

Meanwhile, on the southern border ...

President Trump recently announced that his son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, will be taking care of the project to expand the nation's border wall blocking illegal immigration from the South.

Kushner holds biweekly meetings and "questions an array of government officials about progress on the wall, including updates on contractor data, precisely where it will be built and how funding is being spent," The Washington Post reports.

Trump is trying to speed things up so that he can build 400 miles of border wall by Election Day 2020. At the same time, the administration is grappling with the problem of migrant caravans from Central America and Latin America that have attempted to cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

In recent months, he has enlisted the aid of Mexico's armed forces in keeping more of these would-be immigrants on the Mexican side of the border.

His administration has also reportedly begun deporting asylum-seekers from Honduras and El Salvador — not by returning them to their native lands, but by shipping them off to Guatemala, which hardly seems like a haven from oppression. It is a poor nation with one of the world's highest rates for homicide and malnutrition.

From the perspective of the United States, the southern border has become an exploding crisis. According to the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. apprehensions of those crossing the border without first going through the legal process have soared to 977,509, way above the 521,090 figure for 2018.

Mexicans themselves are becoming frustrated with Central American migrants. A survey in July by the Washington Post and Mexico's Reforma found that "more than 6 in 10 Mexicans say migrants are a burden on their country," and 55% support their deportation from Mexico.

But the problem could soon become much worse for everyone.

The Los Angeles Times reported on Nov. 21 that horrific violence from cartels in

Mexico has metastasized from illegal drugs and weapons to the “multibillion-dollar avocado industry.”

According to the Times, “more than a dozen criminal groups are battling for control of the avocado trade in and around the city of Uruapan,” which is located in the Michoacan state. These organizations are “preying on wealthy orchard owners, the laborers who pick the fruit and the drivers who truck it north to the United States.”

That has immigration experts worrying about what happens next.

Could this rapidly growing violence send massive numbers of people north to the United States, as brutality in Central America has done? Could hundreds of thousands of Mexican families fleeing violence seek asylum in this country?

Already, the United States has been sorely pressed — both during the Trump and Obama administrations — to deal with the refugee problem. It has too few judges ruling on cases, and inadequate holding facilities to handle the existing problem. That is why the United States has often looked the other way as those crossing the border melted into America’s cities and towns, without vetting or provision.

What happens if a new onslaught makes those numbers seem minor by comparison?

All this is a reminder that, while the Washington insiders obsess over partisan politics, there are serious national issues that cry out for attention.

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