



Terrorists knocking at our door: the threat below

By Dennis Evers

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Beheadings, torture, severed limbs, barbaric cruelty -- no, not some far away country, but right on our doorstep, Mexico, the new global hotspot.

From March of 2003 to the present, six years, there have been 4,256 American soldiers killed in Iraq -- God rest their souls. *Last year alone*, there were a staggering 6,000 drug-war related deaths in Mexico.

While drug cartels wage war, the Southwest -- from California to Texas -- is taking a hit, and the entire U.S. isn't far behind. Recognizing the threat, Texas Governor Rick Perry has called for the U.S. to put 1,000 troops on the Mexican border.

According to ABC news, "Phoenix, Arizona, has become the kidnapping capital of America, with more incidents than any other city in the world outside of Mexico City and over 370 cases last year alone."

Mexico is no stranger to violence. In the seventies, I attended college in Guadalajara. Every week, fellow students would report being shot at or assaulted. However, the newest generation of "cartel terrorists" is absolutely ruthless. While the victims are usually illegal aliens or rival drug dealers, soldiers, policemen, politicians, students and innocent men, women and children have all become targets. No one is safe, there or here.

Much of the problem is rampant corruption which involves virtually every aspect of the military and police, as in Tijuana where 500 officers were replaced due to corruption. In Cancun, the former police chief is in custody, a suspect in the slaying of a retired army general hired to oversee the city's police force.

Gunmen killed state police officer Reyes Lopez, a member of an elite anti-corruption agency and then 10 of his relatives, including a two-year-old and five other children.

With an abundance of automatic weapons, grenades and rocket-propelled grenade launchers, the cartel traffickers have significantly more firepower than Mexican authorities.

While Mexico's President Felipe Calderon has deployed about 45,000 troops and 5,000 federal police to quell the violence, the sad yet simple fact is, if recreational and addictive drug consumption in the U.S. was to stop, the whole situation would dissolve. However, as long as cartels vie for control of drug markets in the U.S., the situation will only worsen.

Whether drug- or jihad-driven, terrorism is terrorism, and it affects us all. The Department of State has issued a travel alert for Mexico, and yet another offshoot of the violence is a new class of refugees that would rather sit in a safe U.S. jail than live free in a violent country.

While Al Qaeda is an ever-present threat, the war south of the border is a clear and present danger that Washington needs to recognize and address.

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