



Crenshaw Tries to Build Support for Plan to Invade Mexico

The hawkish wing of the Republican Party isn't backing down from its hopes of involving the United States in a new, long-term foreign military conflict.

Spurred by the heightened emotion surrounding two of the most hot-button issues today — the migrant and drug crises — some in the GOP see an opening for directing the electorate's desire for action into a military foray into Mexico.

One of the most vocal proponents of American military intervention in Mexico for the purpose of combating the cartels is Rep. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas).



AP Images
Rep. Dan Crenshaw

As reported by [Politico](#), Crenshaw, chairman of the House Task Force to Combat Mexican Drug Cartels, is attempting to reach across the aisle to build bipartisan support for his plan. Back in January, the Texas congressman, along with Rep. Mike Waltz (R-Fla.), introduced a bill that would authorize the government to deploy the military to “put us at war with the cartels.”

“The entire point is psychological warfare against the cartels ... to make them think they made a bad business decision,” Crenshaw, a former Navy Seal, said.

He argues that Democrats have been reluctant to jump aboard his plan because they do not understand it.

“The immediate reaction from Democrats has been, ‘you can't just go invading Mexico,’ and it's like, stop being an ignoramus. That's not what anybody's talking about,” he contended. “I envision the same kind of military intervention we use all over the world, where it's entirely led by the host nation.”

In the minds of Crenshaw and Waltz, U.S. involvement in Mexico would be similar to the operations that have been conducted in Colombia, and would involve American troops going on joint missions with Mexican forces. He also wants the U.S. to provide Mexico with close-air support during operations in isolated regions.

But despite assurances and overtures to Democrats, Crenshaw would not take “unilateral” American military action — something several other well-known Republicans have been pushing for — off the table.

As [Politico](#) notes, sitting U.S. senators and presidential candidates have adopted interventionist rhetoric:

Republican Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, running second in his party's presidential primary, said he'd be open to using drone strikes against Mexican drug cartels. In an interview set to air Wednesday on CBS, DeSantis suggested he'd authorize shooting at people coming over the southern border.

“If somebody has a backpack on and they're breaking through the wall, you know they have



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on September 14, 2023

hostile intent and you have every right to take action under those circumstances,” he said.

Meanwhile, Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) has proposed sending in Special Operations forces and said if Mexico doesn’t want to help, “so be it.” Another presidential hopeful, Vivek Ramaswamy, envisions launching a “shock-and-awe” military campaign against drug cartels.

Former Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson, another presidential contender, is also pushing for the deployment of American forces south of the border, encouraging U.S. officials to converse with their Colombia counterparts to take lessons from joint operations conducted there.

Back in May, Republican Sens. Lindsey Graham (S.C.) and John Kennedy (La.) introduced a bill to declare nine cartels as foreign terrorist organizations and to authorize the use of military force against them.

“The cartels are at war with us — poisoning more than 80,000 Americans with fentanyl every year, creating a crisis at our border, and turning Mexico into a failed narco-state,” Rep. Crenshaw wrote in his [press release](#). “It’s time we directly target them. My legislation will put us at war with the cartels by authorizing the use of military force against the cartels. We cannot allow heavily armed and deadly cartels to destabilize Mexico and import people and drugs into the United States. We must start treating them like ISIS — because that is who they are.”

The current hopes of cooperating on such an endeavor with the Mexican government are dim, as Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) balks at such a plan, and U.S.-Mexico relations have deteriorated under his presidency. Crenshaw hopes there could be a reset of relations between the two countries after Mexico’s upcoming elections, though one of the leading candidates is closely aligned with AMLO.

Would launching an assault on the cartels be the solution Crenshaw claims it would be? Or would it create more problems than it solves?

Policymakers must consider the danger that invading Mexico would turn out like America’s recent incursions into the Middle East, particularly Afghanistan. After all, it would not be traditional warfare, but guerrilla warfare. Just as in Afghanistan, American troops would be subject to regular attacks and bombings, and the American public would regularly tune in to the news to learn of more service men and women being killed in a potentially decades-long conflict with no definite end in sight.

Are all of those risks worth it when the government could achieve similar results by taking the logical, much simpler measure of securing the southern border?



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