# C1: Terrorism

**Terror at the border is an increasing threat.**

**Goldman 24**

Adam **Goldman**, Eric Schmitt and Hamed Aleaziz, 6-25-**2024**, "The Southern Border, Terrorism Fears and the Arrests of 8 Tajik Men", No Publication, <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/06/25/us/politics/terrorism-threat-fbi-tajik.html>

The dramatic episode unfolded as anxiety has risen among U.S. officials, who have been warning for months that **the conflict in Gaza** and unrest in Central Asia **could spill into the United States**, most likely in the form of small radicalized groups acting on their own initiative or lone-wolf terrorists.The new details about the F.B.I. investigation and the decision to arrest the men underscore the deluge of terrorism threats inundating national security agencies, some emanating from well-known international actors, others from emerging hot spots like Tajikistan. **Since** the **Hamas** attacks in Israel on **Oct. 7, the F.B.I. has received “more than 1,800** reports of **threats** or other types of tips or leads that are somehow **related to** or have a **nexus** to the current conflict in Israel and Gaza,” Lisa Monaco, the deputy attorney general, said in a television interview in December. She added that many of the cases were resolved without incident. **ISIS-K** has since revived some of its global ambitions, with Tajiks constituting more than half of its several thousand soldiers, experts said. Russia is a frequent target, but **ISIS-K has** also **vowed to attack America**ns and the United States. Most of the details surrounding the F.B.I.’s investigation remain secret, but interviews with several U.S. officials familiar with the case have provided additional insights. For years, Republicans and conservative media outlets have described the potential dangers posed by **terrorists** who might **slip into the country at the southwestern border along with tens of thousands of Latin American migrants.** Those fears, for the most part, have not been realized.

**Hankinson 24**

Simon **Hankinson**, 6-25-**2024**, "America’s Alarmingly High Terror Threat Just Keeps Climbing the More We Fling Open Our Doors", Heritage Foundation, <https://www.heritage.org/border-security/commentary/americas-alarmingly-high-terror-threat-just-keeps-climbing-the-more-we>

Not me. Not FBI Director Chris Wray. In an op-ed for Foreign Affairs published on June 10, **former CIA Deputy Director** Mike Morrell writes that “**the terror threat posed by vulnerabilities at the U.S.-Mexico border is ‘blinking red**’” but he doesn’t know either. **Several countries** on the edge of the former Soviet Union such as **Dagestan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**, are known to **have active terrorist groups.** The New York Post recently reported that over 1,500 Tajiks illegally crossed our border between October 2020 and May 2024, and a stunning 500 have been “caught” this year alone. Recently, eight Tajiks were caught who had **known ties to ISIS**. What about those with unknown ties? They were almost all then released. In Fiscal 2021, CBP only encountered 3,675 Special Interest Aliens, “people from countries identified by the U.S. government as having conditions that promote or protect terrorism or potentially pose some sort of national security threat,” at the borders. Between October 2022 and August 2023, CBP encountered 74,904. Among that total were 659 **Iran**ians and 538 **Syria**ns—two places which harbor some people who thirst for revenge against the U.S. **It’s** pretty much **a matter of time before a preventable terrorist attack is carried out in the U.S. by foreign nationals.** It’s possible the terrorists will be here on visas just like the 9/11 hijackers, but the unprecedented pool of illegal aliens released or paroled by the Biden administration is a more likely source.

**Encounters are up.**

**Hankinson**

Simon **Hankinson**, 6-25-**2024**, "America’s Alarmingly High Terror Threat Just Keeps Climbing the More We Fling Open Our Doors", Heritage Foundation, <https://www.heritage.org/border-security/commentary/americas-alarmingly-high-terror-threat-just-keeps-climbing-the-more-we>

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**Unfortunately, critical gaps exist at the border.**

**Flynn 24**

(Stephen Flynn is an expert in homeland security, most recently appointed head of the National Nuclear Security Administration. This was a report governed by multiple subgroups and boards of the Department of Defense and the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.) NNSA, 06/18/2024, “Nuclear Terrorism: Assessment of U.S. strategies to Prevent, Counter, and Respond to Weapons of Mass Destruction” // (ISPS = International Ship and Port Facility Security; CTPAT = Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism; NNSA = National Nuclear Security Administration) , https://nap.nationalacademies.org/download/27215

Department of Energy, Department of Defense, and Department of State also have significant limitations. In the absence of non-intrusive inspection equipment that can identify shielding**, the stand-alone radiation portals that have been deployed at** major seaports and **border crossing** under the U.S. Department of Energy’s Second Line of Defense, MeagPorts, and successor programs **are not able to detect shielded radiological materials**. Thus, criminals **or terrorists could use readily available materials such as lead to encase nuclear materials** or a **weapon** that might then be able **to pass** through a radiation portal **without setting off an alarm. Technologies are available** to enhance supply chain transparency and the means to detect contraband including nuclear materials. These **improved methods include non-intrusive inspection technologies and** processing scanned images with the assistance of **AI** and machine learning **to better detect and intercept contraband to include nuclear materials**. It is possible to adapt port facility operations to use non-intrusive inspection (NII) technology to routinely scan all containers entering a port facility so as to confirm that the contents do not pose a nuclear or radioactive risk to the terminal, ship and its crew (Bakshi, Flynn, and Gans 2011).5 Note, scanning for nuclear materials is part of the overall contraband

**Affirming solves.**

**Flynn**

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**Absent action,**

**Banco 24**

Erin **Banco** and Lara Seligman, 1-10-**2024**, "American intel officials warn of risk of Hezbollah attacking U.S.", POLITICO, <https://www.politico.com/news/2024/01/10/american-intel-officials-hezbollah-u-s-attack-risk-00134874>

Either scenario — **an attack domestically** or on troops or diplomats overseas — would deal a blow to the Biden administration which has worked to prevent the Israel-Hamas conflict from broadening into a wider regional war and to keep American forces out of the fray. It **would** also likely **draw Washington back into the Middle East** at a time when it is trying to focus its national security resources on countering China and Russia. The National Security Council, FBI and the National Counterterrorism Center declined to comment. But senior Biden administration officials have said publicly after Oct. 7 that it believed Tehran and its proxies were not seeking a wider regional war or a confrontation with the U.S“Iran, Hezbollah and their linked proxies are trying to calibrate their activity, avoiding actions that would open up a concerted second front with the United States or Israel while still exacting costs in the midst of the current conflict,” Christy Abizaid, the director of the National Counterterrorism Center, said during a congressional hearing in October. “This is a very fine line to walk, and in the present regional context, their **actions carry the potential for miscalculation.**” “This is a moment of profound tension in the region,” Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Sunday during his visit to **the Middle East**. “This is a **conflict** that **could easily metastasize.”**

**Miscalculation is inevitable.**

**Cooper 23;** Helene **Cooper**, 11-29-**2023**, "Iranian and U.S. Attacks Could Lead to Larger War, Officials Say", archive.is, <https://archive.is/hgHVd>

But in the seven weeks since the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack on Israel, **Iran**ian-backed militias have launched more than 70 rocket **and** drone attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria. **The** Pentagon, for its part, has responded with four rounds of airstrikes, killing as many as 15 people, **U.S.** officials say. **Neither Washington nor Tehran wants the conflict in** the **Gaza** Strip **to trigger a wider war** in the region, officials in both capitals say. **National security officials fear** a miscalculation amid tit-for-tat **attacks**, combined with each side’s belief that the other does not want a larger fight, **could trigger** exactly that: **a regional conflict**, just two years after the United States ended 20 years of war in the Middle East and South Asia.

**Russia and China are inevitably pulled in.**

Lucas **Winter**, 4-19-**2024**, "The Axis Off-Kilter: Why an Iran-Russia-China “Axis” Is Shakier than Meets the Eye", War on the Rocks, <https://warontherocks.com/2024/04/the-axis-off-kilter-why-an-iran-russia-china-axis-is-shakier-than-meets-the-eye/>

For much of history, **Russia, Iran and China** were less chummy. Imperialists at heart, they often meddled in one another’s neighbourhoods and jostled for control of Asia’s trade routes. Lately, however, America has changed the dynamic. In 2020, two years after exiting a deal limiting Iran’s nuclear programme, it reimposed a trade embargo on the country; more penalties were announced in January, to punish Iran for backing Hamas and Houthi rebels. Russia fell under Western sanctions in 2022, after invading Ukraine, which were recently tightened. Meanwhile, China faces restrictions of its own, which could become much more stringent if Donald Trump is elected president in November. **United by a common foe, the trio now vow to advance** a common foreign policy: support for **a multipolar world no longer dominated by America.** All see stronger economic ties as the basis for their alliance. **China** has promised a “no limits” partnership with **Russia, and** signed a 25-year “strategic agreement” with **Iran** in 2021. All three countries **are members of the same multilateral clubs**, such as the BRICS. Bilateral trade is growing; plans are being drawn up for tariff-free blocs, new payment systems and trade routes that bypass Western-controlled places. For America and its allies, **this is** the stuff **of nightmares**. **A thriving anti-Western axis could** dodge sanctions, **win wars** and recruit other malign actors. The entente involves areas where links are already strong, others where collaboration is only partial and some unresolved questions. What might the alliance look like in five to ten years?

**A GPW would turn nuclear, risking extinction.**

**Dowd 15**

Alan Dowd, 12/31/15. “Shield & Sword: The Case for Military Deterrence,” Providence, <https://providencemag.com/2015/12/shield-sword-the-case-for-military-deterrence/> //epark

The sheer destructiveness and totality of great-power war testify that crossing our fingers and hoping for peace is not a Christian option. Wishful thinking, romanticizing reality, is the surest way to invite what Churchill called “temptations to a trial of strength.” Moreover, the likelihood that **the next great-power war would involve** multiple **nuclear-weapons** states means **that** it **could end civilization**. Therefore, a posture that leaves peer adversaries doubting the West’s capabilities and resolve—thus **inviting miscalculation**—is not only unsound, but immoral and inhumane—unchristian. “Deterrence of war is more humanitarian than anything,” Gen. Park Yong Ok, a longtime South Korean military official, argues. “If we fail to deter war, a tremendous number of civilians will be killed.”

**Which leads to extinction. ORD ‘22 concludes**

**ORD 22** [Sam Ord, Socialist Worker, 3-7-2022, "Unleashing nuclear weapons would destroy all life on earth", https://socialistworker.co.uk/features/unleashing-nuclear-weapons-would-destroy-all-life-on-earth/, DOA: 3-11-2022 //ArchanSen + Recut JS!]

A nuclear blast could assure the destruction of humanity The Ukraine war has resurrected the utterly chilling prospect of potential nuclear war—and with it the end of humanity. Scorched flesh, vaporised bodies, and exploding lungs would be the immediate results. The long-term ones would be even more catastrophic. Yet most commentators and politicians calmly discuss this as just the geopolitics of escalation rather than a threat that should lead to revolt to stop it. **Nuclear war** between the United States and Russia or between the United States and China, **would mean** death for hundred**s** of millions immediately. But then it would mean a climate disaster known as **nuclear winter**. As **smoke from the blast**ed citie**s** rises **in**to **the atmosphere**, the entire planet will soon be choked under dense clouds of soot. This **would mean a cataclysmic drop in global temperatures that would make agriculture impossible and wipe out the entire human race.** Alan Robock, a climate researcher at Rutgers university, has been studying nuclear weapons for 30 years. His team modelled a scenario of “limited” war where two sides launched 100 bombs each. “There would be between 16 and 37 million tons of carbon,” Robock says. It would mean 50 to 125 million people dead in the first week. A reduction of as much as 35 ­percent in sunlight reaching Earth’s surface. That means worldwide famine for a decade. The road to nuclear war is prepared by the idea of “battlefield” nuclear weapons and thermobaric ones. In 2017 the US military used the biggest bomb since the nuclear destruction of Hiroshima

# C2: Cartels

**The story of cartels in Mexico is frightening.**

**Council on Foreign Relations**, 8-5-**2024**, "Mexico’s Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels", Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels>

**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.

**Absent action, the consequences are devastating.**

Katelyn **Caralle**, 7-2-20**23**, "Sen. Vance backs DeSantis' proposal to use deadly force at the border," Mail Online, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12256121/Pro-Trump-Ohio-Sen-JD-Vance-backs-Ron-DeSantis-proposal-use-deadly-force-border.html>

Ohio Sen. J.D. Vance said he wants to see military force used against drug cartels at the southern border as fentanyl continues to flow in the U.S. It comes the same week the Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis proposed the use of 'deadly force' against drudge cartels and smugglers – but Vance's office told DailyMail.com that the comments are not connected. The massive spike in fentanyl overdoses and deaths in recent years is not only an issue that hits close to home with Vance’s constituents, but also his own family, a spokesperson for the senator said when noting that his comments were pre-recorded on June 22 – four days before DeSantis' remarks. Vance has long called for more forceful action at the border and is supporting former President Donald Trump's third White House bid. The pro-Trump senator said during an interview with NBC's Meet the Press on Sunday morning that he would want to 'empower' the president, whoever that may be, to use the U.S. military to target drug cartels and smugglers at the southern border. 'You think the fentanyl problem is bad now, what about **three years from now** when the **Mexican drug cartels are more powerful than the Mexican state itself**?' Vance questioned when speaking with host Chuck Todd. Presidential hopeful DeSantis said Monday while unveiling his proposal to tackle the southern border crisis from Eagle Pass, Texas that he would use 'deadly force' to combat the flow of drugs into the U.S. from Mexico. DeSantis has repeatedly taken aim at former President Donald Trump for failing to deliver on promises he made while campaigning when he got into office – like constructing a wall along the entire southern border. 'I would empower the President of the United States – whether that's a Republican or a Democrat – to use the power of the U.S. Military to go after these drug cartels,' he said. He also warned that if the drug crisis continued on the current track, Mexico could become a 'failed state' - like what happened in Colombia. ' **revenue per year has gone up 14 fold just in the last couple of years,'** Vance said. '**That shows** you, I think, **what bad border policies can do.**' 'The Mexican government is being, in a lot of ways, destabilized by the constant flow of fentanyl.' DeSantis said Monday that the best way to deter cartels is by taking down coyotes and smugglers and making it clear they will be met with force from border enforcement if they break U.S. laws. 'If you drop a couple of these cartel operatives, they'll stop coming,' DeSantis said at a press conference in front of the Rio Grande River in Eagle Pass, Texas last week.

**Fortunately, increasing United States southern border surveillance reverses the trend in 3 key ways.**

### **The first is by decreasing wildlife trafficking**

**Wildlife trafficking is on the rise.**

Andrew **Dorn**, 5-9-**2024**, "Border officials seize exotic animals as wildlife smuggling grows", <https://thehill.com/changing-america/sustainability/environment/4651510-border-officials-seize-exotic-animals-as-wildlife-smuggling-grows/>, accessed 7-3-2024,

It’s unclear if either person was directly tied to a cartel, but both incidents offer a glimpse into an **illegal wildlife trade** that is now the fourth largest funding source for criminal organizations, generating about $23 billion each year, according to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In November, the International Criminal Police Organization, INTERPOL, warned that the growing issue **has pushed many species “to the brink of extinction**.” **Online marketplaces and social media have made** the problem worse. Nowadays, **it**’s **significantly easier for consumers to get wild animals on the black market**, many of which arrive **from outside the country through U.S. ports of entry**. **From 2018 to 2021, wildlife trafficking surged more than 150%**, according to a Moody’s Analytics report, which cited government data. **The illegal trade has become a breeding ground for corruption and a major source of profit as more “structured cartels enter the space**,” the report

**Trafficking across the border is a crucial aspect of cartel revenue.**

Andrew **Dorn**, 5-9-20**24**, "Border officials seize exotic animals as wildlife smuggling grows", Hill, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/sustainability/environment/4651510-border-officials-seize-exotic-animals-as-wildlife-smuggling-grows/>

**The illegal wildlife trade is now the fourth largest funding source for criminal organizations**, **generating about $23 billion each year.** For now, **the U.S. remains** one of **the world’s largest markets for trafficked wildlife**, in part because the “size and scope” of the country’s financial system makes it “**ideal** for bad actors **to pass their illicit funds through,**” Moody’s said in its report. In that sense, **addressing the illegal animal trade could be crucial in the battle against Mexican drug cartels** in addition to protecting endangered species and threats to human health stemming from the transmission of disease.

**Unfortunately, current surveillance is not sufficient.**

Andrew **Dorn**, 5-9-20**24**, "Border officials seize exotic animals as wildlife smuggling grows", Hill, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/sustainability/environment/4651510-border-officials-seize-exotic-animals-as-wildlife-smuggling-grows/>

In 2022, FWS special agents and other law enforcement partners investigated over 10,000 wildlife trafficking cases and collected over $11,000,000 in criminal penalties, the agency said. A study published in April found that better wildlife screening tools, which are “severely lacking,” could help authorities crack down further. **“Currently, wildlife seizures** predominately **rely on prior intelligence as opposed to active surveillance methods**, **thus seizures reported likely represent a very small percentage of all smuggling attempts**,” researchers at the University of Adelaide found.

**More surveillance is the solution.**

Pirotta **Vanessa** , Shen Kaikai, Liu Sheldon, Phan Ha Tran Hong, O’Brien Justine K., Meagher Phoebe, Mitchell Jessica, Willis Joel, Morton Ed, 20**22**, “**Detecting illegal wildlife trafficking via real time tomography 3D X-ray imaging and automated algorithms**”, Frontiers in Conservation Science,<https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/conservation-science/articles/10.3389/fcosc.2022.757950> //Stel

Wildlife trafficking is a global problem involving the deliberate and illegal transport of wildlife across international borders. Animals are either removed directly from their natural environment or bred specifically to fuel demand driven by activities such as the illegal pet trade or for purported medicinal reasons. In Australia, wildlife trafficking poses a serious environmental and biosecurity risk through the removal of native species and the introduction of exotic invasive wildlife. This has the potential to impact the natural ecosystem and Australia’s multibillion-dollar agricultural industry. To help detect and restrict this activity, innovative technologies such as **3D X-ray CT technology** using Real Time Tomography has been trialed to **create wildlife detection algorithms** for deployment across Australian mail/traveller luggage pathways. Known species of trafficked Australian wildlife and additional model species of exotics were scanned to create an image reference library for algorithm detection. A total of 294 scans from 13 species of lizards, birds and fish were used to develop initial wildlife algorithms **with a detection rate of 82%** with a false alarm rate at 1.6%. In combination with human and biosecurity dog detection, this innovative technology is a promising complementary platform for wildlife detection at Australian international borders, with potential worldwide applications.

**Surveillance expansion is crucial to stopping trafficking.**

Lionel Hachemin 23, "How can we use AI to combat wildlife crime?", Lionel Hachemin, IFAW, 8-14-2023, accessed 7-3-2024, https://www.ifaw.org/journal/ai-combat-wildlife-crime //Stel

**AI could tell** frontline officers, who cannot possibly search every piece of cargo crossing through airports or international borders, **which checkpoints are** most **likely to see trafficked wildlife** at which times. To do this, AI tools must learn through collecting and analysing data over time. That data can take the form of intelligence reports, border force seizures, and data collected on the ground by law enforcement officers during their daily routine checks. It can also be open-source data (for example, from transport companies) and complementary data from NGOs and academia, including information about species-specific seasonal patterns and common trafficking routes. Feedback from participants in on-the-ground trials of the technologies could also be used to help AI learn. The goal is to create a feedback loop in which data informs the AI, which helps the officers to catch more wildlife traffickers, which in turn creates better data, from which the AI can continue to learn **and** develop—ultimately becoming more accurate in its predictions. AI in action AI tools could **enable us to devote resources to fight wildlife trafficking at the most optimal locations and** at the right **times.** We could heavily staff the control points that are most likely to encounter wildlife trafficking and concentrate staff there during the times of day when trafficking is most likely to occur.

**Altogether, Houston of Rare in 2023 concludes that**

Jason **Houston**, 2-8-**2023**, "How Does Wildlife Trafficking Impact People and the Environment?", **Rare**, <https://rare.org/stories-articles/how-does-wildlife-trafficking-impact-people-environment/>

The illicit trade of wildlife and their parts threatens millions of animals' survival worldwide, accelerates the biodiversity crisis, and endangers our planet. But it’s not just animals that suffer. **Wildlife trafficking causes devastating impacts on ecosystems, human health, and the global economy.**

### **The second is arms smuggling.**

**Cartels rely on weapons smuggled across the border. Cauchi of CBS in 2023 finds that**

E.D. **Cauchi**, 9-18-**2023**, "Mexican drug cartels pay Americans to smuggle weapons across the border, intelligence documents show,"**CBS**, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-american-weapons-smuggled-across-border/>

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.** Without Project Thor, U.S. law enforcement "bureaucracies were more interested in defending their turf than prosecuting criminal organizations," said Edwin Starr, who retired from the ATF as a senior special agent in December 2022. Starr credited the interagency program with leading to **a major breakthrough in** one of his **firearms trafficking cases** that, according to Demlein, helped **take down an entire cartel gunrunning network.**

**Cauchi specifies that**

E.D. **Cauchi**, 9-18-**2023**, "Mexican drug cartels pay Americans to smuggle weapons across the border, intelligence documents show", **CBS** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-american-weapons-smuggled-across-border/>

Dozens of **cartel** gunrunning network**s**, operating like terrorist cells, **pay Americans to buy weapons** from gun stores and online dealers all across the country, as far north as Wisconsin and even Alaska, according to U.S. intelligence sources. **The firearms are then shipped across the** southwest **border through a chain of brokers and couriers.**

**Increasing surveillance solves.**

**Sanchez of Fox in 2023 explains that**

Sandra **Sanchez**, 1-18-**2023**, "From the ground up, X-rays scan vehicles for contraband at border checkpoints", WFXRtv, <https://www.wfxrtv.com/news/from-the-ground-up-x-rays-scan-vehicles-for-contraband-at-border-checkpoints/>

McALLEN, Texas (Border Report)– A Massachusetts company says it is supplying the federal government with **X-ray scanners** that are being **deployed at checkpoints along the** Southwest **border** to **detect** illegal drugs and **weapons in vehicles.** The Burlington-based Viken Detection is producing **the technology** that **allows** U.S. **C**ustoms and **B**order **P**rotection officers **to see under passenger cars and commercial vehicles** before they pass through border checkpoints, Viken CEO Jim Ryan told Border Report on Tuesday.

**Sherman of News Nation in 2023 adds that**

Robert **Sherman**, 1-20-**2023**, "X-ray tech enhancing drug, gun detection at southern border", **NewsNation**, <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/immigration/border-coverage/xray-border-drug-gun-detection/>

His company was awarded a $500 million contract and is setting up X-rays at ports of entry along the border to scan the underside of cars as they enter the country. Drugs and **weapons hidden from the naked eye show up clearly visible on these scans.**

**Independently, these weapons fuel violence in Mexico. Cauchi concludes that**

E.D. **Cauchi**, 9-18-**2023**, "Mexican drug cartels pay Americans to smuggle weapons across the border, intelligence documents show,"**CBS**, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mexican-drug-cartels-american-weapons-smuggled-across-border/>

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### The third is by stopping fentanyl smuggling.

**Smuggling Fentanyl through the border is a key source of cartel profits.**

**According to the DEA in 2024:**

**DEA**, 5-16-**2024**, "Operation Cash Out Launched Across Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana", <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2024/05/16/operation-cash-out-launched-across-colorado-utah-wyoming-montana>

DENVER – Fentanyl continues to be the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45. In 2023, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) seized nationally more than 77 million fentanyl pills and nearly 12,000 pounds of fentanyl powder. Across the DEA Rocky Mountain Field Division – comprised of Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, and Montana – the DEA seized a record of more than 3.6 million fentanyl pills. Through the first quarter of 2024, the DEA is on pace to surpass the previous record. The **fentanyl** trade **is extremely profitable for** the Mexican **Cartels** who continue to flood the nation and the Rocky Mountain region with their poison. Fentanyl **pills are manufactured** in Mexico **for** as little **two cents** per pill, **yet can sell for** upwards of **$60** per pill in our jurisdiction. **Fentanyl is estimated to be a multi-billion-dollar enterprise for the Mexico-based cartels.** The Sinaloa Cartel and Jalisco Cartel are most responsible for the supply of fentanyl across the United States and the resulting epidemic of drug poisonings. Fentanyl remains the deadliest drug threat facing the nation, and illicit profits derived from sales enrich the cartels responsible for its production, distribution, and deaths.

**Unfortunately, there is a current lack of border surveillance to counter fentanyl smuggling.**

**Strickler of NBC in 2024 writes that**

Laura **Strickler**, Julia Ainsley and Didi Martinez, 3-5-**2024**, "Scanners that spot fentanyl sit unused because Congress hasn't provided cash to install them", **NBC** News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/border-fentanyl-scanners-unused-congress-provided-no-money-rcna141432>

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. Since 2021, the U.S. government has struggled to install fentanyl scanners at ports of entry. Critics have applauded **the progress** but say **i**t’**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?”

**Thus, cartels are able to smuggle most fentanyl through legal ports of entry.**

**Ballesteros of the Wilson Center in 2023 accords that**

Aldrin **Ballesteros**, 8-29-**2023**, "Fentanyl Seizures at the Southwest Border: A Breakdown by CBP Areas of Responsibility", **Wilson Center**, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/fentanyl-seizures-southwest-border-breakdown-cbp-areas-responsibility>

The prevalence of fentanyl seizures in California and Arizona is linked directly to the dominance of the Sinaloa Cartel and the Jalisco New Generation Cartel in Baja California and Sonora, the two neighboring Mexican States.  New Mexico and Texas, on the other hand, border Mexican states where the previously mentioned cartels are not dominant. **Cartels hire** both Mexican and U.S. **citizens to smuggle** the easily concealable drug **through ports of entry** on foot and by passenger and cargo vehicles. **This** practice **results in close to 90% of illicit fentanyl seizures occurring at official border crossings**, according to CBP. The DEA has named the two cartels as the major suppliers of fentanyl in the United States.

**As a result,**

**Paul of the National Immigration Forum in 2023 finds that**

Christian Penichet-**Paul**, 10-25-20**23**, "Illicit Fentanyl and Drug Smuggling at the U.S.-Mexico Border: An Overview", **National Immigration Forum**, <https://immigrationforum.org/article/illicit-fentanyl-and-drug-smuggling-at-the-u-s-mexico-border-an-overview/>

**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 **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.

**Affirming creates new surveillance technology that directly counters fentanyl smuggling.**

**Strickler specifies that**

Laura **Strickler**, Julia Ainsley and Didi Martinez, 3-5-**2024**, "Scanners that spot fentanyl sit unused because Congress hasn't provided cash to install them", **NBC** News, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/border-fentanyl-scanners-unused-congress-provided-no-money-rcna141432>

Officers in Nogales have found fentanyl hidden inside crates of Coca-Cola, where bottles are painted black to look like liquid, sawed in half and filled with fentanyl pills; they’ve confiscated millions in fentanyl pills stuffed inside the water barrel of a commercial bus’ bathroom; they’ve even found fentanyl in cars carrying young children in the back in car seats. **More than 95% of fentanyl seized at the border,** Miller said, **is actually brought into the U.S. in personal vehicles.** The **new technology, known as Non-Intrusive Inspection**, or NII, **lets CBP X-ray** a percentage of **cars and trucks as they pass through** the massive U-shaped **screeners**, which look something like car washes. Drivers don’t have to get out of their vehicles to be screened, which means traffic can keep flowing through border checkpoints with fewer interruptions.

**Harris of Homeland Security in 2024 adds that**

Biden-**⁠Harris**, 7-31-**2024**, "Fact Sheet: DHS Shows Results in the Fight to Cripple Cartels and Stop Fentanyl from Entering the U.S.", U.S. Department of Homeland Security, <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2024/07/31/fact-sheet-dhs-shows-results-fight-cripple-cartels-and-stop-fentanyl-entering-us>

The President has prioritized deploying cutting-edge **drug detection technology across our** southwest **border** and continues to call on Congress to pass the bipartisan border bill, which would deliver 100 more high-tech drug detection machines that **could scan 20 times as many vehicles to stop fentanyl from crossing our border.** Non-Intrusive Inspection: We are dramatically expanding non-intrusive inspection (NII) technology at our southwest border to screen and detect not only drugs, but also currency, guns, ammunition, and illegal merchandise, as well as people being smuggled or trafficked into the country, while minimally impacting the flow of legitimate travel and commerce. By installing 123 new **large-scale scanners at** multiple **POEs** along the southwest border, CBP will increase its inspection capacity of passenger vehicles from two percent to 40 percent, and of cargo vehicles from 17 percent to 70 percent. Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning at Ports of Entry: CBP is innovating with the responsible use of Artificial Intelligence at our POEs. This year alone, **machine learning models** that **help CBP Officers determine** which **suspicious vehicles and passengers to refer to secondary screening have led to 240 seizures**, which include thousands of pounds of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and fentanyl.

**Cartel fentanyl smuggling impacts many in the US. Arnold of News Nation in 2024:**

Jeff **Arnold**, 5-20-**2024**, "Mexican cartels wiped out competition in US fentanyl market: DEA", **NewsNation**, <https://www.newsnationnow.com/us-news/immigration/mexican-cartels-fentanyl-competition/>

(NewsNation) — Two powerful Mexican drug **cartels** are not only **operating fentanyl** and other illicit drug **markets in all 50 U.S. states** but **have** also successfully **eliminated** their **drug-dealing competition** using violence and other means, according to a report issued by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. The Sinaloa and Jalisco **cartels are at the heart of the deadliest drug threat that the U.S. has ever faced**, the federal report said. Federal officials have reported that 200 U.S. deaths are linked to fentanyl each day and that 38,000 deaths tied to the drug were reported in the first six months of 2023 alone.

**Mann of NPR in 2024:**

Brian **Mann**, 6-18-**2024**, "U.S. goes after Mexican cartel leaders' drug profits in fight against fentanyl", **NPR**, <https://www.npr.org/2024/06/19/nx-s1-5011755/fentanyl-drug-cartel-sanctions-money-treasury-yellen-mexico-china>

**Fentanyl**, a powerful and highly addictive synthetic opioid, **is killing more than 70,000 people in the U.S. every year.**

**Destroying the cartels saves thousands of lives.**

**CFR**, 8-5-20**24**, "Mexico’s Long War: Drugs, Crime, and the Cartels", Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/mexicos-long-war-drugs-crime-and-cartels

**Mexican drug cartels are leading suppliers of cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and other illicit narcotics to the United States.**

The **cartel**s and the drug trade **fuel rampant corruption and violence in Mexico**, **contributing to tens of thousands of homicides in the country each year**. Since Mexico launched a war on the cartels in 2006, the United States has provided it with billions of dollars in security and counternarcotics assistance.