have), and almost none of them will express confidence in the honesty or integrity of his Mexican counterparts.

The buoy barrier was placed in the Rio Grande outside Eagle Pass, Texas, after years of federal refusal to control the human-trafficking crisis. As that crisis metastasized with the cartel takeover of the Mexican state, the positive obligation of Texas to defend its citizenry compelled it to act, and, with the barrier, it did so within its own constitutional powers. Though there is no question that Texas and Texans would prefer the federal government simply do its job, it is an expression of the genius of the founders that we have recourse to other levels of government when it will not.

Federal Government Attacks Texas

The reaction of that federal government is telling, in ways that late-Roman Britons would find sadly familiar. Instead of reacting to Texas' self-defense in ways suggesting a sense of stewardship for American citizens and communities, and an understanding of its positive responsibilities for control of the border, it has instead gone on the attack — against Texas.

An expression of that attack was on display this past Aug. 22 in a federal courtroom in Austin, Texas, as both sides set forth their cases in *United States v. Abbott*: the federal government's lawsuit against the governor of Texas that seeks to compel him to — there is no other way to phrase it — stop defending Texas.

The rhetoric from the Justice Department litigators was predictable to an extent. For example, they rely heavily upon the erroneous 2012 Supreme Court decision in *Arizona v. United States*, in which a left-leaning court prohibited the states from exercising plenary powers over persons within their jurisdictions for the first time since 1789. What was less predictable, but considerably more appalling, was the extent to which the federal government litigators advocated, in court, on behalf of the cartel-driven Mexican state — against Texas and its citizenry.

“Mexico won't cooperate with the U.S. as long as the barrier is in place,” said the federal litigators, as if Mexican cooperation was at this point meaningful. Mexico, as observers know, more or less kicked out the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in 2021, and the Mexican president recently vowed to use the Mexican military to defend the cartels against any U.S. military action.

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“Mexico does not generally like walls between our two countries,” said the federal litigators, as if the preferences of the Mexican state-cartel syndicate are at all relevant, especially versus the defense of U.S. citizens in Texas. “Mexico has expressed great gratitude to the federal government for pursuing legal action against the State of Texas,” said the federal litigators, to which one must respond: no doubt. It’s telling that they boast of it.

Especially bizarre and notable was this utterance: “Mexico generally supports humane migration practices.” Well, the U.S. Department of Justice may believe that. They believe a great many untrue things in Washington, D.C. Very few in Texas believe it. No one on the border believes it. Absolutely no one among the millions trapped in the cruel web of Mexican human trafficking — abetted by various organs of the Mexican state — believes it. The charitable explanation is that Washington, D.C., is ignorant. The uncharitable explanation, which is to say the realistic one, is obvious.

What the federal government is doing is sadly evident. Why they are doing it requires informed speculation. The Washington, D.C., reflex is always, by its nature, going to be against state sovereignty and the 10th Amendment — and that goes double when the state in question is governed by the political party opposite to the regime’s own.

We can speculate a bit further and note that both Mexico and the United States have presidential elections in 2024 — and each incumbent requires something of the other. The Mexican president, who hopes to rule through his eventual successor — presidential reelection is forbidden there — benefits greatly from shows of respect and deference by the United States. The American president, who is running for reelection, benefits greatly if Mexico clamps down on any human trafficking crisis in the run-up to November 2024. In this light (and keeping in mind the Biden regime’s robust record of foreign-power entanglements including China and Ukraine), it is not at all unreasonable to ask whether the Biden administration’s attack on Texas, and advocacy for Mexico, stems from a crassly political motivation, predicated upon a deal.

Who Fights for America?

The entire affair is a great tragedy — and a great danger to the future of the United States. When Roman Britain was abandoned by Honorius, the emperor at least had the excuse that the Britons never chose to be part of the empire in the first place. The United States of America is different: Every constituent state has at some point in history made a positive decision to enter the Union. When they did, the federal government assumed a definite set of obligations and responsibilities toward them, as much as those states assumed obligations toward it. When that federal government decides it will no longer meet those obligations and will moreover align itself with an antagonistic foreign power against its own states and citizens, what recourse is there?

Right now there is the recourse to the judiciary — and Texas is smartly taking that path. Yet it is dangerous and foolish in the extreme for the federal government to provoke the question, and to insist that the only pathway for American citizens on American soil is mute submission to its dictates. In south Texas, in the places where D.C. bureaucrats never go, the ordinary people are acutely sensitive to the issues at stake. Mere weeks back my colleagues met with ranchers in Starr County, Texas — remote, rural, and hard up on the Rio Grande — and one of those ranchers, a man who has encountered armed traffickers from Mexico on his own property more than once, asked about exactly this. He was a U.S. Army veteran who defended his country at war, he said, so why won’t the United States defend him?

He’s asking the right question. Washington, D.C., is giving the wrong answer. The good question and its bad answer illuminate what’s really at stake in the buoy-barrier case, which is — as is so often true — about things far beyond itself. Every American citizen in every American community has a legitimate expectation that his government will not attack his way of life, and will not side with foreign powers against him.

The Biden regime does both. In understanding what it means, we hear echoes of Thomas Jefferson’s distress from two centuries back: “This momentous question, like a fire bell in the night, awakened and filled me with terror. I considered it at once as the knell of the Union.” But the Union is not done yet. The question is whether the regime in D.C. will succeed in rendering it a tool for our repression — or Texas will succeed in returning it to its founding purpose.

The question is open. All we can say for sure is that if the Biden regime fights for Mexico, it is Texas, now, that fights for America. ★

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