

Should We Really Send Troops to Mexico?

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The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this week GOP candidates suggesting sending troops to Mexico to battle drug cartels. Not so fast. We need to think long and hard about that. First, we don't have a very good record of success sending forces to Mexico. In the early 1900s Woodrow Wilson was harangued into sending Gen Pershing to Mexico to capture Pancho Villa only to call him back months later after Pershing rarely even got close to Pancho. Second, marching into a country where the enemy has spent years embedding itself in its home turf, much of it not particularly habitable, sounds a bit like Southeast Asia. Finally, on occasion our enemies have viewed Mexico as an attack gateway. Before we entered World War One, Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico and Japan to attack the United States to keep us busy and out of the war with Mexico's reward being reclaiming Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. In fact, Japan made overtures to Pancho Villa about an alliance and Germany seems to have financed some of his activity.

We do need to secure the border as part of a serious policy to reduce illegal immigration and human/drug trafficking. But, before we commit to moving into another country we might consider not only the unintended consequences but forces at play that might welcome such a move.