



Written by [James Heiser](#) on October 20, 2011

## Mexican Cartels are Recruiting American Children

As the drug war in Mexico continues to spill across America's southern border, a disturbing development has emerged as law enforcement officers in Texas attempt to reign in cartel-related crimes: The cartels are now using children as young as 11 years of age in the commission of crimes.

Although the issues related to illegal immigration from Mexico have received less attention in the media in recent months, the cultural impact of Mexican crime and violence flowing freely into the southern United States remains unabated. Sometimes, the undermining of American sovereignty occurs in subtle ways. For example, a scandal has erupted recently in the border city of McAllen, Texas, where a high school teacher required her students to sing the Mexican national anthem and recite that nation's pledge of allegiance. A teacher instructing her students to take these actions on [Constitution Day](#) simply makes the offense all the worse. As [noted previously for \*The New American\*](#): "As the war between drug cartels continues to devolve Mexico into a failed state, Americans have good reason to be proud of their own national heritage — especially on Constitution Day. Constitutionists note that the intentions of the teacher and school district aside, the imposition of a foreign anthem and oath on a day which ought to be devoted to the anthem and oath of these United States seems ill-conceived and poorly timed, at best."



Such a grievous assault on the ability of various levels of American government to exercise effective control within the United States is manifested more openly where the actions of Mexican cartels are taken into account. Now the criminal actions of the cartels are not only victimizing the citizens of the U.S. by spreading their penchant for murder, kidnapping, drug dealing and various other forms of mayhem north of the border — they are recruiting American children into the forefront of their criminal activities.

Reuters reporter Jim Forsyth wrote on October 18 of the phenomena emerging in San Antonio of pre-



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teens serving as “expendables” in the ranks of at least six Mexican cartels:

Steven McCraw, director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, told Reuters the drug gangs have a chilling name for the young Texans lured into their operations.

“They call them ‘the expendables,’” he said.

McCraw said his investigators have evidence six Mexican drug gangs — including the violent Zetas — have “command and control centers” in Texas actively recruiting children for their operations, attracting them with what appears to be “easy money” for doing simple tasks.

“Cartels would pay kids \$50 just for them to move a vehicle from one position to another position, which allows the cartel to keep it under surveillance to see if law enforcement has it under surveillance,” he said.

The use of such children is hardly an isolated situation; according to McCraw, 25 minors have been arrested in one county in Texas in the past year alone for engaging in various criminal activities on behalf of the cartels. Many of these criminal activities may seem minor, but others are quite significant. As McCraw told Reuters, in October, “we made an arrest of a 12-year-old boy who was in a stolen pickup truck with 800 pounds of marijuana. So they do recruit our kids.”

The agenda of the cartels is quite different from those who seem interested in absorbing various territories of these United States into Mexico; the cartels are interested in profits, and not politics — except insofar as the political agenda can serve their criminal enterprise.

As [Raven Clabough has written for \*The New American\*](#), the United States would like to classify the Mexican drug cartels in terms of terrorist organizations, rather than continuing to treat them as what they are: criminal syndicates which are motivated not by an ideology, but by a desire to profit in peddling illegal goods. Mexican president Felipe Calderon has treated his government’s conflict with the drug cartels as if it were quite literally a war — a war which (not unlike America’s “War on Terror”) shows no sign of ever coming to an end. As noted in [a recent article for \*BorderlandBeat.com\*](#), if Calderon has his way, the Mexican government will enshrine the tactics of the current conflict as a permanent feature of governance in that nation:

Mr. Calderón has recently stepped up calls for Mexico’s Congress to approve stalled initiatives to remake state and local police forces, codify the military’s role in fighting crime and broaden its powers, toughen the federal penal code and tighten laws to stop money laundering. ...

He insists that the country will eventually become more secure, although about 40,000 people have been killed since he declared his war against organized crime. He began waging it shortly after taking office in 2006 as violence climbed, and he has continued pressing his offensive against drug organizations as they have splintered and descended into bloody infighting over territory and criminal rackets.

But in a wide-ranging interview, he could not say that his approach had made Mexico safer.

“What I can say is Mexico will be safer,” he said, “and to have not acted, it would have deteriorated much more.”

The American people are poorly served when their children are taught to recite an oath of allegiance to a foreign nation, and their interests are betrayed when Mexican criminals operate with such impunity that they may recruit children as “expendable” tools of their trade. The problem in both circumstances is centered in a similar problem: public servants who are fundamentally failing to protect the rising generation from the hostile intentions of foreign nationals who have become accustomed to an American government seemingly unwilling to defend the interests of the nation.



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*Photo: Drug cartel leader Carlos Oliva Castillo, alias "La Rana," or the "The Frog," is presented to the press in Mexico City, Thursday Oct. 13, 2011.: AP Images*



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