



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 9, 2023

Amid Drug Crisis, Some Want to Invade Mexico. Why That Would be a Mistake.

Forever wars are bad enough when being conducted thousands of miles away. Imagine having one right at our doorstep.

The constantly escalating fentanyl and migration crises are certainly deserving of the attention they get from concerned Americans, being the causes of widespread death and social upheaval they are.

But is it possible that the establishment is attempting to co-opt legitimate emotion about legitimate issues and leverage it for its aims — specifically, for its beloved pastime of foreign interventionism?



Luis Miguel

The unceasing inflow of illegal aliens and lethal drugs from across the southern border are prompting calls by Americans to take a more aggressive military stance against the Mexican cartels — with some even saying the United States should invade Mexico.

Not surprisingly, some of the Republican establishment's most well-known names on Capitol Hill are pushing the idea of waging war, if not on Mexico itself, at least on the cartels:

As the [Washington Times](#) reports:

Sen. Lindsey Graham, South Carolina Republican, and Sen. John Kennedy, Louisiana Republican, announced legislation to declare nine cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and to authorize the use of military force — the same mechanism that deployed troops to Afghanistan and Iraq — against the gangs.

“We are going to unleash the fury and might of the United States against these cartels,” said Mr. Graham, the ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “We’re going to destroy their business model and their lifestyle because our national security and the security of the United States as a whole depends on us taking decisive action.”

... The kidnapping last weekend of four Americans — two of whom were slain and the others rescued — has added urgency to the demands for action.

Those who support such a move argue that prosecutors would have greater tools at their disposal if the cartels were given a terrorist organization designation.

But the Biden White House says such a designation is not necessary. And the Pentagon fears that an aggressive assault by the U.S. military in Mexican territory would alienate the Mexican government.

“I do worry, based on signals, very strong signals we’ve gotten from the Mexicans in the past — concerns about their sovereignty, concerns about potential reciprocal steps — that they might take to cut off our access if we were to take some of the steps that are in consideration,” said Melissa G.



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Dalton, an assistant secretary of defense, before members of the House of Representatives on Wednesday.

Notably, President Donald Trump spoke of designating the cartels terrorist organizations when he was in office, but he walked back on the effort after talks with the Mexican government.

Without a doubt, the devastation from across the border that has impacted American citizens cannot be minimized. But is sending the troops into Mexico really the answer?

As the *Times* noted, declaring the cartels to be terrorists would be akin to what the United States did in Afghanistan and Iraq. Do we really want a repeat of those two conflicts, which came at such a heavy cost in life and limb to our troops, as well as trillions of dollars spent — all for zero change?

Because, make no mistake, the landscape in Mexico is a complicated one, and a “war” within the Latin American country would most likely play out just as unfavorably as our Middle Eastern adventures.

We can send in the troops. But who will they be shooting? Fighting organized crime is not like waging war on a state, in which you simply need to topple the regime in power. Criminal gangs are like a hydra — you can cut one head off, but three more will pop up in its place.

This isn’t a theory. Mexican authorities, and the U.S. agencies that assist them, have seen this play out time after time for decades now. You take out one cartel boss and another simply takes his place — or the gang fractures and now you have several smaller cartels rather than one big one.

But the point is, new criminals will always rise up so long as there is illicit money to be made. And, contrary to the arguments made by those who see legalization of all drugs as the ultimate panacea, it isn’t just about the drugs. These criminal organizations will always find some new illegal activity to latch onto.

This can be seen with the Gulf Cartel, Mexico’s oldest crime syndicate. They started with alcohol during Prohibition, then went on to heroin, then cocaine and meth in the 80s, and now are focused on kidnapping and extortion.

The reality is that organized crime is heavily ingrained in Mexican way of life and there’s nothing we can do to change that unless we were to take over Mexico and spend all our resources to completely transform their culture and society — something that obviously isn’t going to happen, not as long as America has its own problems to worry about.

Moreover, government corruption goes deep in Mexico. So waging war on the cartels will never truly work unless we also wage war on the Mexican government — again, something that would be completely unfeasible.

Ultimately, the only thing that would happen is that the U.S. military would find itself in the same position the Mexican military is in right now — going decade after decade fighting the gangs, gaining a series of battle victories and killing or capturing cartel chiefs, but never being able to actually eradicate the problem.

It would be Afghanistan all over again.

At the end of the day, it simply makes much more sense to work on lowering the demand for drugs here at home, cracking down on cartel operatives within our own nation, and finishing the Wall.



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