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## Cartels and Terrorists—Adaptation Cause for Alarm

Many terrorist organizations have utilized a variety of tactics to advance their agenda. Transnational Criminal Organizations (TCO) are involved in a variety of activities to include human, drug, and weapons trafficking; intellectual property theft; cybercrime; and money laundering.

TCOs, specifically cartels and criminal gangs, are using advanced capabilities and skills as they expand their reach. Currently, TCOs and organized crime groups are using a new tactic. Mexico's drug cartels (specifically *Cártel de Jalisco Nueva Generación* (CJNG)) are using small quadcopter-type drones loaded with small explosive devices to attack its enemies. This tactic could easily be used in the United States.

A panoply of two dozen abandoned explosive-laden quadcopters was found on July 25, 2020 in the southwestern Michoacán state of Mexico. They were filled with C4 and ball bearings.

Drones currently have very little accountability (via tracking) through the Federal Aviation Agency (FAA), or licensing is minimal. Property has very specific boundaries and easements (to include subterranean mineral rights). This does not extend to altitude, which makes this much easier to execute on privately held property, or worst case, public property, such as an interstate highway. The drones are relatively easy to operate and can be undetectable until it is too late.

This capability will rapidly transfer to gangs, domestic terrorists, and other lawless organizations and currently, there are very few effective countermeasures against drones. A criminal group's ability to execute this tactic shows that this is a viable and potential imminent threat. A viable counter drone threat (or ability to detect) is needed to protect specific areas is needed.

## Sources

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/36013/mexican-drug-cartel-now-assassinating-its-enemies-with-improvised-explosive-toting-drones>