

Forget Ukraine, the US Military Should Annihilate the Cartels



A heavily armed army convoy departs the prosecutor's building where Ovidio Guzmán, one of the sons of former Sinaloa cartel boss Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzmán, is in custody in Mexico City, Jan. 5, 2023. (The Canadian Press/AP-Fernando Llano)

by Roger L. Simon

I am not a great fan of Vladimir Putin, to say the least. (I suppose I have to say that for the record.) Unfortunately, although I thought I liked Volodymyr Zelenskyy until he started restricting press and religious freedoms, I'm not much of an admirer of his, either.

Moreover, I spent time in Crimea in the '80s visiting, among other things, the former homes of Anton Chekhov and Sergei Rachmaninoff, neither of whom, I think we can agree, are

Ukrainian.

It's an endless story. The borders in that part of the world have been moving back and forth for hundreds, probably thousands, of years.

If Putin attacks Poland or other NATO members, I reserve the right to change my view, but for now, call me a Ukraine war skeptic. That we are making the world safe for democracy is risible. More likely, it's a kleptocracy.

Most importantly, no American lives have been threatened by this border conflagration that I can see.

But if you're worried about American lives, we have a genuine ruthless enemy on our own soil that is murdering our people on a literally unprecedented scale—the Mexican drug cartels.

They do this, as has been widely known for some time, in cahoots with the communist Chinese who send fentanyl—which is 50 to 100 times more powerful than heroin—in raw form to the cartels, which repackage it in colored pills attractive to children or used to lace other, supposedly less dangerous, drugs.

The result has been 106,693 overdose deaths in 2021, which was an increase from 91,789 a year earlier. These are Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics and probably undercounted. An undoubtedly higher number is expected in 2023.

In other words, we—largely our young—are being killed in massive numbers by the cartels and by China working together.

The cartels are getting richer by the day to the tune of billions and are now able to use many aspects of modern technology, including advanced internet communications and clandestine laboratories, not to mention drones for delivery and targeted assassinations, if necessary.

They also have their hands in human trafficking, which is also growing, and destroying the lives of generations of young people, largely women.

Just last month, the U.S. State Department placed a “do not travel” restriction—its strongest warning—on six Mexican states.

In case you’re thinking of a trip, they are Colima, Guerrero, Michoacan, Sinaloa (home of one of the leading cartels), Tamaulipas, and Zacatecas. (I’ve been to many of them, back in the day. Not now, thank you.) This places Mexico on a list with Afghanistan, Belarus, and Iran.

President Joe Biden’s open border policy has in essence wrecked Mexico by empowering the cartels to almost unimaginable levels. They rule that country now, or most of it.

But the cartels aren’t just in Mexico. They are all over the United States, in about 120 of our biggest cities. If you’re interested in your home, you can check [here](#) at an official document from the National Drug Intelligence Center. It will even tell you which cartel or DTO (Drug Trafficking Organization), in the parlance, is there.

My hometown of Nashville, Tennessee, is blessed with the presence of the Gulf and Los Zetas. Not to be outdone, Atlanta has Beltran–Leyva, Gulf, Los Zetas, Juarez, La Familia, and Sinaloa. Chicago has even more. They’re all over New York City as well.

How do we put up with this?

Biden, through his inaction, has made it clear he doesn’t intend to do anything about it. He seems to smirk anytime anyone brings up the fentanyl epidemic. To their eternal shame, the Democratic Party is his accomplice, not wanting to talk about something that might hurt them with the voters.

At this year's Conservative Political Action Conference, former President Donald Trump reiterated that he will shut down the border, presumably finishing the wall, and increase the number of border personnel in various divisions.

New candidate Vivek Ramaswamy went him one better, advocating, at his CPAC speech and elsewhere, that the U.S. military should be called upon to annihilate the cartels.

Ramaswamy is implying that the cartels are basically at war with us, certainly arguable, and should be treated as a military adversary, on our soil and Mexico's.

He didn't say this, but it's also arguable that we would be doing Mexico a favor, ridding it of a scourge that has made the murder rate in that country nearly five times ours.

It will be interesting to see how Trump responds to Ramaswamy's proposal, if he does. The 45th president, after all, was the one who waged a similar war of annihilation against ISIS and its leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

Trump had great support for this action, as he should have. He certainly saved the lives of Americans and of many other nationalities.

It's interesting, however, that the total number of terrorist deaths ascribed to ISIS since its emergence in 2014 is 27,947, according to visionofhumanity.org—not much, horrific as it is, compared to the ongoing and escalating destruction being perpetrated by the cartels.