

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 4, 2018

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
THE SECRETARY OF HOMELAND SECURITY

SUBJECT:               Securing the Southern Border of the United States

1. The security of the United States is imperiled by a drastic surge of illegal activity on the southern border. Large quantities of fentanyl, other opioids, and other dangerous and illicit drugs are flowing across our southern border and into our country at unprecedented levels, destroying the lives of our families and loved ones. Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) and other deadly transnational gangs are systematically exploiting our unsecured southern border to enter our country and develop operational capacity in American communities throughout the country. The anticipated rapid rise in illegal crossings as we head into the spring and summer months threatens to overwhelm our Nation's law enforcement capacities.

2. The combination of illegal drugs, dangerous gang activity, and extensive illegal immigration not only threatens our safety but also undermines the rule of law. Our American way of life hinges on our ability as a Nation to adequately and effectively enforce our laws and protect our borders. A key and undeniable attribute of a sovereign nation is the ability to control who and what enters its territory.

3. Our professional and dedicated U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents and officers, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers, and other Federal, State, and local law enforcement personnel work tirelessly to defend our homeland against these threats. They risk their lives daily to protect the people of this country. There is a record of dedication and sacrifice, meriting the unwavering support of the entire United States Government.

4. The situation at the border has now reached a point of crisis. The lawlessness that continues at our southern border is fundamentally incompatible with the safety, security, and sovereignty of the American people. My Administration has no choice but to act.

5. The Department of Defense currently assists other nations in many respects, including assisting with border security, but the highest sovereign duty of the President is to defend this Nation, which includes the defense of our borders.

6. The President may assign a mission to the Secretary of Defense to support the operations of the Department of Homeland Security in securing our southern border, including by requesting use of the National Guard, and to take other necessary steps to stop the flow of deadly drugs and other contraband, gang members and other criminals, and illegal aliens into the country. The Secretary of Defense may use all available authorities as appropriate, including use of National Guard forces, to fulfill this mission. During the administrations of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the National Guard provided support for efforts to secure our southern border. The crisis at our southern border once again calls for the National Guard to help secure our border and protect our homeland.

Therefore, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 502 of title 32, United States Code, and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby direct as follows:

Section 1. The Secretary of Defense shall support the Department of Homeland Security in securing the southern border and taking other necessary actions to stop the flow of deadly drugs and other contraband, gang members and other criminals, and illegal aliens into this country. The Secretary of Defense shall request use of National Guard personnel to assist in fulfilling this mission, pursuant to section 502 of title 32, United States Code, and may use such other authorities as appropriate and consistent with applicable law.

Sec. 2. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall work with the Secretary of Defense to provide any training or instruction necessary for any military personnel, including National Guard units, to effectively support Department of Homeland Security personnel in securing the border.

Sec. 3. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, are directed to determine what other resources and actions are necessary to protect our southern border, including Federal law enforcement and United States military resources. Within 30 days of the date of this memorandum, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Attorney General, shall submit to the President a report detailing their findings and an action plan, including specific recommendations as to any other executive authorities that should be invoked to defend the border and security of the United States.

Sec. 4. Any provision of any previous proclamation, memorandum, or Executive Order that is inconsistent with the actions taken in this memorandum is superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

Sec. 5. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

DONALD J. TRUMP

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