



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on March 3, 2009

## Violence Spills Across U.S.-Mexico Border

Phoenix, Arizona, now leads the nation in kidnapping, most of it related to Mexican cartels. Last year the city had more than one reported kidnapping every day. "The victims are not likely to seek police assistance due to their immigration status or their involvement in illegal activity," according to Stratfor, a global intelligence firm. "This strongly suggests the kidnapping problem greatly exceeds the number of cases reported to police." The report goes on to say that Mexican cartels' kidnapping operations in the United States "merit careful attention," also noting that the gangs could decide to "diversify their pool of victims."



One incident that temporarily shined the spotlight on the violence issue was a widely reported assassination in Phoenix where heavily armed gunmen tied to the cartels and dressed like a Phoenix Police Department tactical unit fired over 100 rounds into a house.

"The fight in Mexico is about domination of the smuggling corridors and those corridors don't stop at the border," said Arizona Attorney General Terry Goddard. According to a report in Reuters entitled "U.S. rattled as Mexican drug war bleeds over border," police in Southern California have also been investigating kidnappings of Americans by armed groups connected to Mexican drug cartels. Among the victims was a San Diego woman and her daughter held for ransom in Mexico. Another incident mentioned in the story involved a live grenade traced to a Mexican cartel that was thrown onto a pool table at a bar patronized by off-duty police in Southern Texas.

The cartels are fairly well established throughout the United States. According to a report from the National Drug Intelligence Center released in December, the Mexican gangs "maintain drug distribution networks or supply drugs to distributors in at least 230 U.S. cities." The report also called the cartels "the greatest drug trafficking threat to the United States," adding that "they control most of the U.S. drug market and have established varied transportation routes, advanced communications capabilities and strong affiliations with gangs in the United States."

When asked by Bill O'Reilly on his Fox News show if the violence was going to spread into the United States, Zapata County Sheriff Sigi Gonzalez said; "I'm not going to say it's coming, I'm saying it's already here." He also noted that while some of his deputies were patrolling the border they encountered 20 to 25 men carrying duffel bags with machine guns slung over their shoulders.

The violence is "reaching into Arizona, and that is what is really alarming local and state law enforcement," according to Commander Dan Allen of Arizona's Department of Public Safety, who testified on the issue before the State Senate Judiciary Committee. "We are finding home invasion and attacks involving people impersonating law enforcement officers," he told the committee. "They are very forceful and aggressive. They are heavily armed, and they threaten, assail, bind and sometimes kill



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victims.”

U.S. Representative Lamar Smith recently said the rise in violence along the border “has turned some American communities and neighborhoods into the Wild West.” He added that “a battle is building on the border, and U.S. citizens are getting caught in the crossfire.... Congress must address the violence before more lives are lost.”

With an estimated 5,700 deaths in Mexico last year tied to the cartel violence — including hundreds of law enforcement officials — Governor Rick Perry of Texas wants 1,000 troops to guard the border. Meanwhile, the state’s attorney general is pushing for measures to target smugglers and cartels. Last week the U.S. Justice Department revealed that it had arrested more than 730 people across the country after a nearly two-year investigation of the Mexican Sinaloa cartel. Homeland Security also has plans to send more resources and personnel to the border according to an official cited in the *Los Angeles Times*. Federal lawmakers are jumping onboard as well, with the Senate announcing last week that it would hold hearings to determine whether American law enforcement has the ability to deal with the rise in crime on this side of the border.

The United States is also still on track to pour over a billion dollars into helping Mexico wage its drug war under the Merida Initiative. Attorney General Eric Holder thinks banning semi-automatic rifles would somehow help stop the tide of fully-automatic military weapons, grenades, and rocket launchers into Mexico. Former deputy assistant secretary of State for international law enforcement Thomas A. Schweich explains that “the cartels know no borders in what they do, and it is important that we know no borders in order to defeat them.”

It seems certain interests in Washington would like to use the fear resulting from this violence to further integrate America and Mexico, wage a war against guns and freedom, and ramp up the police state. Yet contrary to Schweich’s opinion that we should “know no borders to defeat” the cartels, we should secure our borders and end the growing entanglements with the narco state that is Mexico.

— *Photo: AP Images*



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