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Column 060208 Brewer

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The Drug Wars in Mexico Won't Stop at the USA Border

By Jerry Brewer

As the murderous carnage by Mexican organized narco-trafficking criminals continues, homicides in the central part of Mexico appear to be in decline. What is failing to alarm a complacent U.S. nation and many liberal politicians as to this real threat requires serious intellectual impetus. Nearly 1,500 people have been killed in Mexico this year. These homicides related to organized crime in 2008 are up 47 percent. To the smug reactions of many north of the border, the cold fact is that the concentration is now along the U.S. border.

As in the theory of law enforcement "saturation" policing, as well as zero-tolerance and dedicated aggressive enforcement efforts, crime is displaced or pushed out of the area of control. Mexico's effective crackdown, although costly in police officer's deaths, is creating drug gang desperation and a climate of extreme anger, hostility, and homicidal rage.

President Felipe Calderon's bold and dedicated spirit in battling the drug cartels in an attempt to dismantle the hierarchy of murdering narco-traffickers has a price. Nearly five hundred policemen, prosecutors, and Mexican military personnel have lost their lives within over 4,000 overall deaths.

In reported contrast, when comparing death due to war and violent insurgents, the United States has lost around the same number in military personnel in Iraq since 2003.

A great fear of the organized criminal elements throughout Mexico, Central America and South America is the potential extradition of those captured to U.S. authorities. This real threat to these insurgents after decades of complacency has bred a reactive mentality that is similar to a cornered rat. Too, the issue of maintaining very lucrative and valuable drug routes to fuel the demand of a U.S. drug habit of nearly US\$60 billion has a "not so rational" mentality that should greatly concern the United States.

The sum and totality of this threat to the United States is that intense drug demand, and the astronomical wealth associated in its delivery, has driven Mexico's drug trafficking organizations

to consolidate their position as the primary suppliers of cocaine from South America. The area to the south of El Paso, Texas in Ciudad Juarez has been one of the major targets of organized criminal assassins with superior firepower. Rumors of a "bloodbath" from these killers indicate that they will target public places such as restaurants and shopping centers.

Lists naming police officers to be murdered have been posted in locations near the Texas border. This attributed to a criminal gang estranged from the Gulf Cartel from eastern Mexico. More than 2,500 people were killed in 2007 from this obsessive drug violence. These threats are far from being conceptual in nature, for police officials at the highest levels have been murdered. An official who had been in charge of coordinating "national police operations" against the traffickers and kingpins was shot nine times and killed recently, among others.

Smaller splintering factions of drug trafficking cartel cells are emerging in a more sophisticated manner. These groups are investing in sophisticated technologies and counterintelligence. In addition, many of them are former advanced military trained personnel with expertise in superior weaponry and tactics. A sobering message to U.S. authorities and politicians not seeing the big picture should be contained in the fact that, within this power struggle of cartels wishing to supply the U.S. drugs, there are a variety of Russian criminal organizations operating. Asian criminal organizations are also no stranger to the southern turf.

What are the answers to this clear and present threat to the U.S. homeland? A clue comes from Colombia, where decades of conflict fueled by narcotics trafficking and terrorism have been met with swift and powerful enforcement. A team effort supported by the United States in partnership with Colombia. And three U.S. bases in the Colombia region were responsible for seizures of US\$1.1 billion worth of drugs in 2007 alone.

Combating drug traffickers and other types of transnational criminals must be a deliberate and dedicated effort. Democracy demands such actions. President George W. Bush has proposed helping Mexico with US\$500 million worth of assistance. He has been met with resistance from a partisan majority congress.

Threats go beyond the scourge of drugs. It is obvious that the drug cartels are becoming somewhat of a melting pot. The tri-border area of Argentina remains a topic of concern in this hemisphere. Elements of Hezbollah and terrorists have been suspected and linked to the region. Hezbollah has recently been identified by U.S. officials as making "Al Qaeda look like a minor league team." The U.S. must come together once again as a nation prepared to protect its homeland from a real and perilously formidable threat.

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