

You Can 'Put It On Your Nachos and Eat It,' Former Border Agent Defends Use of Gas Against Caravan Migrants

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A former border agent has defended the use of tear gas against Central American migrants at the Mexican border with the United States, arguing that the chemical compound is edible.

Speaking on *Fox & Friends* on Monday, Ronald Colburn [downplayed](#) the use of crowd-dispersing spray, saying it was simply “pepper spray” and not tear gas.

“To clarify, the type of deterrent being used is OC pepper spray. Literally, water, pepper with a small amount of alcohol for evaporation purposes,” Colburn told the program’s host Steve Doocy. He then argued that the tear-inducing agent could be consumed with food.

“You could actually put it on your nachos and eat it. It’s a good way of deterring people without long-term harm,” he said.



A group of Central American migrants—mostly from Honduras—run along the dry riverbed of the Tijuana River in an attempt to get to El Chaparral port of entry, in Tijuana, Baja California State, Mexico, near the U.S.-Mexico border on November 25. GUILLERMO ARIAS/AFP/Getty Images

The terms tear gas and pepper spray are often used interchangeably, with pepper spray routinely classified as a type of tear gas. According to Aftermath, a crime scene and biohazard cleanup company, both compounds have a different chemical makeup. However, both cause extreme burning of the eyes and nose

and a rise in blood pressure, as well as significantly impairing vision along with other adverse effects. Furthermore, the impact of pepper spray actually lasts significantly longer than tear gas—up to an hour as opposed to just 30 minutes.

On Sunday, U.S. border agents fired gas into Mexico to deter hundreds of Central American asylum seekers from drawing closer to the U.S. border. The crowd included many young children.

"We ran, but the smoke [from the gas] always reached us and my daughter was choking," said Lurbin Sarmiento, 26, from Honduras, who was near the border with her four-year-old daughter, according to the Associated Press (AP).

"We ran, but when you run the gas asphyxiates you more," Ana Zuniga, 23, told the AP while holding her three-year-old daughter.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen has promised to maintain a "robust" presence along the border to block the migrants from entering the U.S. "DHS will not tolerate this type of lawlessness and will not hesitate to shut down ports of entry for security and public safety reasons," she said in a statement.

Mexican authorities have also announced that some 500 migrants will be deported for allegedly trying to "violently" and "illegally" cross the U.S. border on Sunday. In total, more than 5,000 immigrants have been staying inside and nearby a sport complex in Tijuana, hoping to be allowed to enter the U.S.

Although President Donald Trump routinely refers to the migrants as criminals, analysts and aid workers believe the vast majority are simply fleeing severe economic problems and soaring crime rates in their Central American nations.

"They are NOT coming into the U.S.A.," Trump [tweeted](#) on Monday morning. "We will close the Border permanently if need be," he added. "Congress, fund the WALL!"