

Chairman Cornyn and Co-Chair Whitehouse, and distinguished members of this Caucus, thank you for the opportunity to address you today on the global reach of the Mexican cartels and their threat to the national security of the United States.

I saw firsthand the damage done by the Mexican cartels and their international smuggling of narcotics, including fentanyl, during my 25-year career as an agent and executive with the DEA. I started off on the front lines targeting kingpins and command-and-control networks of transnational criminal organizations who were trafficking drugs into the United States and laundering crime proceeds through U.S. financial institutions. I also spent time abroad, at U.S. embassies in Brussels and Copenhagen, working with our international partners to increase international collaboration against transnational organized crime.

In 2018, I was assigned to the DEA's Special Operations Division ("SOD"), where I supervised a global team that focused on a new and evolving threat: Chinese Money Laundering Organizations ("CMLOs") and other elements of Chinese organized crime globally who had become partners with the Mexican cartels. CMLOs launder the dominant share of Mexican cartel revenues, and Chinese suppliers provide the chemical precursors for the production of fentanyl and methamphetamine. It should be understood that the Mexican cartels and their Chinese money launderers are global organizations, and it will take a globally networked team to disrupt and ultimately dismantle them.

Since their designation by the U.S. government as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs), the cartels' operations have been materially impacted.

Key successes against the Mexican cartels since they were designated as FTOs in February 2025 include the following:

- Over 100 of the top-echelon Mexican cartel targets have been sent to the U.S. for prosecution. Some of these key Mexican cartel leaders are believed to be cooperating with U.S. prosecutors.
- In July 2025, the U.S. Treasury utilized the FEND Off Fentanyl Act to identify three Mexican financial institutions as primary money laundering concerns.
- On February 22, 2026, the Mexican military killed CJNG leader Nemesio "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes in a predawn raid in Mexico.
- On April 29, 2026, the Southern District of New York charged ten current and former Mexican government and law enforcement officials from Sinaloa, Mexico. This was one of the most significant indictments highlighting the level of corruption within Mexico by the Sinaloa cartel.

The Mexican cartels have been forced to evolve based on the dramatically increased threat from the U.S. Government and the negative impact on their revenue streams. We should anticipate that the Mexican cartels will continue to evolve and will seek new organized crime revenue-generating opportunities in markets that offer reduced risk and greater revenue potential, such as Africa and Europe.

Recently, General Dagvin R.M. Anderson of AFRICOM stated that in the last 24 months, of the 12 drug laboratories intercepted in Africa, 11 had members of the Mexican cartels among the operators at the lab.¹ Gen. Anderson pointed out that this was an indicator of the growing presence of the Mexican cartels in Africa. In his written posture statement, Gen. Anderson confirmed that both the CJNG and Sinaloa Cartel have established methamphetamine production labs in Africa, with cartel members arrested at some of the largest labs ever discovered.² In May of 2026, Nigerian specialized police units shut down several large methamphetamine production labs in Nigeria. Mexican cartel members who were arrested had traveled to Nigeria to provide expertise on “cooking” and manufacturing methamphetamine.

In Poland, Mexican cartel-controlled methamphetamine labs have also been identified and taken down by Polish narcotics units on several occasions.

During my work in Brussels and Copenhagen, I collaborated extensively with European counterparts and saw the level of corruption, organized-crime-violence, and control increase dramatically in countries like The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, and Spain. This corruption and control have metastasized because of cocaine trafficking through these ports, posing a clear threat to the national security of these countries. The material negative impact on Europe is coupled with the increase in power by the cartels and various FTOs in the Western Hemisphere, including the Mexican cartels, the Colombian cartels, the Ecuadorian cartels, and cartels based in Brazil, all of which are designated as FTOs by the USG. By targeting key convergence points alongside European and African counterparts, we can dismantle the operations facilitating Mexican cartel drug trafficking activities.

By targeting Mexican cartel operations and leadership outside the Western Hemisphere, in jurisdictions such as Europe and Africa, we can negate a new and lucrative revenue scheme for the Mexican cartels. This will increase pressure on the Mexican cartels themselves.

¹ U.S. Africa Command, “U.S. Africa Command 2026 Testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC),” YouTube video, May 14, 2026, at 37:05, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRBPY9IUAns>.

² Dagvin R.M. Anderson, “Statement by General Dagvin R.M. Anderson, United States Air Force, Commander, United States Africa Command, Before the United States House of Representatives Armed Services Committee, 119th Congress, Second Session, Posture Hearing, 19 May 2026,” U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services, May 19, 2026, <https://www.congress.gov/119/meeting/house/119289/witnesses/HMTG-119-AS00-Wstate-AndersonD-20260519.pdf>.

The established money laundering partnership between the Mexican cartels and Chinese money launderers continues to evolve, as crypto has taken on a much more substantial role in the laundering of funds. The USG should be collaborating with all potential partners to attack the money laundering component of the Mexican cartels. The laundering of drug profits is a clear asymmetric weakness of the Mexican cartels that can be exploited through greater international cooperation between the USG and our allies.

Thank you to this caucus for calling attention to the important issue of the global presence of the Mexican cartels. I look forward to answering your questions and to future discussions with the caucus and its staff about this critical issue.