

## Carpe crisis

by *Oliver\_North*

On Sunday, Nov. 9, 2008, Rahm Emanuel, now the White House chief of staff, famously described the future Obama administration's philosophy for governing: "You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is it's an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before." "O-Team" sycophants in the so-called mainstream media chuckled. Conservatives were alarmed. We now know we had reason to be.

At the time Emanuel made his comment "five days after the election" we thought he was referring to the ongoing economic crisis to justify life-altering legislation on new government spending, social entitlements, higher taxes and massive debt. A quick glance at the Obama budget proves we were right. However, it turns out we grossly underestimated the willingness of the O-Team to apply its carpe crisis maxim to every situation "foreign or domestic."

Anyone who has followed the current travail of the Mexican government in dealing with hyper-violent drug cartels south of the Rio Grande agrees that it is a serious calamity. In 2008, more than 5,800 people were killed in Mexican drug-related violence, double the number in 2007. At least 1,100 have died thus far in 2009.

The \$40 billion that drug lords reap annually from U.S., Canadian and European "customers" has fueled massive corruption in Mexico, allowing cartels virtually unlimited power. Ruthless killings of civil, police and military officials who resist have become endemic. When the chief of police in Ciudad Juarez refused a cartel's order to resign, he was told that they would kill one of his police officers every 48 hours. Five of his officers were murdered in 10 days. The chief quit and went into hiding.

Not all of the problem is south of the border. Well-funded Mexican-affiliated drug gangs operate in at least 230 U.S. cities and towns "keeping their American "clients" supplied" and are fighting for "turf." Last year in Phoenix, there were more than 370 drug-related kidnappings. Cartel-related crimes have been reported from Albuquerque to Anchorage and Seattle to Savannah.

Last month, Mexico's courageous and beleaguered president, Felipe Calderon, began deploying military units to fight well-armed narco-terrorists in northern Mexico. On the U.S. side of the border, DEA, ATF, FBI, Customs and Border Protection, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, along with state and local law enforcement officers, commenced a coordinated, multi-state crackdown on drug gangs. According to the Department of Justice, the operation netted 755 drug dealers, money launderers and smugglers.

In addition to committing additional law enforcement assets to the border, the U.S. also is providing Mexican authorities with intelligence, high-tech detection gear, sophisticated sensors and night-vision equipment for combating cartel "foot soldiers" armed with automatic weapons, hand grenades, heavy machine guns and

Soviet-era rocket-propelled grenade launchers. This help certainly is warranted. It is in our national interest that the Calderon campaign against the cartels succeed.

Unfortunately, the O-Team and its "progressive" allies in Congress aren't satisfied with the progress that is being made thus far. They apparently intend to use the cartel crisis, as Emanuel has advocated, "to do things that" they thought they "could not do before."

On Feb. 25, Attorney General Eric Holder urged the U.S. "to reinstitute the ban on the sale of assault weapons." He said, "I think that will have a positive impact in Mexico, at a minimum." The following day, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., said, "I am prepared to wage the assault weapons battle again and intend to do so." And March 17, during a Senate Judiciary Crime and Drugs Subcommittee hearing, Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., claimed that an "iron river of guns from the United States arms Mexican drug cartels to the teeth."

Reality check: Resurrecting the so-called "assault weapons ban" that expired in 2004 isn't going to do anything to help the Mexican government deal with drug cartels or any other criminal organizations. Nor was the O-Team's decision to stop the Defense Logistics Agency from allowing surplus military brass cartridges to be reloaded going to stop a single bullet from reaching criminals. Thankfully, that inane rule has been reversed, saving law-abiding gun owners and our heavily indebted government money.

The Mexican drug cartels aren't being armed by law-abiding Americans. Rather than trying to re-enact meaningless legislation based on the appearance of a firearm or the shape of a magazine, the O-Team and its congressional allies need to focus on securing our borders and providing the resources to enforce the laws we already have on the books. Infringing on the Second Amendment rights of U.S. citizens won't make Mexicans or any of us any safer or more secure, no matter how severe the crisis.

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