

Septober Aff Case

Our Sole Contention is Cartels

Michael Stott and Christine Murray In Mexico City, 5-21-2024, "Mexico's drug cartels are thriving," No Publication, <https://www.ft.com/content/fe04c6ed-73f8-4e17-852b-ce16fd6c3515>, accessed 7-18-2024

Mexico's organised crime problem has worsened dramatically during the five and a half years of populist leftwinger Andrés Manuel López Obrador's presidency, security experts say, and has become so serious that it threatens the country's future. Polls show that security is a top voter concern ahead of the presidential election on June 2. For more than a decade, the dominant drug groups have been fragmenting, generating a host of smaller splinter gangs who fight over turf. Today, the two largest and most powerful cartels, the Sinaloa cartel and the Jalisco New Generation cartel (CJNG), are jostling with smaller rivals such as the Viagras, the Squirrels and the Scorpions. Many of the **cartels have expanded into** lucrative new businesses. In a 2024 report, the US Drug Enforcement Administration called the Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels "**transnational criminal organisations**" because **they are "involved in arms trafficking, money laundering, migrant smuggling, sex trafficking, bribery, extortion, and a host of other crimes"**. **The cartels control more territory than ever before, about a third of the country** according to one estimate from the US military.

Subpoint A is Arms Trafficking.

Bilateral arms trafficking across the southern border is increasing

Lemus 2024 (Guillmero Lemus, 2-13-2024, "Infographics | Arms Trafficking Across the US-Mexico Border," Wilson Center, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/infographics-arms-trafficking-across-us-mexico-border>, accessed 09/08/24) //gx

The United States and Mexico have grappled with increasing arms and drug trafficking for several years. In response to recent surges in violence, the Mexican Attorney General of the Republic (FGR) and the United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) undertook a joint effort to trace the origin and number of firearms in Mexico coming from or through the United States. Mexico's Secretariat of Foreign Relations found that 70% **90% of traced firearms originated from and passed through the US**. ATF and the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) estimated a lower rate of 68%, comprising 50% domestically produced and 18% imported into the US, and ultimately found in Mexico.

ATF's data unveils compelling insights. Although pistols consistently topped the list of firearms found by the ATF, **there was a 105% increase in rifles found in Mexico and reported from 2016 to 2022**, meaning that cartels may be favoring this type of firearm.

Specific US counties have been linked to weapons found across Mexican municipalities, spanning from the Pacific to the Atlantic Coasts, as highlighted by former Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs Marcelo Ebrard and the Office of the Attorney General of Mexico. Concurrently, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has identified the presence of 'ant-trafficking,' the intentional diversion of firearms from legal channels, and **straw purchases**, where individuals buy guns on behalf of others, along these routes. These actions intensify the illegal transportation of firearms. The presence of guns in Mexico, as well as these two phenomena, demonstrate the connection of these trafficking routes, amplifying illegal firearm transportation.

The increase in these practices necessitates enhanced collaborative efforts between the United States and Mexico to curb the unlawful flow of firearms.

The US' loose gun restrictions drives gun smuggling - weapons are fundamental for cartels to maintain control

Elizabeth Trovall 23, 10-19-2023, U.S. gun business arms cartels in Mexico, Marketplace <https://www.marketplace.org/2023/10/19/how-a-booming-gun-business-in-the-u-s-arms-mexicos-cartels/> [T diddy]

Cartels are bringing assault rifles and other weapons into Mexico through a robust underground supply chain, **capitalizing on their proximity to the United States' \$21 billion gun and ammunition manufacturing industry and** the relatively **loose restrictions on weapons purchasing.**

With roughly 70% of Mexico's guns coming from the United States, the flow of weapons southbound is empowering the same organizations that smuggle drugs and migrants north across the U.S. border. These groups rely on guns to maintain their trade routes and defend themselves against Mexico's military and police forces.

For years, these powerful criminal organizations have developed supply chains — often originating in the United States — to arm their networks. Once small-time operations that moved a couple of guns at a time, in recent years the trade has become more sophisticated, said Craig Larrabee, special agent in charge for Homeland Security Investigations in San Antonio.

"We're seeing larger loads of firearms being smuggled at one time," he said, with upwards of 250 weapons in a single load. "It's indicative of more of an organizational approach to the firearm smuggling."

Since 2020, the U.S. has ramped up efforts to crack down on the southward flow of arms, but major challenges persist in shutting down this well-oiled operation. It relies heavily on straw purchasers — often U.S. citizens without a criminal record who will make an initial gun purchase on behalf of a criminal organization.

"You'll have somebody make a purchase from a federal firearms licensee, like a gun shop, or a gun show or a person-to-person sale," Larrabee said. The weapons often cost several thousands of dollars.

Then the guns are usually taken to a stash house, which could be a residence or a storage unit. From there, another person will pick up the weapons and hide them in a vehicle.

"Then they'll be smuggled across and sent to the purchaser down in Mexico," Larrabee said.

This is happening as the administration in Washington faces mounting political pressure to better control what and who crosses the border. U.S. agencies are collaborating more closely with one another and with officials in Mexico to better track the use of these guns and their path from U.S. localities to sites across the border. And under the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the U.S. upped penalties for arms trafficking and straw purchasing of guns for people not authorized to have them.

Earlier in October, top U.S. officials touted their efforts at a bilateral security summit in Mexico City.

"Just last month, we charged and arrested seven defendants in Texas for buying over 100 guns later trafficked to Mexico," said U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

Also at the summit, Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas said firearms interdiction has increased 44% in the last year. Southbound arms enforcement statistics for fiscal year 2023 have yet to be made public.

But officials set on stemming the southward flow of guns face a number of challenges, including corruption in Mexico, limited agency capacity, gaps in data sharing and inadequate data quality, according to Mark Ungar with City University of New York.

"The data from the states in Mexico is very poor, it's very corrupted," he said. "And there's no powerful capacity or political will, at the national level in Mexico, to hold those states accountable."

He said authorities also lack understanding of the scope of this massive global supply chain, especially as criminal groups in different countries increasingly work together to move weapons.

"By focusing on the U.S.-Mexico border, they're getting the hotspot nexus of where that really counts," he said. "But that's only part of this larger picture of the flow of weapons."

And the U.S. continues to make a healthy supply of guns available to nefarious parties.

Research firm IBISWorld expects the U.S. arms and ammunition manufacturing industry to grow over the next five years. The continued prevalence of gun shows, with thousands held each year across the country, will also facilitate the flow of weapons to Mexico, according to Rice University professor Tony Payan.

"It's almost impossible for the bureaucracy to also keep track of all these guns, and all these shows, and all these sales, and all these private transactions," he said.

"Mexico is not really a producer of guns. It's got very strict gun regulations. And so most guns can be traced back to the United States," he said.

With that access to guns, cartels can continue to run their underground businesses, said Craig Larrabee of Homeland Security.

"They control their routes through firearms," he said. "It's vital for their ability to stay in power and control those areas for the smuggling of people, for their smuggling of narcotics, for the extortion schemes, for all the different things that they do to terrorize communities in Mexico."

DHS technology is necessary for strategy, greater coordination, and wide-reaching anti-arm smuggling efforts.

Jameson Morgan 23, 2-1-2023, "New technologies essential for combating the smuggling crisis at the border", Last Mile, <https://thelastmile.gotennapro.com/new-technologies-essential-for-combating-the-smuggling-crisis-at-the-border/>, ARC

Surging resources to the border and the region, scaling up anti-smuggling operations, and expanding coordination and support for border cities and non-governmental organizations. These new actions and influx of new resources to the border will hopefully help alleviate a major public safety and humanitarian crisis. **However, any investment at the border needs to include new or novel technologies that can help law enforcement officials stay a step ahead of criminal organizations** and keep law enforcement personnel safe as they perform an incredibly dangerous job in remote, austere, and dangerous environments. Cartel activity creates persistent danger and tech challenges. With cartels increasingly conducting smuggling activities at the southern border, there is a clear and present danger to law enforcement personnel. The smuggling activities do not come without violence and there is a significant and persistent threat of violence at the southern border. The danger to USBP and other law enforcement personnel was explained by the former Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, Chief Carla Provost in a 2021 interview with [The Last Mile](#). In a far-ranging discussion that explored the challenges facing USBP Agents, Chief Provost said: “WHEN I WAS THE INTERIM PATROL AGENT IN CHARGE IN NOGALES WE HAD AGENTS GET INTO A SHOOTOUT WITH DRUG SMUGGLERS. IN THAT PARTICULAR REGION, THE AGENTS HAD LIMITED ABILITY TO RETREAT BECAUSE OF DIFFERENT MOUNTAIN RANGES. IT WAS A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION.” **Ongoing cartel activity doesn’t just increase the danger for Border Patrol personnel. The cartels also have the resources to deploy innovative technologies in their operations that create unique challenges when trying to identify, disrupt, and mitigate illicit activity.** While some low-tech smuggling operations are still conducted [using rudimentary materials and procedures \(some even involving things like pumpkins\)](#), there are notable examples of cartels leveraging more complex technologies (like drones) with increased frequency along the border. [According to a recent local news article](#), “The Texas Department of Public Safety is seeing a steep increase in the use of drones on the part of criminal organizations to conduct surveillance on law enforcement along the border.” The article explains that **cartels leverage drones to locate law enforcement personnel and operate in the areas where they aren’t.** goTenna heard about similar issues from Chief Provost, who explained how cartels operate in areas where they know law enforcement personnel lacked essential tools, like assured communications. According to Chief Provost: “CRIMINALS KNOW THAT THE BORDER PATROL HAS CONNECTIVITY ISSUES IN CERTAIN AREAS AND THEY CONCENTRATE THEIR ACTIVITIES IN THOSE REGIONS. AND IT’S NOT JUST THE SOUTHERN BORDER THAT HAS A PROBLEM WITH THIS. THE VASTNESS OF THE NORTHERN BORDER PROVIDES ITS OWN CHALLENGES.” **Technological investment at our border is needed to combat the TCOs conducting dangerous illicit activities daily. As investment increases at the border there are technologies that U.S. law enforcement organizations can deploy to keep personnel safe and combat the advanced technologies being leveraged by the cartels.** Mobile Mesh, Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS), and Digital Sentry Towers The steps proposed by the White House to solve the border crisis include an increase in investment and a surge of resources to federal and local law enforcement. This is a great opportunity to invest in the technologies that law enforcement personnel require to more effectively do their job and to solve their biggest problems. Right now, one of the primary technology challenges facing law enforcement organizations at the border is the lack of assured communications and the inability to collaborate between organizations. The remote, austere nature of the area at and around our borders means that few terrestrial networks are available for law enforcement personnel, leaving them operating without the ability to call for help or coordinate on sensitive missions. The fact that multiple organizations (including federal and local law enforcement organizations) have to work together with disparate, interoperable communications systems makes collaboration a challenge. **If resources are going to be surged to the border to help in the ongoing humanitarian and public safety crisis, technologies that can enable assured communications even in the most remote and austere environments should be among them. And mobile mesh networking solutions are one of the most effective, interoperable, and easily deployed solutions for delivered assured comms.** Mobile mesh networks can enable law enforcement personnel to rapidly establish communications and situational awareness capabilities by creating mobile ad hoc networks. Leveraging mobile mesh networking can enable the following: Improved Rescue Capabilities. Many law enforcement agents and officers operate in small teams or even individually at times. Given the dangerous terrain, climate, and illegal activity at our borders there are times when law enforcement personnel need to be moved to safer conditions. Mobile mesh networks can be integrated with other technologies (such as video, voice, and other communications solutions) to create a comprehensive technology solution at the border. This enables Border Patrol Agents and specialty teams to carry out rescues more effectively and safely. Improved Manpower Disposition and Operational Situational Awareness. Border Patrol Agents have a multitude of missions to complete within the border enforcement zone and limited manpower with which to do so. goTenna and ATAK creates a “force multiplier” by enabling more efficient proactive and reactive responses to those in danger. The ability to use goTenna as a relay extends networks to improve situational awareness. Furthermore, the full spectrum of tools and plugins in the ATAK application can fill gaps that exist due to a lack of manpower. Operational Effectiveness. A mesh network allows Agents to identify anomalous activity before, during, and following operations – providing valuable information on the operating environment and how their presence may affect activity in the area. This enhanced understanding of how operations affect the situation on the ground can be a critical input into the mission planning cycle, allowing agents to use data to inform tactics, techniques, and procedures and drive mission effectiveness. Interoperability – Mobile mesh networking solutions integrate with virtually all of the smart devices that law enforcement agencies already carry every day. Utilizing mobile mesh and the TAK application on these devices can enable communications and situational awareness capabilities within and across organizations almost instantaneously. Perhaps most importantly, goTenna Pro radios combined with TAK or the goTenna Pro App allow federal, state, local, and tribal law enforcement officials to work together seamlessly, communicate on one platform completely off-the-grid, and maintain a unified common operating picture of what is happening on the ground. Mobile mesh networking can also provide the backhaul necessary to leverage other advanced technologies that can help law enforcement protect the border. The ability to backhaul data from distant or remote areas is increasingly essential to help combat the new technologies that the cartels are leveraging in their smuggling operations. **Solutions enhanced by using mobile mesh networking to backhaul data include: IoT sentry towers – leveraging AI-enabled sentry towers connected via mesh networks can enable Border Patrol and other law enforcement organizations to cover a greater area of the vast southern border, even when staff resources are limited. Solutions, like the sentry towers offered by Anduril Industries, can provide highly accurate, persistent autonomous awareness across land, sea, and air. Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems (CUAS) – as drones become more pervasive in illegal operations around the border, it is essential to leverage solutions that can negate malicious drone usage. Companies like D-Fend Solutions have developed new CUAS solutions that can integrate with mobile mesh networks, and identify and eliminate malicious drones with little collateral damage.** The ongoing public safety and humanitarian crisis at the U.S. border makes law enforcement operations more difficult and dangerous. Mobile mesh networks can protect law enforcement, NGOs, and communities while simultaneously aiding in the fight against transnational criminal organizations. The White House’s actions to help stem the crisis at the border are an important step to combat the crisis at our border. However, the increased investment and the surge of resources will only be effective if advanced technologies are deployed to the border, as well. As Chief Provost once told The Last Mile: **“THE BORDER PATROL NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS SIMILAR TECHNOLOGY – OR BETTER TECHNOLOGY – THAN THE CRIMINALS.”**

Cartels have killed half a million people since 2006, which amounts to 65 people per day

Council on Foreign Relations 07/05/24 Mexico’s Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels. [Mexico’s Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels | Council on Foreign Relations \(cfr.org\)](#)

Mexican authorities have been waging a deadly battle against drug cartels for nearly two decades, but with limited success. **Thousands of Mexicans—including politicians, students, and journalists—die in the conflict every year. The country has seen more than 431,000 homicides**

since 2006, when the government declared war on the cartels.

Goure 21 writes

[Dan Goure, writes in 2021, Dr. Goure is a researcher at the Lexington Institute. "Did Biden Halt the Deployment of Advanced Surveillance Systems at the Border?," National Interest,

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/did-biden-halt-deployment-advanced-surveillance-systems-border-193881> McD]

Advanced surveillance technologies were a critical component of the Trump administration's construction program. When President Joe Biden terminated funding for former President Donald Trump's controversial border wall, an unintended consequence of that decision was to stop deployment of several advanced electronic surveillance capabilities. Ironically, on many parts of the border, these systems provide an alternative to a physical wall. Advanced surveillance capabilities act as a force multiplier for badly overstretched Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) personnel. At a time when activities on the border are increasing at a remarkable pace, both crossings by migrants and asylum seekers and drug smuggling, it is imperative that we give those securing the southwestern border the tools they need. The Biden administration and Congress need to restore that portion of the funding for the wall that was designated for advanced surveillance capabilities. CBP is under tremendous pressure on multiple fronts. Most publicized is the increase in migrants presenting themselves at the border. The rate of attempted crossings along the border with Mexico has more than tripled from this time last year. There has also been a major increase in the number of unaccompanied children attempting to cross, leading to scenes of young children being abandoned on the U.S. side of the border. To demonstrate the value of electronic border surveillance, cameras captured two small children being dropped over a portion of the border fence to then fend for themselves earlier this year. In addition, drug smuggling has increased significantly since last year. CBP reported a 233 percent increase in fentanyl seizures from 2020 to 2021 so far. It has been suggested that Mexican drug cartels are helping migrants reach the border to stress CBP resources so there is less chance of their smuggling operations being detected and intercepted. Securing the border has always been about more than just building walls. CBP has been investing in technologies for enhanced surveillance, communications, and situational awareness for more than twenty years. Major advances have occurred in land-based electro-optical and radar sensors, surveillance aircraft, balloons and drones, ground sensors, fiber optic communications, advanced analytics and AI, and the development of a common operating picture. CBP has deployed combinations of these technologies at various sectors along the border, sometimes in addition to physical barriers. In other cases, they are deployed as the primary means of monitoring the border. One capability that CBP has found extremely effective is remote sensing using a variety of cameras and radar systems attached to both fixed and mobile towers. CBP has worked with industry for years to develop the specific technologies needed to provide reliable and cost-effective remote surveillance. These towers allow CBP to monitor the border and be alerted to human activity without having to devote already-scarce manpower. In this process, data is gathered and fused at command centers where artificial intelligence assists in making accurate assessments of events in the field. Likewise, several different tower-based remote sensing capabilities have been deployed. One example is the Integrated Fixed Tower (IFT) system, consisting of high fixed towers topped with electro-optical and infrared cameras, ground-searching radars and a laser rangefinder capable of seeing at ranges greater than 10 kilometers. The IFT system is particularly well-suited to looking into Mexico from positions relatively far from the border. Another system that has been deployed is the Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS), consisting of a mix of fixed and truck-mounted mobile towers generally deployed close to the border. A third framework is the Autonomous Surveillance Towers (AST) system which, like the other tower programs, employs multi-spectral sensing to provide situational awareness of the border. As the name suggests, the towers are designed with a high degree of autonomy, made possible, in part, by reliance on solar power, to reduce the demand on CBP personnel. As part of the Trump administration's wall construction project, CBP invested in a combination of ground-based acoustic, vibration, and visual sensors, including fiber optic cables, that can detect activity at the border. Using artificial intelligence and machine learning, algorithms can distinguish natural phenomena and animals from human beings. This system uses artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms to help create a common operating picture in support of CBP command and control. While most of the reporting of the Trump administration's approach to border security focused on the construction of a physical wall, advanced surveillance technologies such as those described above were part of this construction program. Halting construction of the wall does not mean that the Biden administration will be able to reap significant savings. Much of the money allocated in the current and prior fiscal years has been spent. Other wall-related funding is only available in the year in which it is budgeted ("one year money"). There is a

lot of unanticipated collateral damage to CBP's planned investment in advanced technologies from the way the Biden administration has handled cancelling construction of the wall. This decision did not just stop construction of the physical wall. It also put a halt to construction and deployment of a host of surveillance capabilities that were key to CBP's overall plan for monitoring the border. There are systems, including some of the towers discussed above, that have been built and were just waiting to be deployed. Now the government, having already paid for these towers and other surveillance capabilities, will have to store them, at considerable expense. The sudden cancellation of all activities that fell under the contracts involved in construction of the wall will have a serious negative effect on CBP's efforts to invest in advanced surveillance systems that can serve as an alternative to a physical wall. This comes at a particularly bad time for CBP, which is struggling to deal with the increase in migration and smuggling activities along the border. Deploying these advanced sensor systems would help alleviate this stress as well as significantly improve CBP's ability to prevent humanitarian problems along a dangerous border. The Biden administration should revisit the way it cancelled the construction of the wall. It needs to break out the funds that would have gone for technology meant to supplement or even replace physical barriers. It also needs to increase overall funding for CBP, which is having to take money from its modernization efforts to meet the increase in operational tempo fueled by the surge of migrants and illicit activity at the border.

Intelligence gathered by the AFF's increase in surveillance solves for these current data gaps

E.D. Cauchi 23 [E.D. Cauchi, "Mexican drug cartels pay Americans to smuggle weapons across the border, intelligence documents show", No Publication, 9-18-2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-american-weapons-smuggled-across-border/> accessed on 7-7-2024// zeej

"We have allowed the cartels to amass an army," said Chris Demlein, who served as a senior special agent with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives — the ATF — until 2021. Demlein led the first interagency intelligence project aimed at identifying and dismantling the cartels' international weapons supply chains across the U.S. Within months of its launch on July 25, 2018, the initiative, known as Project Thor, connected the dots between hundreds of disparate law enforcement cases, uncovering vast networks that give these criminal groups on-demand access to American guns. They briefed hundreds of government officials on their discoveries, including the National Security Council and senior Justice Department leadership. Project Thor found that the problem of cartel weapons smuggling was far worse than previously understood. They estimated that cartels were trafficking between 250,000 and 1 million weapons every year, with a retail value of up to \$500 million, not including ammunition and tactical supplies, according to intelligence analysis reviewed by CBS News. Project Thor concluded that American guns were being used to fuel an unprecedented spike in violence across Mexico. Up to 85% of firearms found at those crime scenes traced back to the U.S.

Subpoint B is Drug Trafficking.

Penichet-Paul, Christian. "Illicit Fentanyl and Drug Smuggling at the U.S.-Mexico Border: An Overview." *National Immigration Forum*, 25 Oct. 2023, immigrationforum.org/article/illicit-fentanyl-and-drug-smuggling-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-an-overview/#:~:text=Border%20officials%20seized%204%2C600%20pounds.

CBP data also shows illicit fentanyl smuggling is increasing, and that most of the fentanyl seized by the Border Patrol and

OFO is coming across the southern border. **Border officials seized 4,600 pounds** of fentanyl along the southern border in 2020, a number that skyrocketed to **26,700 pounds [of fentanyl] in FY 2023 – a 480 percent increase. Most of the fentanyl seized** by the two agencies **in FY 2023, about 98.9 percent** (26,700 out of 27,000 pounds), **was seized at the southern border.** The remaining 305 pounds were encountered at the northern border (2 pounds) and at U.S. maritime borders and interior checkpoints (303 pounds). Of the fentanyl seized at the southern border, the vast majority, about 23,900 pounds or 90 percent, was seized at POEs. The fact that most illicit fentanyl is **smuggled through POEs** adds credence to **nationwide evidence** that illicit drugs are predominantly smuggled through land ports, not between. CBP's data **shows** fentanyl smuggling to the U.S. is increasing, most of it is smuggled through the southern border, and a majority of that comes through ports of entry.

However, the people that carry them are specifically selected to bypass border control officers' attention.

Joel **Rose**, 8-8-20**23**, "Who is sneaking fentanyl across the southern border? Hint: It's not the migrants", NPR, <https://www.npr.org/2023/08/09/1191638114/fentanyl-smuggling-migrants-mexico-border-drugs>

Prosecutors and defense lawyers say Haley's story is typical; **the vast majority of illicit fentanyl — close to 90% — is seized at official border crossings.** Immigration authorities say **nearly all of that is smuggled by people who are legally authorized to cross the border, and more than half by U.S. citizens like Haley.** Virtually none is seized from migrants seeking asylum.

Sometimes fentanyl and other drugs are concealed inside tractor-trailers carrying loads of legitimate cargo into the U.S. More **often**, authorities say, it's **[fentanyl is] hidden in passenger cars or on the bodies of pedestrians.**

Law enforcement officials say **drug cartels** routinely recruit couriers or mules to get their products across the border. They're sophisticated in choosing these targets. "They're **looking for somebody [border patrol officers are]** we're **not going to pay a lot of attention to**," says Michael Humphries, the port director in Nogales, Arizona, where Haley attempted to cross back from Mexico.

Surveillance technology is the solution. According to

Laura **Strickler** and Julia Ainsley, 5-9-20**24**, "Fentanyl scanners that sat idle for lack of federal funds can now be installed at the border", NBC News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/border-fentanyl-scanners-sat-idle-lack-funding-r-cna151374>

DHS says that once the scanners are in place, 40% of all personal vehicles crossing the border will be scanned. Now, **fewer than 5% of personal vehicles are X-rayed**, according to DHS officials. **At ports of entry without scanners, customs officers have to rely on their own intuition to detect something amiss and hold vehicles for further inspection. Since 2021, the U.S. government has struggled to install fentanyl scanners at ports of entry.** Critics have applauded the progress but say it's still just a drop in the bucket. Bobby Watt was at CBP for over 30 years and oversaw non-intrusive inspection scanning at ports of entry before he left CBP in 2019; he blames red tape for the delays. He says **the goal should be to scan 100% of personal vehicles.** "It'd be foolish not to," said Watt, now an adviser to scanning contractor Viken Detection. "Because **if you were a drug smuggler, would you go to a port that had an X-ray? Or would you go to the one next to it that didn't have an X-ray?**"

And that technology wouldn't cost the U.S. a dime — we already have access to it, and just need the government to follow through with implementation.

Ingram '24 TucsonSentinel. AG Mayes 'shocked' Nogales border crossing scanners still sitting in warehouse due to lack of

funding. TucsonSentinel. 3-8-2024, accessed 6-27-2024

https://www.tucsonsentinel.com/local/report/030824_mayes_border_scanners/ag-mayes-shocked-nogales-border-crossing-scanners-still-sitting-warehouse-due-lack-funding/ //GFS AL

Last year, a White House official told reporters the Biden administration would add more non-intrusive scanners at ports of entry in Nogales as part of a wider effort to tamp down on fentanyl smuggling, but **the collapse of a bipartisan border bill in February has kept** federal

officials from installing the inspection technology. The scanners were planned to be part of a "layered approach" to intercept

narcotics along the border. Troy Miller, the acting commissioner of CBP, took NBC News on a tour of the Nogales port of entry last week and said **the agency purchased scanners to detect drugs** and other contraband in vehicles, **but still needed \$300 million to install them.**

"We do have technology that's in the warehouse that has been tested. But we need approximately \$300 million (to) actually put the technology in the ground," Miller told NBC News. "It's extremely frustrating." The agency already has some scanners used to quickly scrutinize cars and trucks. Vehicles with "anomalies" are sent to an additional inspection area, where federal officials can interview drivers and passengers and dig through vehicles. CBP said the systems allow officers to "screen or examine a larger portion of the stream of commercial traffic while facilitating the flow of legitimate trade, cargo, and passengers." In a letter to the state's congressional delegation, Mayes said she was "shocked" by NBC's report that the scanners sit unused because **"Congress has failed to provide**

funding to install the equipment." "With Arizona in the midst of a fentanyl crisis, this inaction is irresponsible and negligent at best," she wrote. "As

the attorney general of Arizona, I am using the authority of my office to protect its citizens from the fentanyl epidemic, and I expect the same from Congress. I am calling on you to set aside politics and work with your colleagues to fund the installation of this critical technology." Az Media - AzDOE tutors box The elected Democrat said last year she was "relieved" when Vice President Kamala Harris told her the Biden administration budgeted \$305 million to fund the scanners to

intercept fentanyl. "Today, United States taxpayers have already paid millions of dollars to purchase **high-tech scannersthat** will help **locate**

fentanyl hidden in vehicles," she wrote. "But those scanners **are currently sitting unused in a warehouse** because

congressional Republicans are blocking the funding necessary to install them. Funding these items is unquestionably needed." "Failing to do so will allow deadly fentanyl to continue entering Arizona to be distributed to the rest of the United States. Inaction will sadly lead to more unnecessary fentanyl overdose deaths," she said. Last year, the Biden administration moved to expand the use of non-intrusive inspection technology to x-ray cars and trucks as they pass through U.S. border crossings to intercept fentanyl and other drugs. While the equipment was purchased, many of them haven't come on line because the funding to install them was part of the failed Border Act of 2024, NBC News reported. The bill included \$425 million for the scanners, as well as \$170 million for autonomous surveillance towers, \$47 million for mobile surveillance systems, \$25 million for sensors to detect tunnels, \$7.5 million to expand communications for Border Patrol, and \$10 million to improve the use of drones along the coasts. For months, Sen. Sinema worked with Sen. James Lankford, a Republican from Oklahoma and Sen. Chris Murphy, a Democrat from Connecticut, to negotiate a new immigration bill with the White House. In early February, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer released the \$118.28 billion bipartisan bill, which included military aid for Ukraine and Israel, as well as the long-awaited border measures. However, despite widespread support the bill ran aground after ex-president Donald Trump said he was against the bill and House Speaker Mike Johnson declared it "dead on arrival." "The failure of Congress to fund the installation of this much-needed technology is irresponsible and negligent," Mayes said in a statement. "Congress needs to get its act together and fast because Arizona lives are at risk. My office will continue to fight the drug cartels aggressively, but we need our elected representatives to step up and do their part to protect our communities, too." Since October, CBP officials in Arizona have intercepted around 4,100 pounds of fentanyl, nearly 84 percent of which was seized at the ports. Michael Humphries, the director of the Port of Nogales announced Thursday his officers discovered nearly 226,000 fentanyl pills during two separate incidents in February. Mayes noted that since 2022 nearly half of the fentanyl seized in the U.S. was intercepted in Arizona. House - shoe leather "Because of the actions of the Mexican drug cartels, Arizona now serves as the fentanyl funnel for the rest of the nation," Mayes said. "This devastating public health crisis has wrecked communities, harmed families, and pushed drug overdose deaths to astronomical heights. It is ridiculous that technology that would help prevent the flow of this drug into our country sits unused because of Congressional inaction." Mayes sent her letter U.S. Sens. Kyrsten Sinema and Mark Kelly, as well as the U.S. House Reps. Raúl Grijalva and Juan Ciscomani — who represent the two districts that cover the borderlands. Grijalva and Ciscomani said they would vote against the Border Act, but for different reasons. Grijalva said the Senate "missed an opportunity to create thoughtful and lasting immigration reform and to confront and humanely manage our humanitarian crisis at the border. Instead, the bill doubles down on punitive measures that read like an extreme Republican wish list filled with failed Trump-era immigration policies." Ciscomani said the U.S. needed a "much tougher approach." "

Fentanyl and other lethal drugs entering the US is devastating.

NPR, 12-27-20**23**, "In 2023 fentanyl overdoses ravaged the U.S. and fueled a new culture war fight",

<https://www.npr.org/2023/12/28/1220881380/overdose-fentanyl-drugs-addiction>

In 2023, the United States suffered more than 112,000 fatal drug overdoses for the first time ever. **The majority of those deaths involved fentanyl and ^{other synthetic} opioids**

Often Mexican drug cartels press these chemicals into pills, which are counterfeited to resemble pharmaceutical-grade medications for ADHD, depression, and pain.

Council on Foreign Relations. 07/05/24. Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels. [Mexico's Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels | Council on Foreign Relations \(cfr.org\)](https://www.cfr.org/mexico/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-the-cartels/p27844)

Experts point to both domestic and international forces. The **cartels use a portion of their vast profits to pay off judges, police, and politicians**, while serving as one of the country's top employers. **They also coerce officials into cooperating**; assassinations of journalists and public servants are relatively common. The 2024 election was the most violent in six years, with more than thirty candidates killed. The cartels flourished during the seven decades that Mexico was ruled by a single party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Within this centralized political structure, **drug trafficking groups cultivated a wide network of corrupt officials through which they were able to gain distribution rights, market access, and protection.**

Salvador Rizzo, 6-24-2019, "Do Mexican drug cartels make \$500 billion a year?" Washington Post, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2019/06/24/do-mexican-drug-cartels-make-billion-a-year/>

The results are all over the map, **ranging from \$6 billion to \$29 billion** in estimates released since 2006. But none of them pegs Mexican drug traffickers' revenue at "half a trillion dollars," as Perdue claimed.

Jorge Ventura and Denisse Gomez, 7-7-2024, "Mexican cartels expand beyond drugs into economic sectors: Report," NewsNation, <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/immigration/border-coverage/cartels/mexican-cartels-economic-sectors/>, accessed 7-18-2024

Despite this diversification, **drug trafficking remains** the cartels' **most profitable venture**, albeit with slower returns compared to their other criminal activities.

Unfortunately, cartels create a Mexican failed state, Grinberg 19

Grinberg 19 [Alexander Grinberg is an officer in the U.S. Army, B.A. in Defense Policy and Strategy] "Is Mexico a Failing State?" RealClearDefense, Feb 7, 2019, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2019/02/07/is_mexico_a_failing_state_114170.html !

Mexico is a fragile state, and without action, **faces the risk of becoming a** failing, or worse, a **failed state**. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development defines a fragile state as one that is "unable or unwilling to perform the functions necessary for poverty reduction, the promotion of development, protection of the population and the observance of human rights." In 2009, U.S. Joint Forces Command released a statement expressing concerns over Mexico, highlighting the potential even then for a total collapse. At the time, then-President Felipe Calderón responded to the report, stating it was entirely false; allegedly, he even wanted President Obama to release a statement to that effect. In August 2018, the State Department released a do-not-travel warning for five of the thirty-two Mexican

states. Many other states are still considered dangerous, and the U.S. State Department has advised American tourists caution if not total reconsideration. The warning indicates a lack of stability and control on the government's part in the region. The Mexic[o]an **the**

government is in a prolonged state of civil war with various cartels, and the state is losing.

Rampant corruption from the local to federal level breaks down the fundamental principal-agent relationship between the government and its population, encouraging locals to turn to militias for protection. The militias are, in part, a result of widespread corruption as well as the Mexican military's deterioration. Mexico's military faces large numbers of desertions, while measures to provide security for its population continue to fail. The United States should continue to treat Mexico as a welcome economic partner but accept that Mexico is a fragile state, and thus a serious security risk. The drug war in Mexico is escalating, and it is creating a spillover effect in the United States. In the United States, the majority of the concern from the Mexican drug war focuses on its impact on the opioid epidemic, a growing topic in both countries. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, the total economic burden for opioid misuse, often leading to heroin abuse, is \$78.5 billion a year. CNN reported that from 2002 to 2016 the number of heroin users increased from 404,000 to 948,000, a 135% increase. The opioid epidemic is part of the drug war in Mexico, where violence spills over. Demand in the United States for narcotics profit drug trafficking organizations and money is then laundered back to the cartels who use these funds to purchase weapons in order to take more territory or assert control in Mexico. The spillover effect is hurting both the United States and Mexico. Assistant Secretary Brownfield, representing the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, noted in a 2017 teleconference that an estimate of 90-94% of all "heroin consumed in the U.S. comes from Mexico." While 90% of cocaine samples seized in the U.S. in 2015 originated from Columbia, the cartels smuggle them through Mexico to the U.S. While drugs flow into the U.S. from Mexico, illegal arms are trafficked back into Mexico, fueling the violence. A 2009 report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office noted that approximately 87% of firearms seized in Mexico over the past five years could be traced back to the United States. Stratfor disputes this claim, arguing the number of weapons in the figure were those submitted by Mexican authorities to the ATF and successfully traced. The figure did not include the total number of weapons seized. Even if Stratfor's claim is true and the actual percentage is less than 12%, it is still a concerning number, indicating American arms and associated illegal arms trafficking contribute to the violence and corruption in Mexico. Corruption in Mexico affects public services and industry, negatively impacting the economic well-being of its citizens. A 2016 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report noted bribery and corruption could increase business costs in Mexico by 10%. Even tax administration is affected, and a 2014 Reuter's report states that Mexico has one of the weakest tax revenues in the 34-nation Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. According to the report, "Crime, corruption and tax evasion drained \$462 billion from Mexico's economy in 2011, trailing only China and Russia." Corrupted tax revenue creates a cyclical effect where the government cannot afford to pay for necessary services or even its military. Corruption increases the cost for basic necessities and thus further incentivizing farmers and other vulnerable populations to support the narco-economy. Kleptocracy creates an environment that economically incentivizes farmers to support illegal economies and allows these farmers to fall victim to the cartels. A December 2018 New York Times article covering the trial of Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán's trial discussed various testimonies in the courtroom that highlighted Mexican corruption at very high levels of office. Mr. Guzman's testimony supported other reports of widespread corruption throughout Mexico's government at both state and federal levels. Rural farmers fall victim to cartels, because the Mexican government cannot protect them. Stuart Ramsay, a correspondent for Sky News, traveled to Mexico to report on Mexico's continuing drug war. Many of the interviewed farmers admitted that economic incentives to support a narco-economy, in conjunction with death threats, overruled legal crop farming. Krishnan Guru-Murthy, a British journalist for Channel 4 News, traveled to Cancun to discuss the current state of Mexico's drug war. Part of his report showcased the cartel's ability to murder with near impunity farmers who resisted. The inability of the police to combat this form of terror explains why farmers tend not to resist. Farmers who do resist, typically through an ad hoc militia, add further chaos into an already unstable situation. Max Weber theorized on the state's monopoly on legitimate violence as a fundamental tenet of the modern state, and militias challenge this legitimacy—they degrade the state's ability to maintain order, and they disrupt the basis of a social contract between the state and its society.

These militias are a symbol in that they challenge the state as the sole entity with the monopoly on the legitimate use of force. **The rise of militias and Mexico's inability to make gains in securing territory against the cartels suggest the Mexican government is no longer in control over parts of its country.**

One might consider the growth of local militias within Mexico's rural areas as a way forward, but they are dangerous and indicate the Mexican government cannot defend its citizens. Mexican militias operate outside of the law, and many create their own rules on how to protect their towns. While some militias work with their communities and achieve some level of peace, others act with more questionable methods. In a 2016 Al Jazeera report, journalists recorded militias who patrolled towns and even stopped Mexican police at gunpoint. The police did not resist as they were ordered to present documentation, weapon serial numbers, and a reason for movement. The power dynamic changed. Along with the militias, the Mexican government is struggling to sustain its armed forces. One of the reasons Mexico cannot gain ground over the cartels is because its military is deteriorating through ineffective leadership. The first indicator of the military's breakdown is the deterioration of discipline where there is a growing number of unlawful killings and human rights violations. Human Rights Watch reported that by 2016, the National Human Rights Commission received almost 10,000 complaints, and more than a 100 cases were considered as "serious human rights violations." Of those abuses investigated from 2012 to 2016, only 3.2% reached a conviction. Instead of cracking down on these abuses, President Nieto expanded military participation in policing. As the drug war continues, and the federal government does not crack down on the human rights violations, the Mexican military will further deteriorate. The Mexican military leadership's lack of control over the behavior of their forces indicates an erosion in the chain of command and the respect for their Code of Military Justice, and it suggests further corruption