United States today, Europe tomorrow?

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California, a U.S. State, continues to suffer from deeply rooted systemic issues with violent crime, many of which stem from its fragmented immigration enforcement and political obstruction of coordinated law enforcement. While the state bears direct responsibility for its choices, the federal government has also failed to assert consistency and operational control. Both levels of government have allowed the situation to spiral by misaligning priorities, underutilizing intelligence, and letting political identity override security imperatives.

Patterns of violent crime and organized criminal activity linked to specific migrant groups have been documented repeatedly over the past decade. These are not isolated cases, nor are they new trends. They've simply been allowed to fester. Rather than adopt a targeted enforcement model that distinguishes between legitimate asylum seekers and known criminal actors, California has embraced a blanket protection policy—well-intentioned perhaps, but one that inadvertently shields dangerous individuals.

California offers illegal migrants access to driver's licenses, healthcare, and other public services. In doing so, the state collects identifying information: fingerprints, photographs, addresses. Yet despite gathering this biometric data, California has been inconsistent and reluctant in using it to support federal immigration enforcement efforts, particularly in sanctuary jurisdictions. While fingerprint data from jails is technically shared with DHS under the Secure Communities program, local cooperation on detainers and transfer requests is often denied—even in cases involving serious or violent convictions.

In short: the data exists, but the system refuses to act on it.

This breakdown is not solely California's fault. The federal government has also failed to enforce accountability or offer effective incentives for collaboration. While ICE and DHS do operate nationwide databases and have access to biometric data, they have long struggled to compel sanctuary jurisdictions like California's largest counties to hold or transfer offenders. In recent years, new programs such as Operation Guardian Angel and other task forces have been introduced to bridge the intelligence-enforcement gap, but California's refusal to engage in enforcement partnerships has limited their effectiveness.

Even when ICE identifies a deportable individual—often someone with a prior record or active warrant—California's local authorities may refuse to notify or hold the individual for federal pickup. This has led to high-profile cases where violent offenders were released and went on to commit further crimes, despite ICE having flagged them. The gap isn't in capability—it's in political will.

This is where Europe must pay close attention.

California is an example of what happens when ideology overrides operational law enforcement. When immigration enforcement becomes a symbol of political identity rather than a matter of state security, dangerous individuals slip through the cracks—not because they are invisible, but because no one is willing to act.

Europe is facing increasing pressure from migration surges, cross-border criminal activity, and political polarization over immigration policy. If EU member states take divergent approaches to enforcement—some pursuing strict detention and deportation, others offering broad sanctuary without intelligence screening—they will create the same fractured environment California lives with now. Criminal networks are not random. They are strategic, and they will follow the path of least resistance.

Just as cartels in the U.S. have adapted to California's sanctuary status by using the state as a foothold for operations, transnational criminal groups in Europe will exploit weak points at the national level. A fragmented European immigration policy—with open borders but disconnected enforcement—creates blind spots. When asylum becomes automatic rather than vetted, and when political fears prevent collaboration between agencies, violent actors thrive.

To be clear, the solution is not fear mongering or mass deportation. The solution is targeted, intelligence-based enforcement—rooted in data, guided by human rights, but committed to public safety. California has the data, and the federal government has the tools. What's missing is unity. Enforcement cannot be meaningful when local jurisdictions veto federal action out of political opposition.

Europe still has a chance to get this right. It must invest in interstate intelligence-sharing, a unified asylum framework, and cross-border removal processes. It must create a system where national sovereignty does not interfere with collective security. And most importantly, it must avoid allowing one part of the Union to become a refuge for criminal actors simply because that country refuses to enforce what others will.

California's model is not one of compassion—it's one of paralysis. It shows what happens when politics takes precedence over planning. The consequences aren't theoretical. They're lived every day in communities where violent offenders, flagged and known, walk freely because no one has the authority—or the courage—to act.

Europe should watch closely. Because what is happening in California today could be what unfolds across the continent tomorrow—unless its leaders choose coordination over chaos.