

# Re-Annexation

## The Invention of a Past

How a single prefix redrew the map of America.

# Words Create Reality

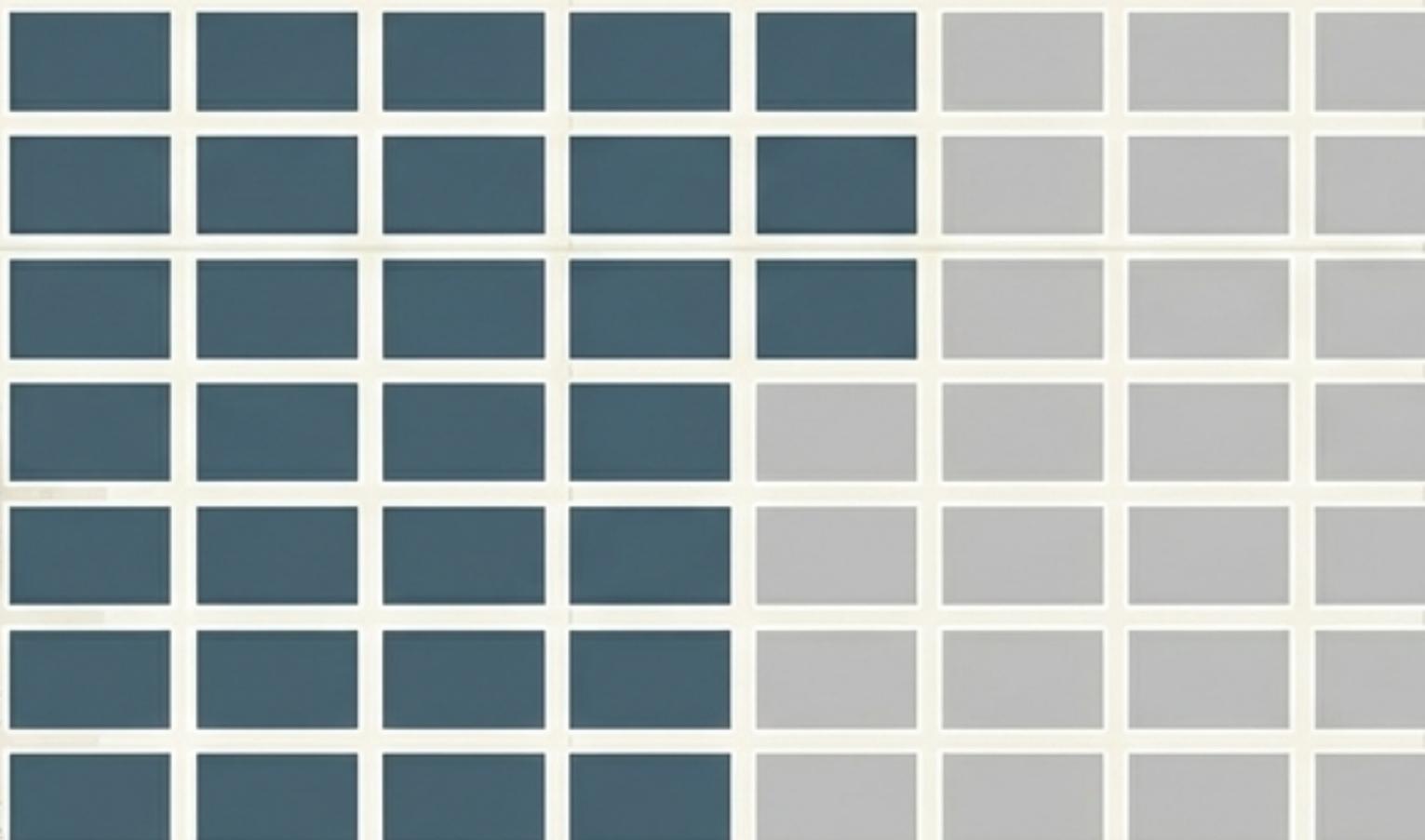
This presentation examines a timeless political strategy: when the facts don't support your ambition, change the language. In 1844, a failing campaign to annex Texas was transformed into an unstoppable movement by reframing it as **“re-annexation.”** This is the story of how that word was weaponized, creating its own past to force a desired future. We will explore the claim, the facts that defied it, and the enduring legacy of this tactic.

# The Consensus Against Annexation

June 6, 1844

AGAINST

IN FAVOR



AGAINST

IN FAVOR

## Key Event

The U.S. Congress decisively rejects the annexation of Texas. The political establishment believed “**sensatez**” (good sense) had prevailed.

## The Underdog

James K. Polk, an unexpected Democratic nominee, faces an uphill battle. The presidency seemed assured for his opponent, Henry Clay.

The *New York Herald* calls him “a ridiculous candidate, lacking all preparation and ability.”

# The Claim: An Act of Reclamation

## The Strategic Shift

Polk, guided by Senator Robert J. Walker, abandons the argument for “annexation” and begins to speak of “re-annexation.”

## The New Premise

The argument was that Texas was never truly foreign territory. It had, they claimed, been included in the Louisiana Purchase from France and was therefore historically American land.

“Words create the past and force the future.”

This strategy tapped into a “culture of faith where what one believes is more important than evidence.” The goal was to win the dialectical battle.



# The Factual Record, Exhibit A: The Adams-Onís Treaty



## THE UNDENIABLE TERM

The Adams-Onís Treaty, signed in 1819 between the United States and the Spanish Empire, established the **Sabine River (#9A1B2C)** as the clear, final, and legally binding western border of the U.S. territory acquired from France.

**IMPLICATION:** The United States formally relinquished any and all claims to Texas.

# “A Chain of Unbroken Agreements”

1819



**Adams-Onís Treaty.** The US and Spain define the Sabine River as the border between their territories.

**Treaty of Limits.** The newly independent nation of Mexico and the United States meet in Mexico City to formally ratify the original Adams-Onís border.



1828

1832



**Second Ratification.** The same two nations sign the ratification again in Washington, D.C., reaffirming the border without ambiguity.

## The Fine Print

The 1832 treaty's Article II re-confirmed the border in detail, citing coordinates for the rivers Sabine, Roxo (Red), and Arkansas. It explicitly cited “**the map published in Philadelphia in 1818**” as the official, binding reference.

I cannot lamented that Spain has not signed the agreement of a historical error, but I believe that one day Texas will be one of the richest states of our Union. Patience and reserve are the best agreement, until the richest that among the inhabitants of the States and territories of the Union, pronounced that this information obtained that in facilitating the negotiations in the government of accretion towards the territory of the United States, the colonies of the Atlantic.

## Key Insight

The “re-annexation” argument was not a correction of a historical error, but a convenient justification for a long-held geopolitical ambition.

# Ambition in the Waiting

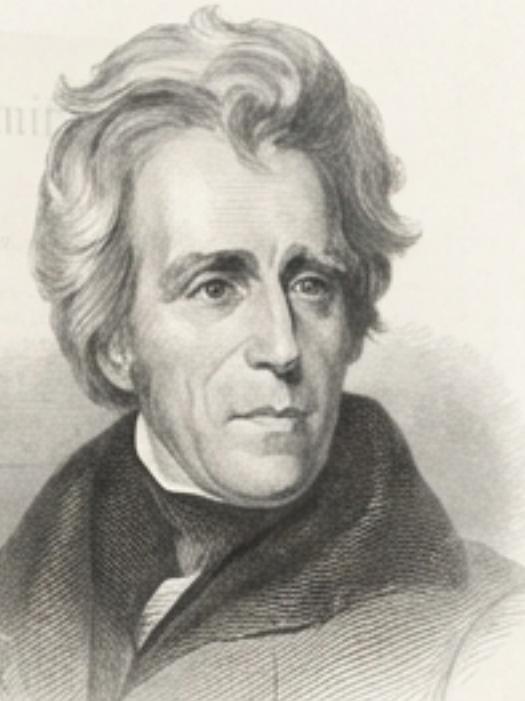
*“I cannot lament that Spain has not signed the agreement, as I believe that one day Texas will be one of the richest states of our Union.”*

— Thomas Jefferson to President James Monroe, May 14, 1820

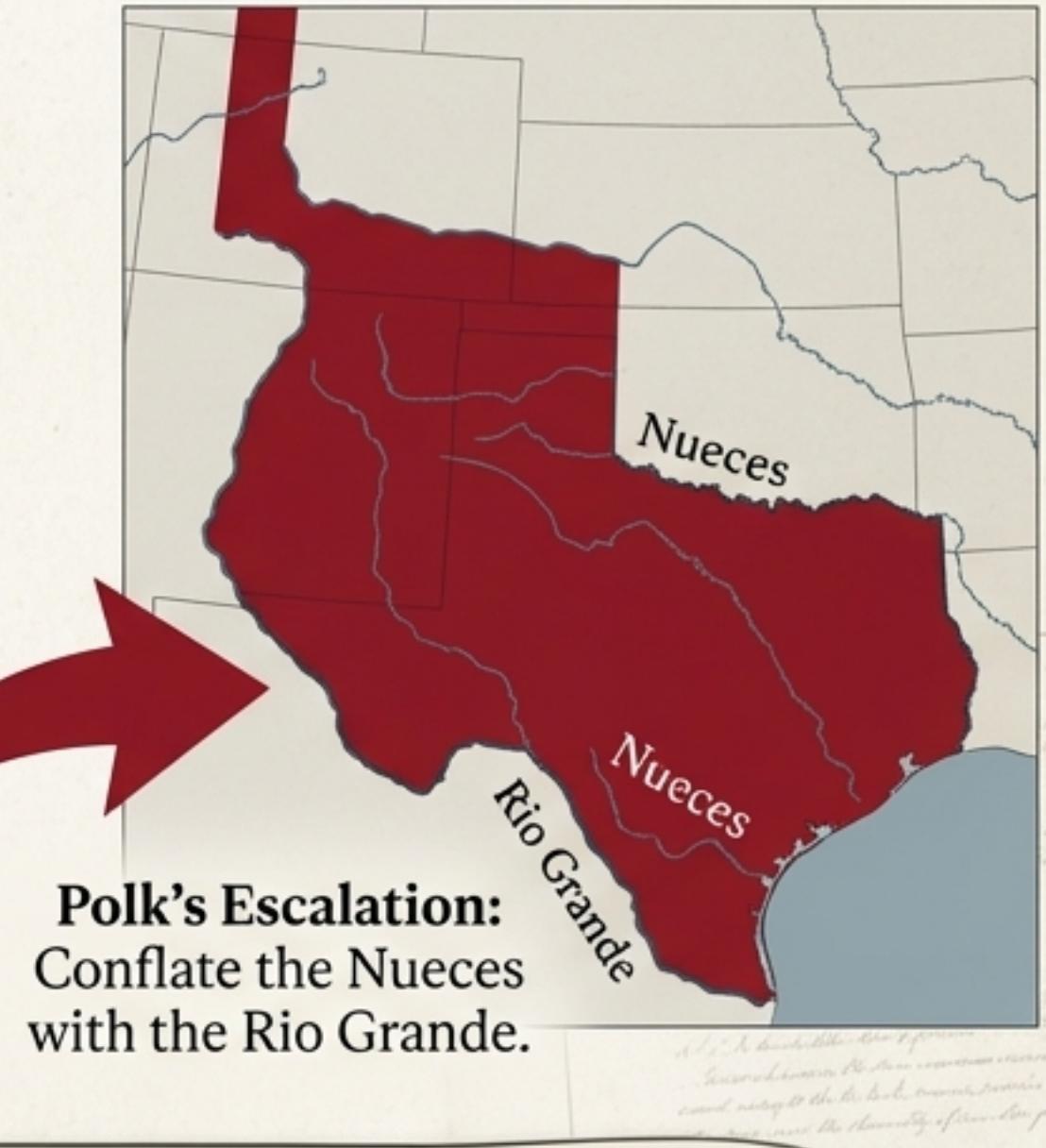
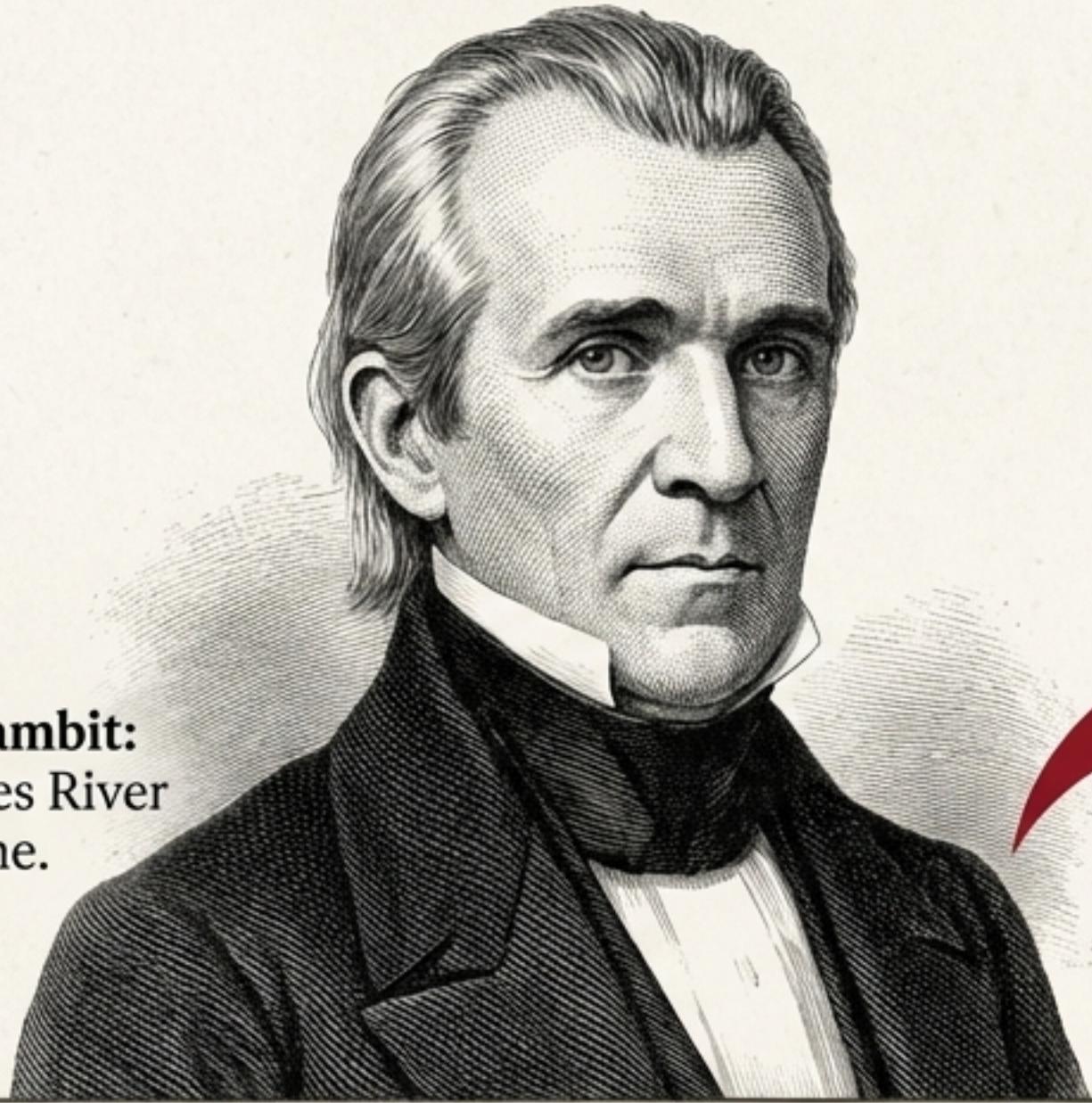
## Conclusion

Key American leaders always saw the treaty's borders as temporary, to be respected only “for the moment.”

# The Architect of an Alternate Reality



**Jackson's Gambit:**  
Call the Nueces River  
the Sabine.

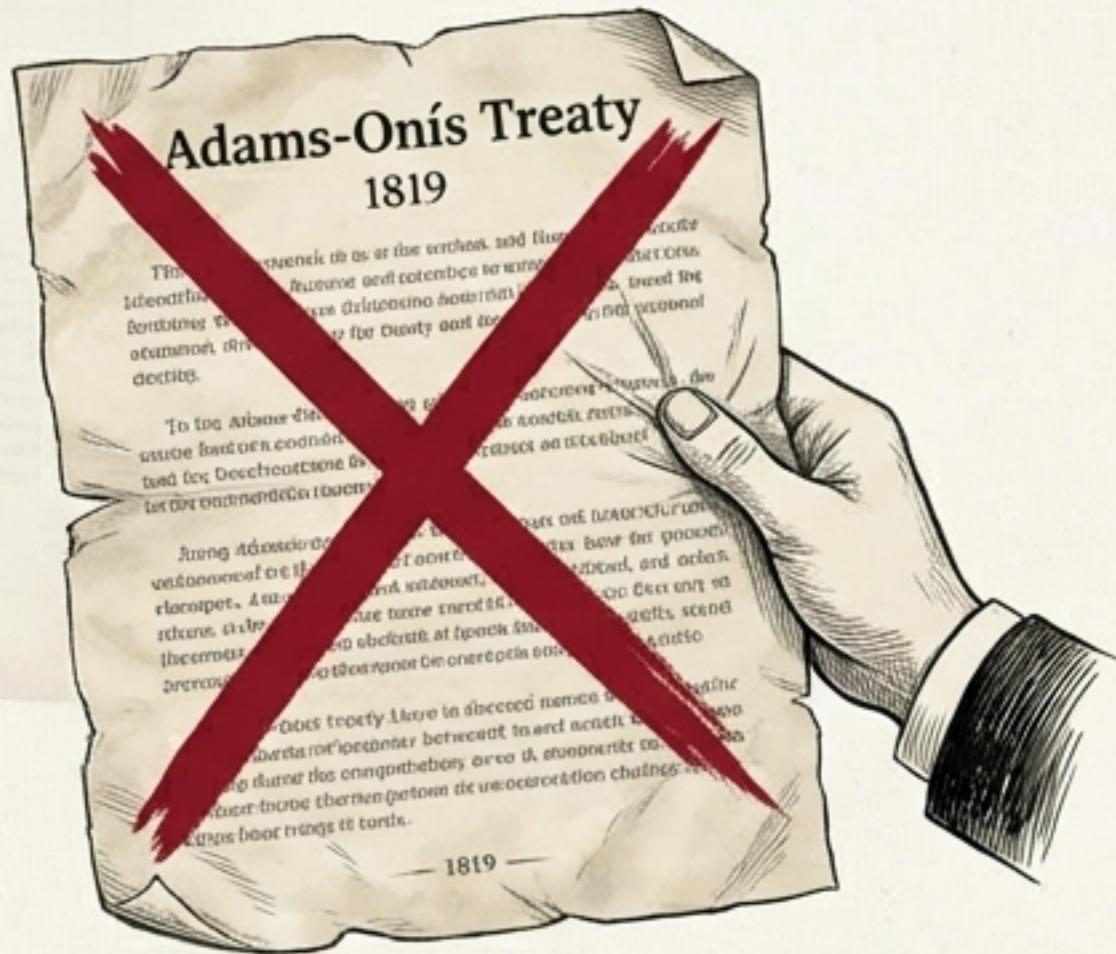


**Polk's Escalation:**  
Conflate the Nueces  
with the Rio Grande.

*The Justification: It is America's duty to "expand freedom to other territories," with California, Oregon, Cuba, and even Canada in their sights.*

# The Law as a Tool, Not a Truth

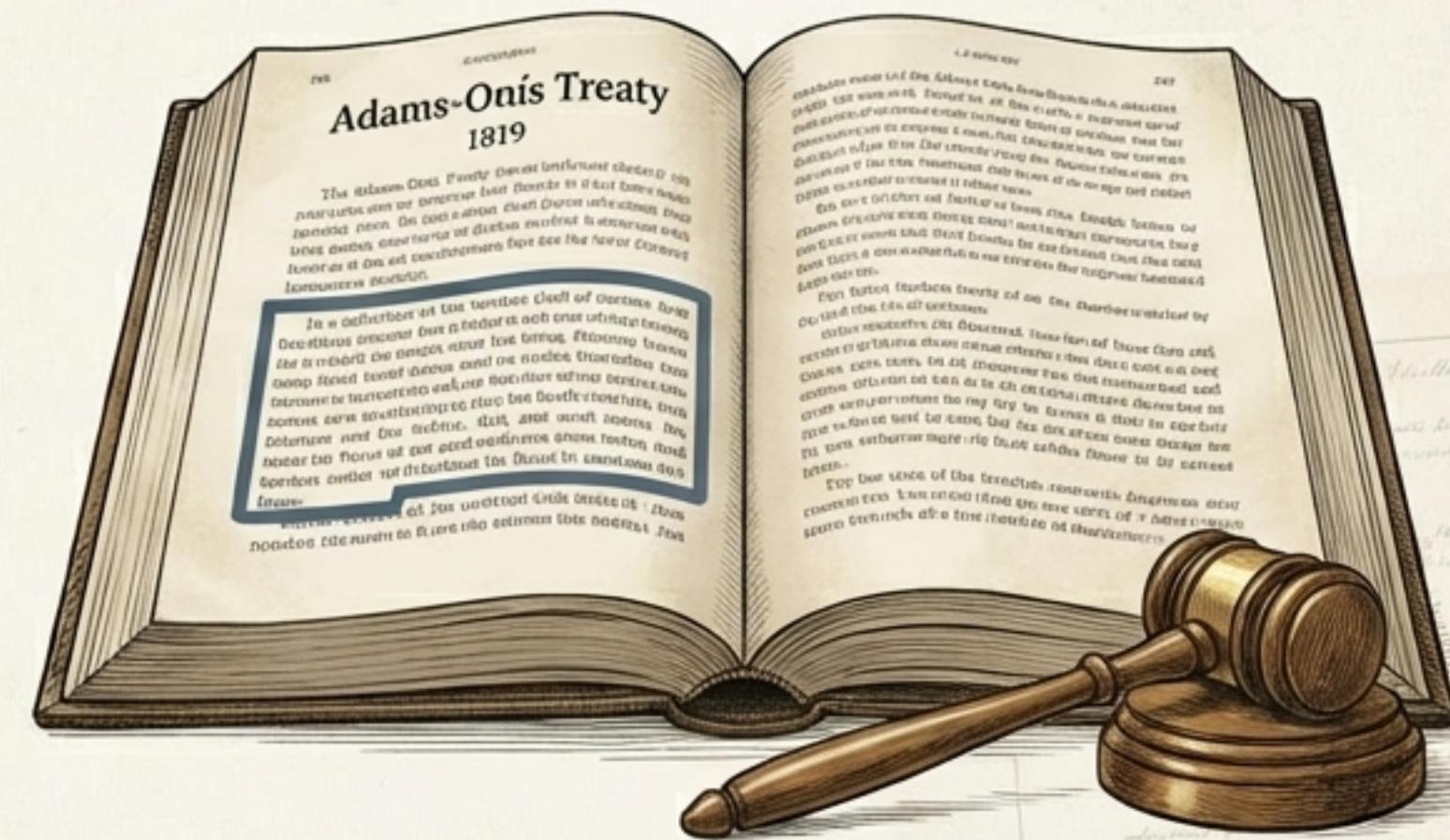
## 1845: THE JUSTIFICATION



The Adams-Onís Treaty is an irrelevant obstacle to national destiny.

## 1896: THE LAWSUIT

*United States v. Texas*



The Adams-Onís Treaty is the word-for-word basis of our entire legal claim to this land.

# The Enduring Power of a Phrase

IRAQ, 2003

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

President George W. Bush's justification for invasion shaped public perception despite a lack of concrete evidence, echoing the primary goal of removing a leader (Saddam Hussein).

USA, 2025

## Weapons of Mass Destruction

President Donald Trump designated fentanyl as a "Weapon of Mass Destruction" to justify potential action against Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, repurposing the same potent language for a new political objective.

# How to Invent a Past: A Three-Step Guide



## Step 1 Assert a New Reality.

Frame a desired action not as a new venture, but as the correction of a historical wrong or the response to a re-defined threat (e.g., "re-annexation," "WMD").



## Step 2 Repeat the Assertion.

Drive the new language into the public discourse until it dominates the debate, forcing opponents to argue on your terms.



## Step 3 Act on the New Reality.

Use the manufactured consensus as justification for the pre-determined goal.

*Where do we see this pattern today?*