



## THE WAR ON NARCOTERRORISM: IS THE WAR ON DRUGS BECOMING THE WAR ON TERROR?

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Dr. Mahmut Cengiz,<sup>3</sup> Cully Stimson<sup>4</sup> & Major Mika'il Ali<sup>5</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> “Professor [Dennis] Fitzpatrick is a decorated national security attorney and litigator who has been recognized for leading difficult and highly sensitive cases over a 20-year government career. He concluded his government service leading the investigation and prosecution of Alexandra Kotey and El-Shafee El Sheikh, two leaders of the Islamic State unit responsible for the abduction and murder of U.S. journalists and humanitarian aid workers. Professor Fitzpatrick has worked with nearly every government agency over the course of his career, including the CIA, FBI, DEA, ATF, Department of Treasury, Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of Commerce. Professor Fitzpatrick recently worked with the Trump Administration’s State Department and National Security Council to secure the safe release of a U.S. citizen wrongfully detained by the Taliban in Afghanistan. Professor Fitzpatrick’s recognition for his work includes the following honors: 2023 Attorney General’s Award for Distinguished Service; 2019 Department of Justice *Director’s Award* for superior performance as an Assistant United States Attorney; 2017 *Virginia Lawyers Weekly Leader in the Law*; 2016 Department of Justice *John Marshall Award* for superior litigation performance in the espionage trial *United States v. Jeffrey Sterling*; [and] FBI Washington Field Office *Outstanding Prosecution Awards*: 2014, 2015, 2019, 2022.” Email from Dennis M. Fitzpatrick, Partner, Whiteford, Taylor & Preston LLP, to Brittney DePoto, Editor-in-Chief, Nat’l Sec. L.J. (Mar. 27, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> “[Dr.] Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera is Professor in the Schar School of Policy and Government, and co-director of the Terrorism, Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) at George Mason University. Her areas of expertise are border studies, U.S.-Mexico relations, international security, migration studies, and illicit networks. She has authored several notable books, including *Los Zetas Inc.: Criminal Corporations, Energy, and Civil War in Mexico* (2017; Spanish edition published in 2018) which examines the intersection of criminal organizations and economic interests in Mexico. Her other works include *Democracy in “Two Mexicos”: Political Institutions in Oaxaca and Nuevo León* (2013) and, more recently, *Frontera: A Journey across the U.S.-Mexico Border* (co-authored with Sergio Chapa in 2024). Her most recent books in Spanish are *Las Cinco Vidas de Genaro García Luna* (The Five Lives of Genaro García Luna) and *La Guerra Improvisada: Los Años de Calderón y sus Consecuencias* (The Improvised War: Calderón’s Years and

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Consequences), both co-authored with Tony Payan and published in 2021. She has also co-edited publications such as *North American Borders in Comparative Perspective*, and serves as co-editor of the journal *International Studies Perspectives* (Oxford University Press). Professor Correa-Cabrera is a past President of the Association for Borderlands Studies (ABS) and has been involved in significant research projects supported by various government agencies and foundations, including serving as the Principal Investigator for a study on organized crime and trafficking in persons in Central America and Mexico's eastern migration routes, funded by the US Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. She is a frequent commentator on issues related to Mexican politics, U.S.-Mexico (border) relations, immigration, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational organized crime in various media outlets. Currently, she is a Fulbright U.S. Scholar in Mexico, researching human smuggling and transnational crime networks, with an upcoming book titled *Coyotes LLC*.<sup>3</sup> *Guadalupe Correa-Cabrera*, SHAR SCH. OF POL'Y & GOV'T, GEORGE MASON UNIV., <https://schar.gmu.edu/profiles/gcorreac> (last visited May 25, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> "Dr. Mahmut Cengiz is an Associate Professor and Research Faculty member at the Terrorism, Transnational Crime, and Corruption Center (TraCCC) and the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University (GMU). He has extensive international field experience, having provided capacity-building and training assistance to partners across the Middle East, Asia, and Europe. Dr. Cengiz has also contributed to research projects for the Brookings Institution, the European Union, and various U.S. agencies. Dr. Cengiz is a prolific author, with six books to his name, along with numerous articles and book chapters on topics such as terrorism, organized crime, smuggling, terrorist financing, and trafficking. His 2024 book, *Murder By Mail: A Global History of the Letter Bomb*, explores the individuals and groups who have used letter and package bombs to kill and maim their victims. Since 2018, Dr. Cengiz has been leading the development of the Global Terrorist Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC) and currently serves as Academic Director and Co-Principal Investigator for the GMU component. He is also a Fellow at Small Wars Journal El Centro, a columnist, and a member of the editorial board of *Homeland Security Today*. Dr. Cengiz teaches courses on Terrorism, American Security Policy, and Narco-Terrorism at George Mason University." Email from Mahmut Cengiz, Rsch. Assoc. Professor, Terrorism, Transnational Crime & Corruption Ctr. & Shar Sch. of Pol'y & Gov't, George Mason Univ., to Danielle Saman, Managing Ed., Nat'l Sec. L.J. (Mar. 30, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> "Cully Stimson is Deputy Director of the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, Senior Legal Fellow, and Manager of the National Security Law Program at The Heritage Foundation. He is a widely recognized expert in national security law, the law of armed conflict, terrorism, criminal law and homeland security. Prior to joining Heritage in 2007, Stimson served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Detainee Affairs, where he advised Secretaries of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates on global detention policies and practices. Stimson served as an Assistant United States Attorney, and a local and state prosecutor in San Diego and Maryland, where he focused on violent crime. A retired Navy Captain, Stimson served in the Judge Advocate General's Corps for 30 years.

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*On April 4, 2025, the National Security Law Journal at George Mason University Antonin Scalia Law School hosted its spring symposium: “The War on Narcoterrorism: Is the War on Drugs Becoming the War on Terror?”. The event was cohosted by the National Security Institute at George Mason University. The symposium featured a panel discussion on Executive Order 14157 and its eight designations of organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (“FTOs”) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (“SDGTs”). The following is an edited transcript of the panel discussion.<sup>6</sup>*

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**ANNALISE EMONS, INCOMING EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:** Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the National Security Law Journal and National Security Institute’s Spring Symposia, “The War on Terrorism: Is the War on Drugs Becoming the War on Terror?” Thank you all so much for joining us today.

I am Annalise Emons, your incoming Editor-in-Chief of the National Security Law Journal. The National Security Law Journal is

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He currently serves as the Rector of George Mason University.” Email from Cully Stimson, Deputy Dir., Edwin Meese III Ctr. for Legal. & Judicial Studs., Manager, Nat’l Sec. L. Program, Senior Legal Fellow, Heritage Found. & Senior Advisor to the President, to Brittney DePoto, Editor-in-Chief, Nat’l Sec. L.J. (Mar. 28, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> “Major Mika’il Ali is a Commandant of the Marine Corps National Legal Fellow assigned to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency’s Office of General Counsel, where he advises on all matters pertaining to the agency’s national security and intelligence mission, with specific emphasis on support to Combatant Commands, Intelligence Agencies, Law Enforcement, and use of Artificial Intelligence capabilities. Prior to NGA, Major Ali served as a Judge Advocate at United States Cyber Command, where he advised issues related to military cyber operations, network security, data governance, emerging technology, and international agreements. Maj Ali’s other assignments included Deputy Counsel at the Marine Corps Training and Education Command, Assistant Judge Advocate for Joint Task Force Guantanamo Bay, and billets as a prosecutor and legal assistant attorney. Maj Ali received his J.D. from Lewis & Clark Law (2011) and LL.M in Cyber, Intelligence, & National Security from Antonin Scalia School of Law (2017). Maj Ali is a current member of the Scalia adjunct faculty where he teaches Constitutional Law, National Security Law, and the Covert & Special Operations Seminar. Maj Ali is also a fellow at The Cyber and Technology Center.” Email from Major Mika’il A. Ali, Assistant Gen. Counsel, Off. of Gen. Counsel, Nat’l Geospatial Intel. Agency, to Brittney DePoto, Editor-in-Chief, Nat’l Sec. L.J. (Mar. 26, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> A recording of the event can be found at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lTh2Rt1YOfA>.

the country's premier journal on national security law, advancing the "dynamic field of national security law, including topics related to foreign affairs, intelligence, homeland security, and national defense," with "informative and innovative commentary on a wide variety of issues pertaining to national security law and policy." With this mission in mind, we host two symposiums to encourage academic scholarship and discourse surrounding pressing national security issues.

Since the Reagan administration, the war on drugs has been deeply associated with the Republican Party. As time progresses and administrations change, so do the attitudes towards drug policy and tactics to counter the drug epidemic in the United States. One factor contributing to drug problems remains consistent: transnational drug cartels. On February 20th, President Trump made an unprecedented move with the release of Executive Order 14157, which designates drug cartels and other transnational organizations as Foreign Terrorist Organizations. One major effect of the executive order is that this designation gives the President the authority to exercise the Armed Forces against drug cartels. This leaves one question looming among national security communities. Is the war on drugs becoming the war on terror?

To discuss this question, NSLJ is teaming up with the National Security Institute. NSI is dedicated to "strengthen[ing] American national security and U.S. global leadership by educating future leaders and advancing actionable solutions based on practical experience." NSI champions intellectual and personal diversity as the crux "to a well-informed society and foreign policy," and also as a key attribute for developing the next generation of national security leaders—many of whom are in this room with us today.

With that, I would like to turn the floor over to our moderator: he is a fellow for the National Security Institute, Commandant of the Marine Corps National Legal Fellow Program, and a current JAG. Everyone, please give a warm welcome to Professor Ali.

**MAJOR MIKA'IL ALI, MODERATOR:** Thank you. Thank you for that introduction. Can everyone hear me? Okay—I'm excited to have

you all here this afternoon. Look forward to an exciting discussion.

With that, I would like to introduce our panel. So first to my right, we have Mr. Cully Stimson, who is the current Deputy Director of the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, a Senior Legal Fellow and Manager of the National Security Law program with The Heritage Foundation. Prior to that, he was a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Detainee Affairs, where he advised the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and Robert Gates on global detention policies and practices. And before that, a retired Judge Advocate from, like me, the Sea Services—Navy counterpart—at the rank of Captain. So please give a round of applause for him.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**MAJ. ALI:** Next we have Professor Dennis Fitzpatrick: a decorated National Security Attorney has worked with over—every agency in the federal government, multiple agencies, was responsible for leading the investigation and prosecution of multiple terrorists. Give a round of applause.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**MAJ. ALI:** And next we have Dr. Mahmut Cengiz—did I pronounce one right?

**DR. MAHMUT CENGIZ, PANELIST:** That is correct.

**MAJ. ALI:** Exactly. Right now, he's an Associate Professor and Research Faculty Member for the Terrorism Transnational Crime and Corruption Center [(“TraCCC”)] at the Schar School of Policy next door. Author of multiple books, author of multiple journals and publications—has done extensive work with the European Union, U.S. agencies, and in the Middle East, specializing in terrorism, organized crime, smuggling, terrorism financing, and trafficking. Please give him a round of applause.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**MAJ. ALI:** Online, we have Professor Guadalupe Correa-

Cabrera. My Spanish is not that good, but I hope I can pronounce it pretty well. She's also a professor at the Schar School of Policy and Government, the co-Director of the Terrorism Transnational Crime and Corruption Center. Her expertise is in US-Mexico relations, international security, migration studies, illicit networks—and also focuses on the phenomenon of human smuggling, trafficking, and migrants, as well as one of the principal investigators on the research grant to study organized crime and trafficking persons in Central America along the Mexico migration routes. So everyone give a round of applause.

[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE]

**MAJ. ALI:** All right, with that being said, I want to jump into some of the questions. I'm looking forward to a very illuminating discussion. For the panel, I'd like you all to chime in on this first question. One: in regards to the designation of these cartel networks as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, or Specially Designated Global Terrorist Organizations, has this been done before? And how does this change the paradigm for how we get after these criminal organizations now that they are designated as terrorist organizations?

**DENNIS FITZPATRICK, PANELIST:** Well, it hasn't been done before. To this degree, the answer is no. I think this administration's effort is unique in that regard of taking—you know, the terrorism designation, and applying it to street gangs on the one hand, and also in same action, cartels. And I think what we need to do is actually divide them and look at them separately. But let's take a step back.

It's not unusual and it's not unique to charge drug traffickers with terrorism offenses. There's actually a statute in Title 21, Title 21 § 960A, that if you are engaged in drug trafficking and you have knowledge or the intent that the proceeds of drug trafficking will aid terrorism, then that's narcoterrorism.

So, there is a species of what's happening now that is on—in the pre-existing arsenal of crimes that we have. In fact, the first narcoterrorist prosecuted was a man by the name of Mohammed Khan, who was a Taliban leader, also an extraordinarily prolific heroin

dealer. And he was prosecuted in the District of Columbia in 2008. Served two terms, two life—was convicted, sentenced to two life terms for imprisonment. And, strangely enough, we recently traded him, in the concluding days of the last administration, to free two Americans who were held by the Taliban. So, that life term of imprisonment became 17 years.

So there's that precedent. But, this initiative is new—it's a different take on addressing narcotics trafficking and violent crime. Like any aggressive policy decision, there are advantages, there are virtues, and there are disadvantages and negative aspects to it.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you.

**CULLY STIMSON, PANELIST:** First off, thanks for having me. It's nice to back at Mason where I used to teach as an adjunct like Dennis. And, like Dennis, I was an AUSA [Assistant U.S. Attorney] too. And I think you all who are graduating, are stuck with me because I'm going to be on your graduation certificate because I'm the Rector of George Mason University—which I guess technically means I'm all your all's bosses . . .

[**MR. STIMSON AND AUDIENCE LAUGHS**]

**MR. STIMSON:** . . . But that's sort of ridiculous.

It's easy to fall into the trap to think that this is just another effort to go after the so-called war on drugs. It's not. Most of you weren't alive on 9/11. I was. In fact, I was teaching here and my company in New York City, Marsh McLennan—the first plane that hit the first tower hit Marsh. Killed 295 of my colleagues. On that day, we lost almost 3,000 Americans. We rightly joined that war through an AUMF [Authorization for Use of Military Force] that Congress passed on the 18th of September. But if you look at the death toll, combined death toll and destruction of these cartels, and you consider, for example, that we have 100,000 fentanyl deaths a year in this country—it's the number one killer of young people, your age—this is entirely appropriate.

This is not Nancy Reagan's "Just Say No," on steroids. This is enabling a series of statutory, executive, and what I would call intelligence apparatus to go after organizations that, to my mind, have been essentially equivalent of a terrorist organization for a long time. So, it is the right thing to do. And I think when you get into further questions, we can get into some of the nitty gritty of what additional tools that brings to the table. But I caution you not to fall into the trap like, you know, some of our libertarian friends will say, "oh, it's just the war on terror, make it all legal, dude." This is not that. These are murderous thugs who enact essentially quasi-national power to supply drugs and death in our country.

**MAJ. ALI:** Professor . . .

**DR. CENGIZ:** Again, thank you, Mika'il for the invitation. I think I just want to talk about the definition of the issue. I think with this initiative, we are expanding the terrorism definition. Because so far, for example, we are doing a global terrorism database project at the Schar School—at the TraCCC Center—and since 2018, we have reported more than 58,000 terrorism incidents and none of them was, you know, including any cartel violence. But from this, I think after this initiative, we have just started the cartel, maybe, violence processing. I think the biggest impact is about its definition, because we are really expanding and stretching the terrorism inclusion criteria.

Also, of course, it might have some big impacts on legal or maybe some policy implications. I think you will see a more increased penalties and restrictive sanctions after this designation. Maybe another one would be from the legal implications. So we will see, I think, more enhanced law enforcement powers in the surveillance and the asset forfeitures. Of course, you will see some extraterritorial reach. So, we will maybe see in the future some military operations beyond U.S. borders. And, beyond this legal implication, of course, there are some policy implications I think we will have more discussions about the future—some diplomatic tensions because of sovereignty issues. Of course, another one will be about the sanctions. It may really strain some relations in the future in the region. Thanks.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you for that. I want to give Professor Cabrera



a chance to jump in on it and we'll move into some of the more nuance about it. Go ahead.

**DR. GUADALUPE CORREA-CABRERA, PANELIST:** Thank you. Thank you to all of you of the National Security Law Journal for the invitation. I'm going to tell a little bit about my background because, I mean, my background is a little bit different. I have been doing research on these organizations since the year 2009 when I arrived to Brownsville, Texas. I wrote a book about Los Zetas. And the relationship between these organizations and the terrorist groups are still under investigation, and we need to understand what is the real capacity that these groups have to really affect the United States' state.

I mean, no matter how this is defined, it's already an executive order, it's important to consider that, you know, the denomination is not enough. I think it's a good thing to deal with this in a more formal way, to follow the money, because this denomination at this point does not have a character of extraterritoriality, even though there have been some discussions about this. It's important to follow the money, it's important to conduct investigations of who are those in the United States who are supporting the activities of these groups. But we have to consider that this is not enough. Anti-narcotics operations in the United States and anti-narcotic cooperation programs with other countries, let's say in the Americas and beyond, have failed. Have failed because the United States has targeted the groups outside its borders.

What about the distribution mechanism? So that's why this denomination is important. Who is supporting these groups? But at the same time, we need to do more investigations about what are the channels of distribution of products that are sold by these organizations. So, this is a good step moving forward. But, this is just one, I mean, one action. We have to move forward and with further actions and investigations to really go to the bottom of this.

**MAJ. ALI:** Yeah, thank you for that. So I want to follow along on that, your answer, with another line of questioning. You talked about we attacked them outside of the United States, but what about in the United States? Can either the panelists talk about maybe

domestic or international legal issues that would need to be addressed here in the United States before we can go after those distribution networks? What challenges do they pose? Search and seizure? Any other legal consideration or policy considerations we have to take in account to really get after these networks here in the United States?

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** Yeah, well, I think in some respect, the answer is going to be you have to address it on a case-by-case basis, right? You're going to have to wait and see when the facts develop and then handle them that way. But I think sort of continuing with Professor Cabrera's point, she said follow the money. That's really, in my view, that's really the point of the designations under Title 8, Title 22 Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorists.

The whole point of this is to get to choke off the money motivator and the money supply of large-scale drug trafficking organizations. If you designate the Sinaloa Cartel or Los Zetas as Foreign Terrorist Organizations or SDGTs, that necessarily means they become specially designated nationals under OFAC's [Office of Foreign Assets Control] sanctioning and blocking authorities. Banks take that very seriously. And I think what the Trump administration, one of the messages they're trying to send is "enough talk" and "we need to get everybody to buy in to this fentanyl problem." And that includes elite banks and folks that sort of try to rise above it all. If these terrorists or if these drug trafficking cartels are designated terrorist organizations, that choking off the flow of money is a very, very powerful tool. And so I think at a broader policy level, that's the effect.

Now, that's why I said at the beginning, I like to sort of distinguish between the cartels, which I think are serious, and are wreaking, as Professor Stimson said, enormous havoc in the United States, particularly among young people. I don't think it's hyperbole to say that we are losing a good portion of generations, right? And it is largely taking place in forgotten communities across the country, right? Which is another under-reported story. So, I think it's a message from the administration that we're going to take this seriously and it's all, a 360 degree look at the problem.

**MR. STIMSON:** So, if I could just pick up on Dennis's comment and put a finer point on it. Every executive order that every president signs has typically a cascading effect. Right? This one is no different. And so, what this domino did by pushing and designating these discreet drug cartels is to, for example, bring in directly the Material Support for Terrorism Statute, 18 U.S.C. § 2339B, all right? Why does that do that? Because if you read section (a)(1), it talks about unlawful conduct and it specifically mentions Foreign Terrorist Organizations. And it starts with, "whoever knowingly provides material support, or resources to a foreign terrorist organization." So that not only puts the crosshairs on the cartels, who are now designated as FTOs but anyone who's helping them. So that brings in what Guadalupe and Dennis are talking about, it's the banks. Because if you look at—and you guys read law every day—civil penalty: "Any financial institution that knowingly fails to comply with subsection (a)(2) shall be subject to a civil penalty in an amount that is greater of \$50,000 per violation." So, the Mafia, DTOs [Drug Trafficking Organizations], cartels, it's all about the money. "Greed is that green-eyed monster that mocked me that eats upon" for those of you who are Shakespeare scholars. That's it's all about the money, right?

But, it also, for example, if you look at, speaking of the cascading effect, if you look at Pam Bondi's directive to all employees of DOJ, and then the DAG [Deputy Attorney General], the Deputy Number 2's memo called "Operation Take Back America," they now open it up to all ninety-three U.S. Attorney's Offices to go after these organizations without running it through the National Security Division so they're giving them more leash. That's another good effect. And the other thing I would say is once you do what they did, and you treat them for what they really are, which are terrorist organizations—not Cheech and Chong selling a little spliff on the side of the street, these are terrorist organizations—then you open up the whole intelligence toolkit. So Executive Order 12333, which I know Professor Jaffer talks about a lot, and I'm sure you talk about, and FISA [Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act] section 702. Right? FISA section 702 is the NSA's tool that allows us to surveil non-US persons reasonably believed to be overseas. Not only getting the metadata—the time the call started, the time the call stopped—but the actual content. And so, this allows you to feed, what Dennis talked about on a case-by-case

basis, whether using Title I, traditional criminal law tools, or intelligence gathering to snap up information to find out how to go after the finances. So, this opens up a whole panoply of toolkits that weren't otherwise available prior to this happening.

**MAJ. ALI:** And we'll jump a bit more into that. I'm going to get Professor Cengiz.

**DR. CENGIZ:** In addition to that I think also like the key challenges we should talk about like overlapping jurisdictions and international law because we know that under international law transnational cartels are investigated as criminal enterprises. I think also another challenge would be about challenges in proving terrorist related activities. Because you need to prove these political models in, maybe, cartel cases in the U.S. This is another challenge. But of course, we know that they are always profit oriented. I think another one could be about extraditions because other countries may not be on the same page with us. So, we can have some, maybe, extradition issue and problems in the future. I think also lastly, another key challenge, maybe, it can divert our attention from ideological groups to non-ideological groups like cartel's. Because we believe that today, according to our database, ISIS and Al Qaeda, they are not defeated organizations, so they are not—maybe they are confined to the regions they have been operating, but they are still very actively involved in terrorist activities. Also, to make one key challenge about this, it may divert our attention, as I have tried to explain, to more non-ideological groups and organizations.

**MAJ. ALI:** Yeah, and I want to kind piggyback off that. So you talk about resource constraints. Mr. Stimson talked about those extra intelligence authorities that may come in to help get after these newly designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations. But can you speak on the actual, you know, practical support now that they've been designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations? There are extra authorities that can come in to help get after these guys. So other than the legal authorities, you pretty much opened up all the IC [Intelligence Community] and maybe some military support. How do you think that will change the dynamic of getting after these Foreign Terrorist Organizations?

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**MR. FITZPATRICK:** Well, it'll get their attention. Right?

[PANEL LAUGHS]

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** I mean, certainly it'll get their attention, right? And listen, that's helpful. You know, deterrence matters. And keeping the people who will harm this country on their heels has a great impact. So yeah, think that opening it up, broadening it out beyond just strict law enforcement protocol is a good idea.

Listen, sometimes policies get stale, right? And sometimes we need to sort of stir things up a little bit and try new things to solve sort of pernicious problems, right? And I don't think anyone would disagree that the large-scale drug problem and the influx of fentanyl into this country has been a persistent problem. So, it needs new ideas, it needs creativity and policy thinking, and I think that's at the root of this.

**MAJ. ALI:** And I want Professor Cabrera to chime in on that. How do you think changing it from a traditional law enforcement mission to now this whole of government mission where you can bring in IC and possibly military support, how do you think that changes the dynamic?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** This is very important. It's a great advancement to deal with this big problem that is transnational in its nature. However, there is a challenge to that, I see, in this whole of a government approach, which starts from the conceptualization of these groups. These Foreign Terrorist Organizations right now are not really groups, they are networks. And that's the problem when I see how law enforcement and what's in the narrative, because if these groups are monolithical, and we're seeing yes. We're seeing *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación*, the *Sinaloa Cartel*, *Tren de Aragua*, or *MS-13*. We're talking about, I mean, let's talk about drug trafficking organizations, not *Tren de Aragua* or *MS-13* that also some of them are connected with drug smuggling or, you know, activities related drug trafficking. Anyway, if we don't understand this, then we're talking about networks, we're going to have a problem. I see a very big issue trying to really go after the money or following the money and

the organizations or the people that are supporting these “groups” or networks. So, this is becoming—this will become very, very complex.

There’s another thing that I would like to pose here. We’re talking about banks. We’re talking about actors who are supporting these groups. What about arms-producing firms. That’s another organization that we need to keep in mind here? Yes or no? I mean, today we’re addressing this through the legal aspect of this. There are many things that are not being discussed that we need to discuss. But this whole-of-government approach to deal with the network itself and those that are part of this network is a very, very big advantage. And it’s important.

But also in this network, as we already discussed, we have banks. We have private security firms. We have arms-producing firms that we need to discuss further what is their role and how to deal with the activities within this network.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. Mr. Stimson?

**MR. STIMSON:** So, one of the comments that Professor Correa-Cabrera was alluding to was a case that was just argued in front of the Supreme Court, where Mexico sued arms manufacturer here in the United States, essentially arguing that they’re selling weapons, long rifles, those are ending up in the hands of cartel members. The cartel members are using them to kill people. But if you guys remember back to Torts in the *Palsgraf* case, there’s a causation issue here. And I think if you listen to the questions that the Justices were asking of the lawyer for Mexico, I don’t think they’re going to prevail. Nor should they, in my opinion.

There’s a different concept that I think is behind some of this. And that is, when the President was a candidate and running for office and people were talking about the “invasion” on the southern border and whether it technically met the definition of invasion, there was this—somewhere in the blogosphere and somewhere along the sidelines of these discussions—this sort of mental image of the U.S. military *invading* Mexico to go after the cartels.

And I want to step back from that for a moment to remind you of a legal concept in regime international law that was really front and center on the Navy SEALs' raid of the compound in Abbottabad, Pakistan to get Osama bin Laden. Ashley Deeks, among other legal scholars, has written about the unwilling or unable test. In Pakistan, we decided as a matter of law, the country [U.S.] did, that the country of Pakistan—and the ISI [Inter-Services Intelligence] in particular—was unwilling or unable to cough up the whereabouts or assist with the raid to capture or kill bin Laden.

So that's not a hard and fast rule, but it is an international law concept, and I'd be curious to hear Guadalupe's comments on this, because she spent so much time studying this and writing about this. Some people say Mexico is a failed state. I don't think it is a failed state, but I'm not an expert on Mexico. Some elements of the Army are corrupt. Some elements of National Police Force are corrupt. But I don't think we have decided as a matter of law that they're unwilling or unable, as a sovereign country, to try to solve the drug trafficking problem such that we could legitimately send the 82nd Airborne or the Marines across a sovereign border to go after the cartels. And so, in these actions here, you see actions short of that. Hopefully, they're very successful at that, but I don't think you should be thinking that we're just going to send the Marines in to get them because that would be a *very different* line to cross, and I don't think this administration is considering that at all.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you, Professor Cengiz and Cabrera, I'd love to hear your thoughts based on your research . . .

**DR. CENGIZ:** I think it is one option to deploy the military right after these designations, but after seeing our experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, I don't know how much we should be relying on the military option like this when targeting these cartels.

I think also at the same time, we can be seen as a sovereignty issue. So we have seen some Mexican government people being against U.S. maybe likely—maybe using this military option in the future. Of course, we should be working on the same page with the Mexican government. Otherwise, if there is no collaboration, I don't think that

will be effective at addressing this issue. So, this military option may bring us more unintended consequences, like breaking our ties or pushing this issue to the sovereignty issue area. So, I think we should be really careful about this option in the future.

**MAJ. ALI:** Okay, I want to go to Professor Cabrera now. Then I'll get to Professor Fitzpatrick. Professor Cabrera, what do you think? Is there an unwilling and unable on behalf of Mexico or is there something else that we can do?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** It is a very interesting discussion here that we need to also understand from different lenses. There's impunity and corruption in Mexico, as it is in the United States. Lots of impunity and corruption that has been able to . . . under protection brackets in Mexico, [which] have made possible that these groups distribute drugs and participate in other activities.

But as I said, we're talking about networks. Not a lot of those networks are connected with drug trafficking. And not all of this part is part of the national security interest of the United States. These groups need to be dealt with force in the case of Mexico. And Mexico has to deal with that problem. Is Mexico capable of doing that? Yes. But Mexico *needs* to address its impunity and corruption issue. At the same time, the United States needs to address its impunity and corruption issue with regards to when the drugs are received in the United States and *distributed* in the United States.

We're talking about drug trafficking, and the groups that operate in Mexico—not all of them are centered on drug trafficking activities, even though we're talking about the Sinaloa Cartel or the *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación*. Some cells of these groups dedicate only to extortion, and they affect Mexicans, not the U.S. population. And they are not connected to drug trafficking. Some of them steal gas or are dedicated to human smuggling. And they start to specialize.

So, we need to address things in a more . . . I mean the way this has been defined, sometimes the discussion is *only* centered on drugs and *only* centered on the national security interests of the United



States. But these groups are more than that. So, we need to refine our discussion, our conceptualization, of these groups and identify the groups in a different way: conceptualizing of them as networks and understanding what part of the network is really affecting the United States, its people and the United States' state and society.

Mexico can deal with this and *should* deal with this because it affects Mexicans and its relationship with the United States, as El Salvador did. El Salvador was considered, to some extent, by some as a failed state. Then [President Nayib] Bukele was able to deal with the problem very, very quickly. And one of the things that was important—it's not like creating prisons and sending people inside—but really addressing the issue of corruption in the government.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you for that. I want to get to Professor Fitzpatrick. Given your experience on actually investigating and prosecuting terrorists, how amenable do you think the Mexican government would be to extraditing some of these leaders from the plazas and from the cartels and their various networks back to the United States to actually face our justice system? Or do you think they would be more willing to just . . . we supply them support to prosecute them there in Mexico?

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** Well, I think it changes over time, right? I think we're heading into a period where the relationship is actually improving with Mexico. But, you know, acknowledging that it can change quickly.

The Mexican government has extradited numerous drug traffickers—I mean Chapo Guzman. Very, very complicated case, right? There was some corruption involved with his case, certainly. He was incarcerated. He escaped, however, the military recaptured him, and they quickly extradited him to the United States for prosecution. So, yeah, I think you will see cooperation from Mexico and Central and South American countries to further this.

The whole question of do we want . . . We have to be judicious in who we are going to prosecute, and we also need to make sure that we have a strong case, right? So those are factors as well. We can't do

these things . . . there's sort of the public perception, and then there's actually the everyday work of developing a case and satisfying yourself that you have the quality and the quantity of evidence to prove the case beyond a reasonable doubt. And that's more difficult than I think the general public understands.

But the last point—on the whole issue of relationships with our southern neighbors—again, I think part of the dynamic here is to send a message to the Mexican government, the Colombian government, the Honduran government, the Venezuelan government that we're really serious about this. And it sort of serves as a wake-up call to these governments as well.

**MR. STIMSON:** I was in Bogotá, Colombia, a few weeks ago, visiting the former CNO (Chief of Naval Operations), and it was interesting because back in the day when we were coming up in the ranks, the cartels in Columbia owned the country, essentially. I mean, it was . . .

**MAJ. ALI:** The Medellín . . .

**MR. STIMSON:** . . . the Medellín, and I'm sure Guadalupe probably has studied that as well . . .

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** Yes

**MR. STIMSON:** . . . and could speak more eloquently than I can about it. Today, it's a thriving metropolitan of twelve million people. There're no drug issues going on at the scale it was at, not even close.

And so, it's interesting, if you read AG Bondi's February 5th memo to DOJ, she essentially says under section one, "For leaders and managers of cartels and TCOs, the most serious, readily provable offenses under DOJ's general charging policy will typically include capital crimes," and she lists all of them. But then she says, and this is interesting, "On the other hand, under the total elimination policy," they want to get rid of all cartels. Nice thought. "It will often be prudent to pursue removal from the United States of a low-level investigative target without immigration status, rather than incurring

the time and resource costs associated with criminal prosecution.”

So, you see this calibration issue going on. And in the *pure* terrorism context, the ideologically-driven terrorism context that my colleague is talking about—Al Qaeda, some members of the Afghan Taliban, associated forces, and ISIS—they’re completely ideologically driven, and oftentimes surveillance of them—and only surveillance of them to find out various things like funding and disruption—is the best option. And prosecution is oftentimes the worst option for them.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. We’re almost to question and answer. I saw your hand go up, but I just want to get to this last one specifically for the two professors that are researching at Schar. Based off the history of these organizations, based off your own research, what do think the risk is for escalating or what type of reaction they would have to their leaders being captured, extradited, prosecuted, or potentially eliminated by, like we talked about, military or law enforcement? What do you think their reaction to all this [would be]? Do they go underground and preserve their money? Do they attack U.S. personnel, diplomatic facilities, or maybe U.S. civilians? What do you think?

**DR. CENGIZ:** I believe that maybe it may provoke some retaliations from the Mexican cartels. And of course, I have just mentioned some of the military options—some unintended consequences. So it will always be an option for Mexican cartels to retaliate. Of course, maybe targeting some Americans in Mexico, just to give a message to, maybe, the U.S. government. Of course, they can be the “good guys” in Mexico and that way they can seem like the victims so they can get more recruits and if they are provoked, they will retaliate. I think it’s a risk to deal with this cartel issue because they’re really very powerful. And the thing is, as far as I know, there are more than 2,000 cartel members and Jalisco is the leading one with more than 4,000 members. Also, they are a global network. I don’t think this designation, or our counterterrorism approaches will bring us good results in the short term. Of course, there will be unintended consequences like provoking retaliations. These are some issues on the table which we can see in the future.

**MAJ. ALI:** Okay, now Professor Cabrera, if they retaliate, what do you think their calculus is based off of your studies of “if we target a U.S. citizen, we may open ourselves up for some U.S. military action against us.” What are your thoughts on that?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** Yeah, I think that the capacity of this group is not as some people think it is. The capacity of these so-called cartels or as I call them, transnational crime networks—because they don’t necessarily connect with drug trafficking—have diversified very quickly and very evidently. You know, and they survived, as I mentioned in the beginning, because of the protection from different levels of the Mexican government. The capacity that they have depends on these protection brackets, these protection schemes.

If we address this issue, if Mexico addresses this issue and the United States addresses the issue of demand for drugs and the capability that the networks that distribute drugs in the United States, if we do these things at the same time, and then there’s a serious effort to follow the money, to deal with those that support these networks or parts of this network, we’re going to deal with this. You know . . . They have arms. They have military capacity. Of course they do. They are armed civilians. But the capacity can definitely be dismantled if the protection is also lessened and there is motivation by the two governments to deal with these on both sides of the border. I don’t think that the retaliation will be massive if the United States and the Mexican government go after them.

Of course, sometimes we think or we analyze this as the state and these criminal groups are different but the government protection of these groups is also, forms a part of it so there is a possibility to pressure from the United States, to prosecute, to investigate, to deal with money laundering—which is another thing that we need to be talking about—you know, the capacity that they have has to do with the availability of arms too and if you close that possibility in a certain way, which I understand there are many complexities about the arms trade issues, but we will be in a good path.

And I believe that at this point, with everything that is happening with tariffs, with the threat of tariffs, with a new world

order, Mexico's government understands what they have to do. And in my view, the new administration of Mexico is collaborating and with good luck, these protection brackets will be dismantled.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. Yes, so we have about five more minutes before we have questions and answer time so I want to get to one last question. So we've talked about some judiciary, right? We talked about prosecution. We talked about the executive bringing in the intel community and the military, law enforcement. What about Congress? What have they done? What are they doing? What do we think they should be doing? What role do they play in this new paradigm opened up from designating these cartel organizations into foreign terrorists and Specially Designated [Global] Terrorists organizations.

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** Congress has delegated all their authority to the executive. That's the answer. Congress is missing in action. Congress has been missing in action for a long time. We're in an environment now where—and these things wax and wane, right—we're in an environment now where we have a strong executive, we have a strong judiciary, and we have a very weak Congress. In part, we have a weak Congress because we're a very divided country. And that's just a natural consequence of our division.

**MR. STIMSON:** Well, I think the pendulum is slightly swinging back with the court's decisions in *Loper Bright* and *Relentless*. And I think the next target on deference would be Auer deference, not to get in the weeds on admin. law. But you're right. For example, there have been over 40 authorizations for use of military force in our country's history, only five declarations of war and 11 conflicts. I've written and testified about this. Do you realize that the authorization for use of military force from 1991 to expel Saddam Hussein from Kuwait is still on the books? Do you realize that the 2002 Iraq AUMF is still on the books? And we haven't relied on that at all as a matter of law. And the only one they were relying on for these types of things for Al Qaeda, ISIS, and associated forces, the post-9/11 2001 AUMF. So to Dennis's point, Congress needs to get back in the business of legislating, but the overturning of *Chevron* deference is going to put pressure on them to actually write laws with teeth.

**DR. CENGIZ:** I would say we need more oversight and accountability. I'm thinking about, maybe, the current counterterrorism policies and the strategies at the border. Of course, there is a big definitional issue. So far, I don't think there is any terrorism definition covering this cartel violence. So maybe there might be some new laws in the future covering cartel violence as one part of terrorism.

**MAJ. ALI:** Professor Cabrera, do you want to chime in on Congress' role or we can roll straight to the questions and answers?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** I just wanted to say something about Mexico. Because this is a transnational issue that is going to be addressed by different governments, right. So here, what happened in Mexico, just for everybody to kind of also think about this, there's a concentration of power again into one party. The previous party state regime, the PRI [Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Institutional Revolutionary Party)] regime, is kind of like renewing itself through the judicial reform in Mexico. So there's a concentration, the lack of checks and balances might be useful for Mexico too, to advance this issue in a more relevant way. I know it sounds a little bit contradictory. But one of the main problems in Mexico to deal with this issue was exactly the division of powers that created some tensions. And today, with the judicial reform, that also has its many, many negative aspects. But it's going to make easier the address of the issue from the Mexican perspective.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. Thank you for that. So I'm going open it up for a question and answers. We have a couple of minutes.

[Points to audience member] Right here at the front.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** Hi, I just wanted to ask a little bit more about the immigration law aspect of this that was brought up a little bit. So presumably a lot of these cartel members are not U.S. citizens. They would be deportable simply by virtue of whatever crimes they commit in the United States. And I saw this happen a days ago with a woman who was a fentanyl trafficker. So what's the advantage for our national security interests in pursuing terrorism related charges as

opposed to just deporting them?

**MR. STIMSON:** So I think you're referencing AG Bondi's memo to the department, and I think to reiterate what she said, they're focusing on the leaders. Not Billy Bob or Suzy Q, who's coming across the border who was here illegally and maybe is a low-level dealer. So they're going to go after, and have been going after, targeting leadership. And she clearly says in her memo that, you know, deporting somebody who has a final order of removal, which is a process that takes a long time—way too long—is the right approach.

What's interesting is, there's an interesting parallel. We had 103,000 detainees since the war on terror started: 75,000 in Iraq, 25,000 in Afghanistan, and 779 in GTMO [Guantanamo Bay detention camp]. Today we have none in Iraq, none in Afghanistan, and about 15 or 16 down at GTMO. This is the only war we've ever fought where we let the opposing enemy forces go during the war. And so ask yourself this, and I'm not suggesting an answer to it: Does it make sense to send back low level members of the DTO that you can deport because they're here illegally and just go after the high level guys, because aren't you just reinforcing the DTO? I don't know the answer to that.

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** There's a lot in that question. And I don't want to get too far into the weeds of sort of actually prosecuting and trying cases. But, in some respects, it's wishful thinking to say, we're just going to go after the leaders and we're going to deport all the low-level folks. Because in reality, you need the low-level folks to prosecute the leaders . . .

**MR. STIMSON:** To make a case . . .

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** . . . It's all tied together. The way you prosecute leaders of drug trafficking organizations is you flip the lower-level people, right. So I appreciate Attorney General Bondi's message, but in reality—and I've existed under a lot of different policy initiatives by many, many different attorney generals—and we pay respect to them, and then we do what we have to do to prosecute our cases.

**MAJ. ALI:** [Points to audience member] Go ahead.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** So, I have two questions. First question is open to everyone. I'm just wondering if you guys could give us a little bit more in terms of this executive order and its cascading effects, and how it'll affect our capacity. Because one thing was mentioned that we focus all our attention right now, especially in law enforcement/intelligence apparatus, on ideological groups. Do we have the capacity to turn a lot of that towards this? Do we need that? And are we going to see potentially a large expansion of those areas?

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** Let me take that one first. So from the DOJ perspective, right. And I think that it's a very good question: I meant to reference it earlier. I don't think you're going to see a drain on resources, actually. And I don't think, to address your question as well [pointing to previous audience member], I don't think you're going to see this vast expansion of prosecuting terrorism cases with drug traffickers. I really think the point of the initiative is what we discussed earlier. It's money and it's politics and policy. And politics in the good sense is getting people's attention. I think that's the emphasis.

With respect to actual boots on the ground prosecution, the fact is there are plenty of statutes to prosecute these people already, and the terrorism statutes will just be tag-on charges, right. It'll end up being negotiated away. We have kingpin statutes. We have continuing criminal enterprise. We have racketeering. We have violence in aid of racketeering. We have a whole host of criminal statutes already on the books. So we actually don't need, from a criminal prosecution standpoint, the material support statutes. We don't need them. But that's not to say that it doesn't have beneficial effects. Again, stemming the flow of money and policy, and getting other countries' attention.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** So just real quickly, specifically for Professor Correa-Cabrera, you mentioned that you don't love the conception of how we have it right now: just drug cartels, that all these groups are merely drug cartels, and that you'd rather perceive them as networks that have diversified their criminal enterprises. Can you speak a little bit more as to why that's important, and are you saying that we need more, like different types of regulations or statutes to



address that, or what's the end effect of that?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** Yeah, this is a very, very good question and I'm writing a book on that as we speak. You know, if you conceptualize, if you denominate a group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, you kind of assume that there is a concentration of functions, there's the leadership, there's specific leadership you should go after. These groups, the way that I see that—I have done a lot of work on the ground in Mexico. I'm Mexican, I have a [dual] citizenship. And if you can see this this way, if you don't understand, for example, that the Jalisco New Generation Cartel is not necessarily a group with a specific leadership. And Nemesio Seguera Cervantes, alias El Mencho, is really, we don't know where he is, but if we're really talking about a criminal franchise, we're not going to prosecute these things—these people—correctly. And these activities are not going to be stopped because you assume that everything that has the brand of the *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación*, I mean, they acquire a brand and they commit extortion or kidnap people, extract rent from Mexicans. They're not necessarily related to drug trafficking activities. There's a whole misunderstanding of these groups. If we, and if the prosecutors in the United States, the investigators, and the general public, don't understand this, we're never going to deal with the problem because we're talking about multiple illicit businesses.

And some of these businesses are just affecting Mexicans. What I'm going for here is that focusing on narcotics, focusing on drugs, is not going to help us here because these groups are not just dedicated to drugs and they include different groups. They include those who transport the drugs, some of them who produce the drugs, some of them that are just, you know, protecting these groups, like the gangs, that form part of these networks. Some people that are in the illicit markets, like, you know, working for transportation companies and also providing some services to the cartels, the “drug cartels.”

I don't like—it's not that I don't love the way that it is—I think it's wrong. First of all, they are not cartels. They are not oligopolies because, supposedly, they fight among each other, right? They don't sit down at a table and decide they are going to produce a certain amount of drugs, fentanyl or whatever. They supposedly fight among

themselves for the control of the plaza . . .

**MAJ. ALI:** That's an interesting point . . .

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** . . . So I think there's a fundamental mistake here, conceptualizing the groups as organizations, when they are networks.

**MAJ. ALI:** Professor Cabrera, this is the moderator. That's an interesting point because a lot of people don't know that because of the franchise makeup, there is actually a lot of infighting . . .

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** Sure

**MAJ. ALI:** . . . between them. It's not this monolithic group of one leader at the top. We're running short on time so I want to give Professor Cengiz a second.

**DR. CENGIZ:** It's fine. So maybe if we have the first question, the capacity question. Again, if I go back to our database, since 2018, we have recorded more than 58,000 terrorism cases. But in the U.S., it is not more than 100. I think our data is showing that we are not doing too much terrorism investigations in the U.S. So it's still important point. I just want to add it.

**MR. STIMSON:** I'll just make a couple quick comments. One is, I'm reminded of what some of the top Al Qaeda people used to tell our interrogators when they were being lawfully interrogated. And they would say, had a bunch of similar exact favorite quotes. One of their favorite quotes was, "you have watches, we have calendars." In other words, they're going to take a long view. And so, to the professors' comment about, okay they're not ideologically driven but they're driven by the greed of power and money, that greed is not going to go away.

Secondly, to Professor Correa-Cabrera's comment, I thought it was very perceptive. No doubt correct. That these are sort of loose associations. We have a tremendous capability in that area because that's what Al Qaeda was, especially in Afghanistan. And so, they didn't walk around with their Al Qaeda card: "Hey, I'm Al Qaeda Bob,

I'm Al Qaeda Fred." They weren't readily identifiable. But if you consider the fact that 60-70% of the President's daily brief, every morning, comes from 702 collection [referring to a provision within FISA]. When you turn that spigot, when you turn that apparatus, on these cartels—I don't know what percentage today the President's PDB [President's Daily Briefing] has from this, but it has to be more than zero, right? So you're going to see who's talking to who. You're going to see who's calling who. You're going to see who's emailing who. You're going to read those things. And that's what the intelligence apparatus does. So we're going to have more information now than we had before, and information is power, and that helps.

**MAJ. ALI:** We're going to take the gentleman here. We'll get you and then, I think I'm getting the [signals a cut-off]. Go ahead, sir.

**AUDIENCE MEMBER:** First and foremost, thank you so much for this conversation. I think critics of the war on terror, one of their biggest concerns is that it seems to never be, it's never ending. So I'm curious with that understanding, I think today we raised sort of what the problems are and no doubt there's pernicious death and harm that's occurring because of these transnational criminal networks. And especially because of their characteristics, as networks.

How do you see applying these tools that you talked about today in terms of the end result of solving these problems? Is it one of those things where, critics are right, that similar to the war on terror, where it's never ending? Or is it more that we target the biggest harm factors and sort of just put the institutions in place to minimize these networks? Especially, considering once you get rid of one, if there's infighting, you may have a power vacuum and things of that nature.

**MAJ. ALI:** What does it look like in the end; what does victory look like?

**MR. FITZPATRICK:** You know, listen, I think that's an existential question, right? So I don't know if there's a perfect answer. What I do know, is that there's an obligation on the government to protect its citizens, right? And so the, you know, the war will end when we stop facing harm and threats to our national security. You tell me

when that is. I mean, I don't know so, what we need is effective, thoughtful, I would argue appropriately aggressive measures to protect the American people.

And there's a read and react quality to the policy making as well. You have to stay abreast of developing threats when other threats are diminishing. To your point, that there are factions and there are shifts in the methodology of bad actors. So I think it's got to be a consistent thing.

**DR. CENGIZ:** What I can say is that I think so far, the world has failed effectively to counter terrorism. For example, in our database again, we are recording every year 8,000 terrorism incidents. And every year more than 3,000 people are losing their lives. And no one can stop [it] so far.

Of course, it's a complex issue, political grievances, economic grievances. There's everything on the table. I'm just looking at how we have responded to this ideological growth. I don't think that we will see some effective results in the fight against the cartels, even after their designations.

**MAJ. ALI:** Professor Cabrera, what does victory look like? What does it look like in the end, or is it, can it be achieved?

**DR. CORREA-CABRERA:** Yeah, this is great question. I believe this is a direction, this is an action in the right direction to deal with those reporters, to follow the money. Of course, going after, I mean, the question here is should we continue with the kingpin strategy, which is a different thing than this denomination. This denomination does not have extraterritorial capacities, and it deals with an aspect that needs to be dealt with, and focused on these groups as foreign terrorist groups. It has its good things.

I was always very concerned about this happening, but it happened, and I'm trying to look at the good things, and it's good. But your question is, should we continue with the kingpin strategy? Should we continue going after leaders that really do not exist in that sense? Because cartels do not exist in the sense that we are thinking of them.

And if we go after El Mencho, or after the El Mayo Zambada, or after the kids of El Mayo Zambada and the family, and we continue with this strategy, we're never going to address this problem. You know, we have to follow the money. And you have to deal with fighting corruption and impunity and dismantling the networks, you know, in collaboration. So I'm just not very sure that to continue going after leaders is going to solve the problem. That has not solved the problem since the beginning of the war on drugs in last century.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. With the last minute left [points to Mr. Stimson].

**MR. STIMSON:** To me, the answer falls in three buckets. And I don't pretend to have the answers.

One, it's a philosophical question, and I'll leave that to the philosophers. It's a political question because political powers are evanescent, and it goes away after period of time. So we'll have to decide how long this administration, or the following administration, wants to continue this drumbeat. And that's an economics question. And I'm reminded of the scene in *My Cousin Vinny* when they're cooking the grits. He goes, "Does the law of physics cease to exist on your stove?" Remember that scene? Yeah. Well, this is supply and demand, right? And Guadalupe nailed it early. Until the demand signal lessens, the suppliers are going to find a way, somehow, whether they put the drugs in a cow, which apparently they're doing now, or they put it in boats, or they fly it in, or they put it in dead groupers, or whatever they do, they're going to get it. And so, I think this will stem the tide somewhat. It will have all sorts of collateral consequences, some positive, some negative, but I don't think the question is capable of being answered.

**MAJ. ALI:** Thank you. I know I had one more question, but we are out of time. We can save some time for afterwards. If you don't have a law school topic for any paper you're writing, you've learned lots of stuff. Especially my students in my seminar, take notes. Everyone, join me in giving them a round of applause.

