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by Ed Manning

MEXICAN CARTELS ARE TERRORISTS

"We cannot sacrifice our safety to the murderous greed of drug cartels." Jan Brewer (R), ex-Governor, Arizona

It's past time for the Trump Administration to designate the Mexican cartels as terrorist organizations. The President does not need Congressional approval to do so. The Democrats will continue to provide lip service to securing our southern border. They have little interest in solving a broken immigration system. Party first, country last.

Mexican cartels are now labeled as "transnational criminal organizations" (TCOs). MS-13, Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG), Sinaloa Cartel, Clan del Golfo, and Lebanese Hezbollah are all TCOs. Terrorism is increasingly funded through transnational crime, most prominently the drug trade.

The brutality of the cartels is breathtaking. The thrust of the 2018 Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) drug threat assessment report is an indictment of open borders, sanctuary cities, and the "criminal justice reform" movement. Popular resorts with Americans, such as Cancun, are now unsafe for travel. Mexico has over 250,000 dead and 38,000 missing since 2007. From September 2017 to July 1, 2018, 132 politicians and candidates were murdered.

The DEA assessment report demonstrates, contrary to the Democrat talking point, this is not a "manufactured crisis":

Mexican TCOs continue to control lucrative smuggling corridors, primarily across the Southwest border, and maintain the greatest drug trafficking influence in the United States, with continued signs of growth. They continue to expand their criminal influence by engaging in business alliances with other TCOs, including independent TCOs, and work in conjunction with transnational gangs, US based street gangs, prison gangs, and Asian money laundering organizations.

Jaeson Jones, retired agent with Texas Department of Public Safety's intelligence and counterterrorism division, has studied and fought the cartels for his entire career. He regularly speaks with cartel informants. In an interview with Conservative Review, he said "the term Transnational Criminal Organization provides no authorities to law enforcement or the Department of Defense (DOD) to eliminate the Mexican cartels" as the term "terrorist" would. "If we are to be successful in the future, our nation must designate the cartels as terrorists," he said. "Then our military can collaborate with host countries around the world to end them."

Derek Maltz, former head of the DEA's Special Operations Division, said that if you take a look at the State Department's designation requirements, "It's very clear the Mexican cartels fit the criteria of a terrorist group." The Mexican cartels that have "infiltrated all the major cities in America, are operating in over 50 countries, helping to supply funding to Islamic terror groups through the West Africa drug trade."

Jaeson Jones believes the Mexican cartels are a threat to our sovereignty:

"A new trend we're seeing is where they're taking armored vehicles and cloning them with military insignias from Mexico. That allows them to get up close to the military so that they can engage them. You see what I'm saying about tradecraft, military tactics, and what they're using. These are not things that normal law enforcement can take on, and it's imperative that our government recognize that, at some point, we've got to start creating the ability for the Department of Defense to be able to get into this and have authorities to go out and help Mexico be successful because a lot of folks, again, forget Mexico has thrown everything they've had at this since 2006, and it is getting worse, not better."

"...look at the tactics. To cross into the US, you don't just walk across the border. That's not how it works. What happens is they have what are known as falcons (cartel lookouts), and there are literally thousands of them. These falcons utilize handheld radios that are digital in nature and encrypted as they monitor our movements and bring across their contraband. The falcons and the sicarios, which are assassins that we're trying to work against, are leveraging a capability that our law enforcement, particularly local law enforcement, do not possess."

How would designating the cartels as terrorist organizations help? DEA's Maltz offered: "When you look at the production operations in Mexico, it seems very clear to me that with all our intel, we could hit those laboratories and poppy fields hard with DOD capabilities. If we can destroy the production sites, the supply would go way down and make the cost more prohibitive for our youth."

The Department of Homeland Security reported that 76,000 illegal aliens crossed the southern border in February. Former Obama Department of Homeland Security secretary Jeh Johnson said the influx of immigrants at the southern border is a crisis. "It's a crisis because it overwhelms our Border Patrol and our immigration officials' ability to deal with it, and it's a crisis because you have to absorb that population somehow into southern border towns."