

# Slouching Towards Fort Sumter?

By Victor Davis Hanson

In the months before the April 12, 1861, firing on Fort Sumter, there were lots of sharp divisions in the North about the proper reaction to the first seven Confederate states that had already left the Union.



Not all Unionists believed that war was inevitable. Some, in fact, were happy to be done with the departing South and thus see their stain of slavery gone from the Union. Similarly, others agreed that the emerging Confederacy was not worth the trouble and costs of war, and the secessionists could just form their own nation and stew in their own backward, servile juice.

But after Fort Sumter, Lincoln—who was hated as much by the Confederates as Trump is by the woke and socialist left—gained a consensus that the Constitution had no clauses about any lawful departure from the union. But it did operate under a clear supremacy clause that made state obstruction of federal law and occupation of federal property veritable sedition.

Lincoln and the preservationists felt that they easily had the moral high ground of abolition versus the continuance of

slavery. Nor did they want a North America of fragmenting, warring nations in the manner of Europe.

Something similar is emerging over Minnesota, the South Carolina of our age.

Once sanctuary states, cities, and counties had established the precedent that, with impunity, they could nullify federal immigration law, then what followed was a logical and mounting descent into the current open defiance of the federal government. How odd that self-described progressives are now acting out the visions of prior kindred nullificationists and neo-Confederates from John C. Calhoun to George Wallace.

The reaction of the rest of the nation, especially its conservative half, to Minnesota resembles the 1861 disconnect in the North over the insurrectionary states.

Some believe that if Minnesota wants to protect its approximately 1,300 jailed illegal alien murderers, rapists, and assorted felons, so be it, and ICE should leave such a dysfunctional and dystopian state to its own self-destructive path.

In this way of "See ya, wouldn't wanna be ya" thinking, Trump should stick to the red and purple states, clear them of criminal aliens with the help of local enforcement, but without the organized performance-art leftist resistance. Then he could contrast the nation with the difference between low crime, noncontroversial deportations, versus the blue-state model of protecting illegal alien criminals and their indifference to the mayhem they inflict on the innocent.

If Minnesota further wants to be a state like 1861 South Carolina that openly defies the federal government, then also so be it. But it should accordingly not expect federal funding for its pick-and-choose approach to federal law and property.

Has Minnesota forgotten that, like blue-state America, it

cheered on Barack Obama's DOJ when it successfully sued Arizona in 2010, insisting that it was Obama's right as a federal custodian not to enforce federal immigration law at the border—and thus not legal for Governor Jan Brewer to use her state resources to enforce a federal law that derelict federal officers would not?

But on the other hand, contemporary Unionists objected that such live and let suffer is defeatist. Moreover, there are millions of Americans inside insurrectionary Minnesota who do not support their neo-Confederate leaders. Millions in Minnesota properly see themselves as Americans first and Minnesotans second.

In this line of argument, just as Lincoln refused to give up federal armories, property, and offices inside the South—most notably Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor—to insurrectionists, so too the Trump administration has an obligation to protect federal property and offices in Minnesota and to enforce federal law throughout the nation, at least if it is to continue as a nation.

Very soon, Trump will have to decide which strategy is preferable and politically viable before the midterms.

Meanwhile, Minnesota's highest elected officials have ordered local and state police not to protect federal immigration officers from the very street violence that they fuel. Indeed. Governor Walz, Mayor Frey, and Attorney General Ellison are actively encouraging Minnesotans to obstruct federal officers from enforcing federal laws—despite the mounting violence that follows their collective prompts.

The three know that organized and well-funded groups organize the protests and incite the violence. And perhaps the trio even welcomes would-be martyrs to use their vehicles to ram ICE officers or to arrive at protests armed with military-grade, semi-automatic pistols with plenty of magazines and

ammunition to spare.

Walz and company further quietly accept that they could easily mitigate the violence by simply turning over roughly 1,300 criminal illegal aliens in various Minnesota jails to federal authorities. To do so would lessen the chances of violence, make Minnesota a safer place, and expedite the rotation of ICE out of Minnesota.

But, of course, Walz, Frey, and Ellison have no such intentions, given their schemes are elsewhere.

Given the failure of an increasingly socialist Democratic Party in 2024 to offer a more popular and convincing agenda than Trump's, they believe their future lies in an increasingly redistributionist America, fueled by unlimited, unaudited immigration from the former Third World. They view as a political asset millions of arriving poor in dire need of massive federal health, food, housing, and education subsidies and entitlements, imbued with DEI victimhood, and nursed on America as toxic at its birth and ever more pathological ever since.

So for the Minnesota state officials, screaming for ICE "to get the f\*\*k out of Minnesota" is more than mere braggadocio. It is a reminder that the Democratic Party wants a safe place for illegal immigration, the fuel of a future dependent constituency—as the architecture of the recent massive Somali frauds attests.

They also believe that the more turmoil, the more violence, the more resistance, and the more a general sense of chaos and unrest swirl around the Trump administration, the more they can drive down its popularity before the midterms.

They still cherish the months of riot, violence, and arson in the George Floyd "summer of love" in 2020 as critical in defeating Donald Trump.

Now as then, the left believes they can create a lose/lose dilemma for Trump: send in the National Guard to restore order, and he confirms that he is a "Nazi" and using the "Gestapo" to quell "peaceful" protests. Stand down, and the left owns the street, exasperating the MAGA base that mysteriously Trump has allowed the criminal left to nullify the enforcement of federal law in near-secessionist fashion.

There are other Democratic agendas, both short- and long-term.

The Minnesota Democrat apparatus either knowingly turned a blind eye to, protected, or silently partnered with the architects of likely the largest theft of federal welfare and entitlement monies in U.S. history—largely by the Somali community, both immigrants and their second-generation apparatchiks. The Democratic elite counted on the prophylactic cry of "racist!" to exempt the Somali community from any legal accountability. And so far, they seem right in that assumption.

And the public?

Polls reveal its trademark ambiguity. A majority voted for Trump to enforce immigration law, close the border, end illegal immigration, and deport those who broke federal law. But that hope and the reality of implementing it are two different things—especially when a state like Minnesota has not just institutionalized illegal immigration but nearly canonized foreign nationals illegally residing in the U.S.

To sum up public opinion, the proverbial people want all criminal illegal aliens deported as soon as possible, and they may even support the deportations of all 10-12 million illegal aliens who came en masse, unaudited, and with the de facto blessing of the Biden administration.

But that said, they want the act of deportation of the non-criminal to be out of sight, out of mind—as if magically they can simply disappear and thus either self-deport or assemble

at ICE stations eager to be sent at no cost home.

For now, Walz, Frey, and Ellison are upping the rhetoric, fanning the violence, and talking openly about how best to nullify federal law and impede federal enforcement. They are convinced that they have galvanized national opposition to the hated Trump, smothered the Somali fraud scandal, and stopped ICE deportations of their constituents.

In all of those assumptions, they have little idea they are following the Confederate script to the letter. And like their spiritual forefathers of 1861, they grow ever more cocky, boastful, and defiant as they create martyrs, spread narratives of victimhood, and daily slouch toward another Fort Sumter.

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