


Substantial Disruption



The Great Slab of Trump

By Mike Tully

Attorney General Jefferson Beauregard Sessions, the only Orc known to speak with a drawl, dwells in a dank and musty Manichean world with his loyal consorts, fear and paranoia. That reality informs a Hobbesian vision of governance characterized by [reduced oversight](#) of police authorities, [more private prisons](#), and a slavish [dedication](#) to keeping strangers out of the country. He is President Trump's pre-eminent policy enforcer and his world view has led him to bring dangerous simplicity and absolutism to policy issues that require analysis, nuance, insight, compassion, and a complex understanding incompatible with a Manichean worldview.

While Donald Trump and his incoherent cohort have stumbled in their attempts to replace the Affordable Care Act, pass a Muslim-centric immigration ban, reform the tax code, staff high-level positions, and figure out [which way](#) their aircraft carriers are sailing, Sessions has full control of immigration law enforcement and brings a punitive and Draconian approach that will prove counter-productive, waste resources, and leave domestic scars that could linger for a generation or longer. Immigration policy is like a milking stool; it needs three legs to stand on. They are: (1) border integrity; (2) enforcement of laws addressing employers who knowingly hire immigrants not permitted to work here lawfully, and (3) temporary visas that permit foreign workers, such as seasonal agricultural employees from Mexico, to work legally without fear of detention or exploitation. Trump and Sessions -- by focusing primarily on removal and imprisonment -- are trying to build a one-legged milking stool. They plan a [massive increase](#) in border agents, immigration [judges](#) and [prison cells](#). Sessions is calling on federal prosecutors to prioritize immigration law enforcement, even though he [has yet to appoint](#) a single U. S. Attorney after summarily firing all 93 of them. A federal prosecutor [told the Daily Beast](#) he found Sessions' approach to immigration law enforcement "f-ing horrifying."

Sessions recently visited Nogales, Arizona and [decried](#) "transnational gangs like MS-13 and international cartels (that) flood our country with drugs and leave death and violence in their wake." He described them as "criminal organizations that turn cities and suburbs into warzones." Really? "Flood our country?" Does he not know what a flood looks like? And our cities and suburbs are "warzones?" Is he unable to distinguish Los Angeles from Mosul? There are bad guys who penetrate the border, no question about it, but there always have been; they are criminals, not ISIS. While Sessions and Trump blame the Obama administration for the presence of the gangs, they were [already established](#) in American cities before Obama campaigned for the presidency. Facts and logic are not welcome in Sessions and Trump's make-believe black and white world.

Sessions' statement, "it is here that criminal aliens and the coyotes and the document-forgers seek to overthrow our system of lawful immigration" may have been the daffiest thing he said. The criminals, coyotes (people-smugglers) and forgers seek to make an illegal buck, the way they have for generations. "Overthrowing the American system of lawful immigration" seems a tad ambitious. How many criminals have said: "Let's scam some money so we can buy good liquor, snort better blow, get new clothes, entertain our women, drive better cars, and live in a nicer house. And, oh yeah, let's not forget to overthrow the American system of lawful immigration!" Sure, that makes sense.

Sessions has allies. John Kelly, the Director of Homeland Security, defended Sessions' Draconian approach to immigration by declaring that "we are in fact a nation [under attack](#)." One would think that Kelly, a former Marine General, would be able to recognize an "attack." Santa Anna storming the Alamo was an "attack." The D-Day invasion of Normandy was an "attack." The Tet Offensive was an "attack." The siege of Gondor by the Orcs and Nazgul – well, you get the idea.

His other ally is the empathy-free Director of the Office of Management and Budget, Mick Mulvaney, who insists that President Trump's infamous border wall be included in the budget agreement that Congress must approve in order to avoid a government shutdown. "We want wall funding," he [recently declared](#), adding, "(T)he president should, I think, at least have the opportunity to fund one of his highest priorities in the first funding bill under his administration."

Congress should let Trump and Sessions get a start on their border wall. They'll never have the funds to complete it, so let them build a sample of the "beautiful wall" Trump promised his base. It will be constructed on fairly level terrain, will be about thirty feet high, and extend for ten miles or so. Let it stand as a symbol of arrogance, not the Great Wall he envisions and promised, but as his personal monument: The Great Slab of Trump. It would be the perfect icon of Trump and Sessions' simplicity and absolutism: bleached and abandoned; a sentinel of nothingness, a shrine to political folly, an echo of [Ozymandias](#), eloquently doomed, "boundless and bare," as "the lone and level sands stretch far away."