



Trial of “El Chapo” coming to a close

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Gang lord Joaquin Guzman better known as “El Chapo”.

His arrest and trial mark one of the most recent high profile cases in the United States’ war on drugs.

But after years of fighting cartels in Latin America, has the United States made any real progress.

CGTN’s Giles Gibson reports.

A symbol of Mexico’s powerful drug cartels, extradited to face trial in an American courtroom, but El Chapo is just the latest in a long line of “kingpins” targeted by United States authorities in their decades-long “War on Drugs.”

“By portraying the drug problem in that way, the drug war makes it about exterior problems, that it’s not about inequality at home, it’s not about policing or inequality or racial conflict,” said Matthew Pembleton from American University’s History Department. “It’s about foreign villains and it puts a face on things so that you can pin it on this one problem, on this one person, and put them in jail and that solves the problem.”

Even before El Chapo’s trial began in November, U.S. authorities were already focusing on their next target.

Last year, the Trump administration announced a new strategy for Mexico, including cracking down on the Jalisco New Generation cartel. Authorities say it’s one of the “fastest-growing” cartels in the region

Across the border in Mexico, the human cost of the drug war keeps growing, with more than 200,000 people murdered since 2006, according to government figures.

The spiraling violence led Mexico’s new president, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, to stop targeting individual drug lords.

Instead, he says his new government will focus on public safety and cutting sky-high murder rates.

But experts say the root of the issue lies north of the border.

“The problem is that they’re a transit country towards the United States for cocaine, particularly, and they also are big producers of heroin and methamphetamines,” said Juan Carlos Hidalgo

from the CATO Institute. “So any solution has to deal with the United States being the largest consumption market for the drugs that are either produced in or go through Mexico.”

So even with the man they call “Shorty” in American custody, the drug trade still towers over the U.S., Mexico and much of Central America.