

God, Life, and Everything
The New York-Texas Crazy Coalition

The other day, I sent my brother in Texas (he lives outside Ft. Worth) a note saying, "What the heck is going on in Texas? It's gotten so crazy."

He responded with, "Talk about crazy. Why do you export your crazy down here?"

That might be a strange conversation if you don't know what we are talking about. We were, of course, referencing the news coming out of Texas the last couple of weeks.

First, my comment had to do with the governor's calling out the Texas State Guard to keep an eye on the US Army as it performed maneuvers as part of a seven-state wide war games called "Jade Helm 15." For some reason, Texans got it in their heads that the Obama administration was going to invade and take over Texas, apparently forgetting that Texas is already a part of the United States.

My brother's comment referred to Pamela Geller, the New Yorker whose American Freedom Defense Initiative sponsored a contest to draw the prophet Muhammed. Predictably, and I would suggest intentionally, it drew out a couple of Muslim nut jobs with assault rifles who planned on attacking the contest and presumably killing anyone they could. That is, until an off-duty policeman, working as security, killed them both.

There is crazy involved in both of these situations, and I thought I'd just have a look at both of them.

First, I still have no idea what would prompt folks down there to think the US government was going to invade Texas. In a way, we did that from the 1820s to the 1840s - first as legal, then as illegal immigrants from the US into the Mexican state of Tejas. Then, once Texas broke away from Mexico in the 1830s, our government took over in 1845 (at the request of the Texas government).

The current brouhaha has more to do with a rabid dislike and distrust of the president. They imagine he'll do anything to get their guns (according to one concerned citizen at a town meeting in Bastrop County). Even sending in the troops. The governor, when he heard of these upset citizens decided it would be less confusing to call out the state guard than to simply say, "Don't let your paranoia infect the whole state."

The fact that groups have not risen up against these war games indicates that it's not our government acting oddly, it's Texas.

The situation with Pamela Geller's group is more complicated. According to her, it was absolutely necessary to have this contest because of the attacks on the French magazine Charlie Hebdo - attacks spawned by the magazine's unflattering portrayals of Muhammed. According to Geller, if Muslims weren't so offended visual portrayals of their prophet, we wouldn't have to keep drawing pictures of him.

Say what?

Yes, we have to intentionally offend because some of those who are offended will act wickedly.

Let me be the first to say, there is no excuse ever for physically attacking anyone, and certainly not for offending one's religion. Let me also point out that none of the cartoonists - or Geller - are Muslim, so Muslim law does not apply to them. It would be as shocking to have Muslim law apply to non-Muslims as it would be to have Christian

law apply to non-Christians. We would never force stores to close on the sabbath or deny gays the right to marry just because it may or may not violate Christian sensibilities. Right?

So, absolutely, those Muslims who insist that non-Muslims obey Muslim law are out of line.

But just as surely, any of those participating in that cartoon contest can't seriously call themselves Christian because it is hardly Christian behavior to intentionally mock someone else or willfully offend them just because we can. It is not Christian behavior to knowingly push someone - especially those who are unstable - into violence. Geller's group knew there would be some crazy out there who would take the bait. They said so.

It's as if they were counting on it. Which is another type of crazy. Because mocking and pushing is the only way to defend our rights to be offensive and belligerent.

So New York and Texas have shown that they can compete for the paranoid belligerent prize. It would be refreshing if they could some day compete for the "No thanks, I don't have a need to be angry or obnoxious" award.