

Democrats join with Republicans to pass Laken Riley Act

Trump declares “invasion” and orders deployment of 1,500 active-duty troops to US-Mexico border

Jacob Crosse
22 January 2025

On Wednesday, following a series of anti-immigrant executive orders issued by President Donald Trump, acting Secretary of Defense Robert Salesses announced the Pentagon is deploying more active-duty troops to the US-Mexico border in furtherance of Trump’s plans to carry out the “largest deportation operation” in US history.

Since being sworn in on Monday, Trump has used the power of the presidency to declare a “national emergency” and order the Department of Defense, Department of State, Department of Justice and Department of Homeland Security to prioritize defending the “sovereignty” of the US from an alleged “invasion” of immigrants.

On Wednesday, Trump signed an executive order suspending “the physical entry of aliens engaged in an invasion of the United States through the southern border.”

As a matter of fact, there is no armed invasion force attempting to attack the US or its citizens on the Southern or any other border. The vast majority of those seeking entry at the US-Mexico border are workers and their families fleeing from countries currently subjected to US economic sanctions, trade war measures or other imperialist machinations.

In a statement published Wednesday following Trump’s latest anti-immigrant executive order, Salesses wrote that under his direction the Department of Defense had established a “Task Force” to “expedite” the implementation of Trump’s executive orders, which includes deploying “US military forces to carry out directed missions called for by the

President.”

Anonymous Pentagon officials have told multiple outlets, including the *Washington Post* and CNN, that as many as 10,000 troops could be deployed in the near future to the Southwest border. “This is the initial effort that we can do right away, and we anticipate many additional missions,” an unnamed senior US military official told *Politico*. “This is just the start.”

Another senior military official told CNN, “We’ve been told to treat this like a national emergency because it’s been declared a national emergency. Don’t be surprised if you see Marines being dropped off by helicopters.”

Salesses’ order Wednesday calls for deploying 1,500 “ground personnel” to the US-Mexico border. He noted in his order that this was a “60 percent increase in active-duty forces” at the Southwest border since Monday. There are currently some 2,200 troops in El Paso, Texas, working alongside Texas Guardsmen as part of Governor Greg Abbott’s Operation Lone Star.

Politico reported that the 1,500 figure includes 500 Marines, who had previously been on standby to assist with the still raging Los Angeles fires. On Wednesday, the Hughes fires erupted in the Castaic area in northern Los Angeles County, igniting more than 9,000 acres. As of this writing, the fire is burning out of control. At 5:00 p.m. over 31,000 people were in a “mandatory” evacuation zone, while another 23,000 were under imminent evacuation warnings.

The active-duty troops being deployed are currently being assigned a support role and are prohibited from

acting in a law enforcement capacity. That could change, however, if Trump invokes the Insurrection Act of 1807 which empowers the president to deploy US military and federalized National Guard troops within the United States to suppress a “civil disorder” or “rebellion.” As part of his executive orders, Trump revealed that he would decide within the next 90 days whether or not to invoke the Insurrection Act.

In addition to operating drones and helicopters, the ground troops will be augmented by the Pentagon’s Transportation Command, which will use military aircraft to airlift more than 5,000 human beings currently detained by Customs and Border Protection (CPB) out of the United States. Flights will be ongoing from San Diego, California, and El Paso, Texas.

Finally, Salesses ordered the troops to assist in the construction of “temporary and permanent” physical barriers along the border. US troops have previously strung up hundreds of miles of barbed concertina wire as part of building the Southern border wall.

Salesses, a former Marine Corps officer, was appointed to head the Pentagon while Trump’s current nominee, fascist Pete Hegseth, is still undergoing discussion in the Senate. He concluded his memo, “This is just the beginning. ... President Trump directed action from the Department of Defense on securing our nation’s borders and made clear he expects immediate results. That is exactly what our military is doing under his leadership.”

Far from offering any resistance to Trump’s plans to deploy the military on US soil against immigrants and their families, Democrats are providing Trump the legal framework to detain and deport tens of thousands more people. On Wednesday, 46 Democrats joined all Republicans in the House to pass an amended version of the fascistic Laken Riley Act.

House Democrats who voted in favor of the bill include Ohio’s Emila Sykes, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus; former Army Colonel Yevgeni (Eugene) Vindman and pro-Israeli genocide New York Rep. Ritchie Torres. It will be the first piece of legislation Trump signs since being inaugurated on Monday.

The legislation requires federal immigration police to detain and possibly deport undocumented immigrants, who have simply been accused of petty crimes, such as shoplifting. The law would also allow state attorneys

general to bring civil lawsuits against specific federal officials if they feel they are not enforcing immigration law to their liking.

The bill includes no “reforms” or “pathways to citizenship.” The only amendments that were added to the bill were both from Republicans.

Texas Senator John Cornyn’s amendment expanded the list of offenses eligible for detainment and deportation to include assaulting a police officer, while an amendment filed by Iowa Senator Joni Ernst includes acts that cause the death or “bodily harm” to an individual. This would allow immigrants involved in car accidents, which may be no fault of their own, to be detained and deported.

The bill includes no funding mechanisms, but Democrats previously estimated it would cost \$83 billion over three years to facilitate the detention of another 110,000 people, as well as hire another 20,000 border agents.



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