

Dept Of Defense Orders Crisis Response Force To Southern Border



More troops are heading for the southern border. The Department of Defense is sending members of a Crisis Response Force to two ports of entry in preparation for a deadline fast approaching. The Trump administration is waiting for the Supreme Court to rule on the Migrant Protection Protocols policy. The deadline is Wednesday.

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On February 28 a panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals temporarily blocked the Remain in Mexico policy. Groups of asylum-seeking migrants gathered at the southern border causing concern by the Border Patrol that they would try to storm the border. It was a legitimate concern because of past chaos at the border, including caravans from Central America. The Paso del Norte International Bridge in downtown El Paso was closed, as well as other crossings.

CBP spokesman Ralph DeSio addressed the growing tension and the fact that ports of entry are not equipped to handle large groups arriving all at the same time. After the ruling by the 9th Circuit Court, about 30 migrants enrolled in the Remain in Mexico program and waited with their attorneys, requesting to be admitted into the U.S. Fortunately the migrants remained orderly.

“The balance between facilitating the flow of legitimate trade and travel while upholding our national border security mission and the safety of the public and our personnel is delicate,” DeSio said in a statement. “Ports of entry are not

designed or equipped to handle extremely large groups of travelers arriving all at the same time, and temporary closure of a [port of entry] is contemplated as an extreme option, as necessary for public safety and border security.”

The migrants were turned away and the Ninth Circuit Court panel agreed to stay its own order. The Remain in Mexico policy stays in place until the Wednesday deadline. If the Supreme Court rules against taking up the Trump administration’s appeal, the Ninth Circuit Court has ruled that the Remain in Mexico policy will be blocked in the border states within its jurisdiction - California and Arizona. That court does not have jurisdiction over New Mexico or Texas.

The Department of Defense is deploying 160 troops to two cities determined to be key spots should the Remain in Mexico policy end. Eighty active-duty troops will go to San Diego’s San Ysidro border crossing and eighty active-duty troops will go to the Paso del Norte bridge in El Paso. The troops are equipped to provide military police support, as well as engineer, and aviation support. They are part of the DOD’s Crisis Response Force.

The 160 troops are part of the Defense Department’s Crisis Response Force, which the Pentagon has made available to CBP since Trump initially deployed soldiers to the border in November 2018 in anticipation of the arrival of a large caravan.

A CBP spokesman said the deployment to San Diego and El Paso would begin Saturday and last for two weeks. The agency has the option, based on current needs, to extend the deployment and even “lift and shift” to other border crossings, he said.

There is the consideration of the government’s efforts to contain the coronavirus at the border, too. COVID-19 screenings have been implemented at the border by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Acting Commissioner Mark Morgan told reporters on Thursday morning they are working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to monitor and evaluate health risks along the entire border to determine the best approach to contain the virus, known as COVID-19.

“If the health risk shifts and the CDC and the medical experts decide that there is an increased risk to the Southwest border, and CBP will be part of those discussions on what we need to do then to operationalize and reduce that risk,” he said.

Morgan says that more than 60,000 people have been referred to the CDC for additional screenings. Most screenings take place at airports, though, but CBP is following the same protocols on the northern and southern borders.

The perpetually outraged open-borders crowd is not happy with the additional deployment of troops to the border. Some are accusing the Trump administration of using concern over the spread of COVID-19 as a justification for the order.

U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, a freshman Democrat from El Paso, said in a written statement that the Trump administration is using COVID-19 as “an excuse to sow fear about asylum seekers in an effort to continue to violate the law.”

“While it is no surprise, it is nonetheless deeply disappointing that the Trump administration would use the coronavirus as an excuse to sow fear about asylum seekers in an effort to continue to violate the law,” Escobar said. “It is because we are all concerned about the coronavirus that we need to focus our resources on our real challenges, like the limited number of tests available, something that troops on the border won’t address.”

Escobar’s complaint doesn’t hold water. The Trump administration, especially President Trump himself, has been very careful to not “sow fear” to anyone over COVID-19 while trying to get the message out about its potential spread, which is likely. Trump shut down flights from China early and assembled a team of public health professionals to tackle the problem. The storming of the border by migrants hoping to receive asylum and be released into the United States, as has happened in the past, cannot be allowed. Not only is it a national security risk, but it is also a public health risk. The open-borders crowd will never be happy until the southern border, in particular, no longer exists. They are not concerned with protecting the sovereignty of the United States. Fortunately, President Trump is and continues to do a good job on that front.

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