

## **Secession – yet again**

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Way back in late 2019, months before any of us had heard of Corona Virus, I wrote two pieces on California, Oregon and Washington possibly seceding from the United States (*NCP* June & October, 2019). Now, five months into the COVID pandemic, with no end in sight, it's time to revisit the issue once again.

It's blatantly apparent that the US government's response to the Corona virus pandemic has been abysmal to the point criminal malfeasance. We have a true humanitarian disaster on our hands, almost exclusively due to our government's completely immoral and utter mishandling of the epidemic. Although the US has only 4.1% of the world's population, we are posting 26% of the world's total cases. As of Aug 1, 2020, there have been 4.6 million cases of COVID in the US, with more than 150,000 deaths (22% of the world's total).<sup>1</sup> And, while the rest of the world is beginning to open up, cases in the US continue to soar.

In March 2020, early in the epidemic, California Governor Gavin Newsome got a jump on the pandemic and took early steps to shut down California in an effort to "flatten the curve." And, for the first couple of months of the pandemic, the number of COVID cases in California were far fewer than one would expect considering that we're the most populous state in the nation engaged in a tremendous amount of trade with the Far East, where the pandemic began. Unfortunately, under pressure from the federal government, we began to reopen prematurely, and cases spiked along with most of the Deep South and Southwest, states that refused to initially close down.

Due to lack of direction and action from both the White House and Congress, actions that should have been common sense public health measures have become a stage for political grand-

standing – either one believes the science or one believes the president; COVID is a threat or COVID is a hoax, and an effort to discredit Trump to throw next November’s election to the Democrats. We won’t even mention the phenomenally stupid COVID “cures” being touted by Trump and his conspiracy-minded allies; that’s grist for another mill.

We’re now being treated to a variety of news stories about physical threats to public health officials who recommend following the scientific consensus and closing things down to prevent the spread of the virus. These threats are almost all directly traceable to the Trump White House and his Fox News acolytes. This is utterly insane; there’s no room in a pandemic to politicize public health, yet that’s exactly what’s been happening.

In mid-March, when the pandemic first started making an impact on the country, Trump abdicated his responsibility and told the states to handle the problem. Yet, when the states asked for help in terms of ventilators and personal protective equipment (PPE), the Feds told them that it was federal responsibility to allocate those resources, and proceeded to give that equipment to states that didn’t need that stuff, i.e. states controlled by the Republican Party. Meanwhile, the states that were getting slammed by the virus: New York, New Jersey, Washington, and California, among other “Blue” states, received almost nothing from the Federal Reserves. In fact, both New York and Washington had paid private companies to supply PPE to their frontline healthcare workers, only to have their purchases “appropriated” by the federal government for its own purposes. <sup>2,3</sup>

Later, after it became obvious that the pandemic was going to be a problem for the rest of the year, and states started looking at what it would take to re-open schools, Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos told them that all school districts must reopen in the Fall or risk losing federal dollars. This violates the guidelines established by the president’s own Corona Virus

Task Force – schools shouldn't reopen until COVID infections dramatically taper off. Yet, despite the guidelines, both DeVos and Trump are pushing to re-open the schools even though there is absolutely no way children in large groups like schools can maintain social distancing; the schools could become “hot spots” for the virus. This reality was brought home last week when the CDC reported that 260 teens and staff at a Georgia summer camp caught the virus.<sup>4</sup> We had our eyes opened again when the American Academy of Pediatrics reported that 94,000 children tested positive for the virus during the last two weeks in July.<sup>5</sup>

Apart from his criminal mis-handling of the COVID epidemic, condemning added thousands to death, Trump has further declared war on “The Left Coast” when he exercised an unconstitutional violation of the 10<sup>th</sup> Amendment's, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people,” and sent federal troops into Portland to quell mostly peaceful “Black Lives Matter” demonstrations. These un-identifiable federal troops, including Border Patrol Agents almost 400 miles from the nearest international border, only inflamed the situation provoking more violence and sensational TV footage. Trump has since threatened to send troops into Chicago, Albuquerque, Seattle, Kansas City and Washington DC.<sup>6</sup> The governors of Illinois, New Mexico, Washington, Kansas and the mayors of the involved cities have specifically requested that those troops *not* be sent. Yet Trump and his enabling Attorney-General Barr have threatened to send troops irrespective of what the governors want.

While Congress, especially the Republican-led Senate, has continued to dither, remaining paralyzed in the face of these combined crises, the unconstitutional executive overreach has continued, now threatening the US Postal Service, in an effort to undermine the 2020 general election.<sup>7, 8</sup>

When we couple the government's inadequate response to the COVID epidemic, fascistic response to constitutionally protected protest, attempted sabotage of the upcoming election, the fact that the state governments of Oregon, Washington and California have filed more than one-hundred lawsuits against the federal government's executive overreach *and* that the Feds have undermined our environmental agenda to combat global climate change, we find that our three states are completely out of synch with the rest of the country.

Why should we remain in a country where we're not wanted, or even liked all that much? What does affiliation with the United States offer us that we can't achieve much more completely on our own? As I mentioned in my June 2019 piece, California has the fifth largest economy in the world, and yes, we've all suffered tremendously from the COVID epidemic, but I suspect, that, given half-a-chance the economies of the three Left Coast states will be able to recover more rapidly than the rest of the country, once we're allowed to defeat the virus our own way.

Richard Kreitner, author of *Break It Up: Secession, Division, and the Secret History of America's Imperfect Union*, stated in an interview with Rebecca Onion in *Slate*, the internet politics and arts journal:

*"I think it's [secession is] not only an American tradition but actually a patriotic position. I think questioning the value of the union is arguably the most patriotic thing we could do. The whole point of the country when it was founded was to be the means to some kind of ends—to serve a purpose. The best American tradition continues to treat the union as a means to those ends, and I think those are in the Declaration of Independence—'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' . . .*

*I think there's always been a tradition, a radical one but definitely patriotic one, that holds the country to high standards and says, We should hold this thing together, but only as long as it's going to serve some purpose."*<sup>9</sup>

Again, I ask the question, “Haven’t we Californians had enough?” Isn’t it time to serve some “higher purpose” in providing a “more perfect union,” to quote the preamble to the Constitution, to our citizens?

Our ability to “promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty. . .” to our citizens has been undermined by our corrupt and criminal administration. Our progressive carbon-emission standards have been gutted by the feds, our “flatten the curve” response to Corona virus has been undermined by federal malfeasance and incompetence, and our cities are under threat by an unhinged federal assault on our First Amendment rights of Free Speech and peaceful assembly. I say, “Enough is enough! It’s time for the progressive ‘Left Coast’ of Oregon, Washington and California to go it alone, engage in an extremely patriotic act, and part ways with the government in Washington, DC.”

I’m sure that we could work out some sort of federation or commonwealth status for our new nation of Cascadia in relation to the rest of the country. But I feel that it’s definitely time to part ways – obtain a divorce from the US, as it were; and we won’t even try to get child-support.

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