



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on June 26, 2019

Mexico Sending Mixed Messages About Detaining Migrants Trying to Enter U.S.

Mexico — largely in response to President Trump’s May 30 announcement that he would impose tariffs on Mexican imports if our southern neighbor did not adequately stop illegal migrants from traversing its territory and crossing the U.S.-Mexican border — is deploying nearly 15,000 troops to its northern border in an effort to stop these migrants from reaching the U.S. border.



We observed in our [June 5 report](#) that after Trump announced that after he would impose tariffs on Mexican imports if Mexico did not prevent Central American migrants from traveling through Mexico to the U.S.-Mexican border, Mexico’s Foreign Relations Secretariat posted a statement on June 3 claiming the country was effectively providing humanitarian visas to Central American migrants and strengthening immigration enforcement operations in southern Mexico.

A [follow-up report](#) in *The New American* on June 8 noted that Trump announced in a tweet the previous day that he was suspending his plan to impose steep tariffs on Mexico. The president tweeted that Mexico “has agreed to take strong measures” to halt the use of their country as a highway into the United States for illegal immigration.

Trump tweeted, “I am pleased to inform you that the United States of America has reached a signed agreement with Mexico. Tariffs scheduled to be implemented by the U.S. on [June 10] against Mexico, are hereby indefinitely suspended.”

Mexico’s Defense Minister Luis Cresencio Sandoval said during a June 24 press conference that the regular army and national guard troops would be deployed along the entire length of the border from Tijuana, Baja California (south of San Diego) to Matamoros, Tamaulipas (south of Brownsville, Texas).

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The press conference was apparently the first time that Mexican officials stated publicly that they were sending troops to the Mexican-U.S. border. AFP posted a photo on June 21 showing members of the Mexican National Guard stopping immigrants in Ciudad Juárez from crossing the Rio Bravo (the Mexican name for the Rio Grande) separating Baja from California.

Undocumented “immigration is not a crime, it’s an administrative violation,” Sandoval said. “We simply detain them and turn them over to [National Migration Institute] authorities.”

However, on June 25, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (shown) said that the Mexican National Guard will not be detaining migrants, seemingly contradicting what Sandoval said the day before: “No such order has been issued, and we are going to review that case, so that it doesn’t happen again, because that’s not our job.”

Apparently, this is causing confusion among National Guard members. As [noted by AP](#),



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National Guardsmen interviewed Monday by AFP in Ciudad Juarez, across from El Paso, confirmed their superiors had instructed them to stop migrants from crossing the border.

“They tell us we’re not detaining enough, that migration levels are the same,” said one, speaking on condition of anonymity.

“When they saw the photo (of the migrant detention), they told us we can’t touch the migrants. But at the same time, they order us to detain them and produce results,” he added.

The *New York Times* reported earlier this month that Mexico committed to deploying 6,000 National Guardsmen to its southern border to control immigration coming in from Central America, but only a fraction of those have actually been deployed.

Photo: AP Images



Warren Mass has served The New American since its launch in 1985 in several capacities, including marketing, editing, and writing. Since retiring from the staff several years ago, he has been a regular contributor to the magazine. Warren writes from Texas and can be reached at wmass@thenewamerican.com.

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