

Department of Homeland Security weighed National Guard for immigration roundups

By GARANCE BURKE
Associated Press

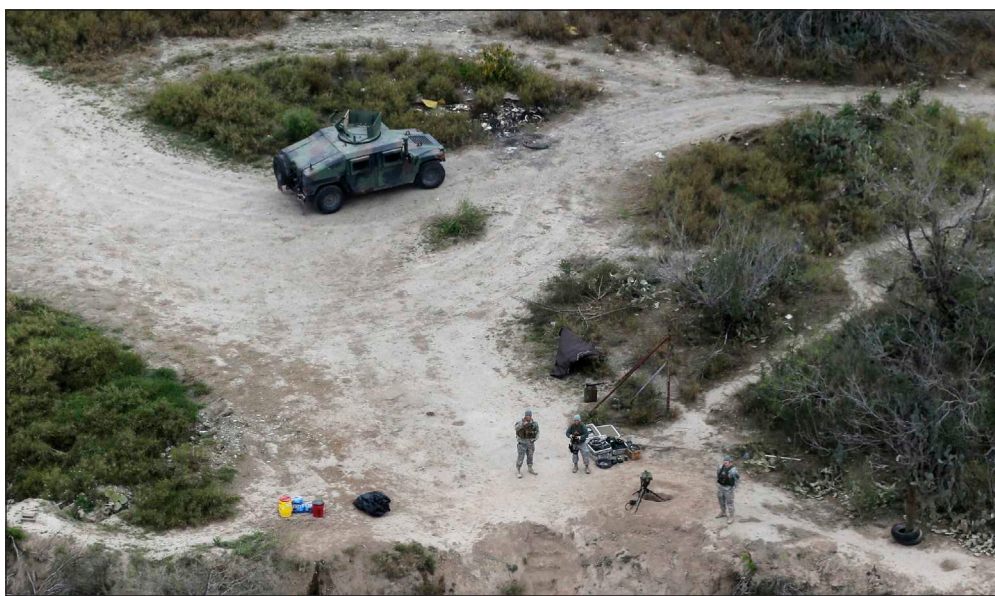
The White House distanced itself Friday from a Department of Homeland Security draft proposal to use the National Guard to round up unauthorized immigrants, but lawmakers said the document offers insight into the Trump administration's internal efforts to enact its promised crackdown on illegal immigration.

Administration officials said the proposal, which called for mobilizing up to 100,000 troops in 11 states, was rejected, and would not be part of plans to carry out President Donald Trump's aggressive immigration policy.

If implemented, the National Guard idea, contained in an 11-page memo obtained by The Associated Press, could have led to enforcement action against millions of immigrants living nowhere near the Mexican border. Four states that border on Mexico were included in the proposal — California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas — but it also encompassed seven states contiguous to those four — Oregon, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.

Despite the AP's public release of the document, White House spokesman Sean Spicer said there was "no effort at all to utilize the National Guard to round up unauthorized immigrants." A DHS official described the document as a very early draft that was not seriously considered and never brought to Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly for approval.

However, DHS staffers said Thursday that they had been told by colleagues in two DHS departments that the proposal was still being considered as recently as Feb. 10. DHS spokeswoman Gillian Christensen declined to say who wrote the memo, how long it had been under consideration or when it had been rejected.



In this, 2015, file photo, members of the National Guard patrol along the Rio Grande at the Texas-Mexico border in Rio Grande City, Texas.

The pushback from administration officials did little to quell outrage over the draft plan. Three Republican governors spoke out against the proposal and numerous Democratic lawmakers denounced it as an overly aggressive approach to immigration enforcement.

"Regardless of the White House's response, this document is an absolutely accurate description of the disturbing mindset that pervades the Trump administration when it comes to our nation's immigrants," said U.S. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-Nev.).

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson said he would have "concerns about the utilization of National Guard resources for immigration enforcement," believing such a program "would be too much of a strain on our National Guard personnel."

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert would have serious concerns about the constitutional implications and financial impact of activating the National Guard to round up unauthorized immigrants, the governor's office said in a statement.

Nevada Gov. Brian Sandoval questioned the legality of the plan described in the draft memo and said

it would be an inappropriate use of guard resources.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), said, "This administration's complete disregard for the impact its internal chaos and inability to manage its own message and policy is having on real people's lives is offensive."

The AP had sought comment from the White House beginning Thursday and DHS earlier Friday and had not received a response from either. After the AP released the story, Spicer said the memo was "not a White House document" and said there was "no effort to do what is potentially suggested."

Governors in the 11 states would have had a choice whether to have their guard troops participate, according to the memo, which bears the name of Kelly, a retired four-star Marine general.

At a maximum, approximately 100,000 Army National Guard and Air National Guard personnel would be available for state-side missions in the 11 states, according to statistics and information provided by the National Guard Bureau.

While National Guard personnel have been used to assist with immigration-related missions on the

U.S.-Mexico border before, they have never been used as broadly or as far north.

The memo was addressed to the then-acting heads of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. It would have served as guidance to implement the wide-ranging executive order on immigration and border security that President Donald Trump signed Jan. 25. Such memos are routinely issued to supplement executive orders.

Also dated Jan. 25, the draft memo says participating troops would be authorized "to perform the functions of an immigration officer in relation to the investigation, apprehension and detention of aliens in the United States." It describes how the troops would be activated under a revived state-federal partnership program, and states that personnel would be authorized to conduct searches and identify and arrest any unauthorized immigrants.

If implemented, the impact could have been significant. Nearly one-half of the 11.1 million people residing in the U.S. without authorization live in the 11 states, according to Pew Research Center estimates based on 2014 Census data.

Oregon lawmakers propose state control of public land

SALEM (AP) — More than half the land in Oregon is owned by the federal government, but Republican lawmakers there have raised the possibility of transferring it to state control.

A bill sponsored by Grants Pass Republican Rep. Carl Wilson and three other lawmakers would create a task force to analyze the costs and benefits of such a move, reported *The Statesman Journal*.

Wilson emphasized that he does not support selling Oregon's public land into private ownership and that his bill only calls for a study.

"I'm not sure if this is a good or a bad idea, or how it would actually work," said Wilson during a Thursday hearing on his bill. "But I have to believe Oregonians would do a better job of caring for our lands than a federal bureaucracy."

The bill exempts national parks, monuments, wilderness areas and tribal lands from being considered for transfer to the state.

During the hearing, every public speaker offering testimony opposed the idea of state control. Conservation and sportsman's groups said Oregon

couldn't afford to manage the land, while others disputed the need to fund such a task force when Oregon is facing a \$1.8 billion shortfall.

Some speakers pointed to the state's plan to sell the 83,000-acre Elliott State Forest as evidence that federal lands may end up being privatized if moved to state control.

"The ultimate outcome of this bill would not be state land management of our public lands," said Dan Morse, conservation director for the Oregon Natural Desert Association. "The more likely outcome would be the future sale of our public lands when the state can't reasonably afford to manage them."

Wilson and other rural Republicans say studying the possibility is necessary because it may be one way to improve rural economies. Cutbacks in logging due to overregulation have limited their countries' ability to fund services or protect against wildfires, the Republicans said.

"We used to have a vibrant economy, with good wages and good places to work," said bill co-sponsor Rep. Sal Esquivel of Medford. "So much of that has been shut off."

Baker City transfers \$150K to snowplowing

BAKER CITY (AP) — The Baker City Herald reports Adam Nilsson and Daniel McQuisten were appointed this week to fill the seats vacated by two Baker City councilors who resigned because they were moving.

The new councilors joined the holdovers for a meeting that saw the council make an

emergency \$150,000 transfer to help pay this winter's big bill for snow and ice removal.

Finance Director Jeanie Dexter said it's only the second time she's seen Baker City take such a step. The last time was when the city had to buy a UV filter after cryptosporidium contaminated the city's water supply in 2013.

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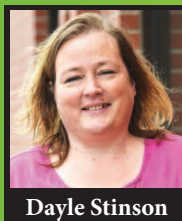
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