



# Republicans Who Want to Invade Mexico Learned Nothing From Afghanistan

Here we go again.

It hasn't even been two whole years since Biden's disastrous Afghanistan withdrawal marked the end of two decades of an equally disastrous occupation, yet the neocons in the federal government already have their sights set on the stomping ground for the next failed war: Mexico.

Reps. Dan Crenshaw (R-Texas) and Mike Waltz (R-Fla.) this week put out a [proposal](#) for authorizing the use of military force against Mexico's drug cartels.

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

Crenshaw would have been more accurate in drawing a parallel not with ISIS, but with the Taliban, which the United States was unable to exterminate after two decades of fighting and which coasted into power the moment American forces pulled out of Afghanistan.

For, you see, combating the cartels would be more akin to taking on the Taliban. This is important for anyone who is serious about confronting the drug issue to understand. It's not enough to simply go into a country guns blazing, bombing and shooting at everything in sight, believing this will fix the issue.

Military force only deals with the most superficial of factors in the drug war, but ignores the deeper factors — factors that would cause the cartels, like the Taliban in Afghanistan, to never completely be eliminated and to eventually come back in full force once the American people tire of war and the troops are called home.

The question, as it was in Afghanistan, is not whether the U.S. could militarily mop the floor with the cartels. Of course it could. But would that solve the problem? For how long? And at what cost?



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Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on April 12, 2023

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Let's say the United States decides to go to war against the Sinaloa cartel or the Gulf cartel, just to pick two prominent targets at random. And let's assume that, despite Mexico's repeated insistence that it does not want a U.S. invasion, the government accedes out of neighborly good will or (most likely) out of fear.

So now we have U.S. troops in Mexico tracking down the Sinaloa cartel. Skirmishes and raids occur. Arrests are made. Within a relatively short time frame, the head of the cartel is dead or behind bars.

Now what?

Let's assume (in an assumption that probably gives Washington too much credit) that American policymakers realize the folly of occupying a foreign country for decades and decide to call the troops home after the Sinaloa cartel is finished.

What will happen the instant the last of our forces are back in the states?

Another criminal organization steps into that vacuum. It might be the few Sinaloa leaders we didn't catch. It might be another cartel that is all too eager to jump into the open market free of competition that we just handed them on a silver platter.

What do we do then? Are we going to wage war on every cartel in Mexico in order to leave no surviving organizations that will move in after we're gone?

We're already treading on fantastical ground here. But even if we did that, the exact same thing as above would take place in the end. Eventually, our forces leave — and new cartels form in a matter of weeks.

Are we just going to occupy Mexico forever to try to prevent the cartels from coming back into power? We all know how that will turn out. It's exactly what we witnessed in Afghanistan; a never-ending series of skirmishes and raids, combined with terror attacks and guerrilla warfare by the enemy. News every week about a bombing killing U.S. troops or outrage after American actions kill Mexican civilians.

Gradually, the Mexican people, bitter at the *gringos* occupying their country, side with the cartels and the *rebellion* grows bigger.

When all is said and done, we'll leave in embarrassment, nothing in Mexico will have changed, and our country will be trillions of dollars poorer — with nothing whatsoever to show for it.

Invading Mexico might sound good on paper (and on Twitter). It appeals to our macho instincts, to our desire to destroy those who are doing us wrong. And it gives politicians the appearance of wanting to do something decisive. But it's a recipe for disaster.

Furthermore, the fear of America invading Mexico, ostensibly over the drug crisis, is only pushing [Mexico closer to China](#), as the Latin American country seeks Beijing's protection against unwanted incursions from Washington.

In short, it would be a lot simpler, a lot less expensive, and a lot more effective to forgo the neocon calls for war and do the one thing that will actually curtail the flow of drugs: Secure the border.



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