

# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## DONALD TRUMP CALLS FOR MILITARY TO GUARD SOUTHERN BORDER

*President suggests he might use Nafta talks to pressure Mexico to halt protest march of asylum seekers from Central America*

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April 3, 2018

President Donald Trump on Tuesday said he planned to enlist the military to help guard the U.S. border, while at the same time he tried to step up pressure on Mexico to stop a protest march of asylum seekers traveling through America's southern neighbor.

Mr. Trump also suggested the North American Free Trade Agreement, which is being renegotiated, could be used to pressure Mexico to do something about the protest march, calling the trade deal "terrible" for U.S. but a boon for Mexico.

Earlier in the day, the president tweeted: "The big Caravan of People from Honduras, now coming across Mexico and heading to our 'Weak Laws' Border, had better be stopped before it gets there." He added: "Cash cow NAFTA is in play, as is foreign aid to Honduras and the countries that allow this to happen. Congress MUST ACT NOW!"

Later, in comments to reporters, Mr. Trump said: "Until we can have a wall and proper security, we're going to be guarding our border with the military. That's a big step."

The Pentagon said it couldn't provide any additional information about the president's statement, which he made while sitting next to Defense Secretary Jim Mattis.

In a news conference later Tuesday with Baltic leaders, Mr. Trump criticized the U.S.'s "horrible, horrible and very unsafe" immigration laws and said he would meet "in a little while" with Mr. Mattis to discuss a plan to have the U.S. military secure the border.

"I think it's something we have to do," Mr. Trump said.

The U.S. military has been deployed to the border before. From 2006 to 2008, then-President George W. Bush deployed more than 6,000 National Guard troops to the border as part of Operation Jump Start, at a cost of about \$1.2 billion. The troops helped with tasks such as logistical support while the Border Patrol worked to add additional agents and construct new fencing.

President Barack Obama sent a smaller contingent of about 1,200 National Guard troops in 2010 to assist the Border Patrol with illegal crossings and drug violence.

Mr. Trump's threats on Nafta come as American, Canadian and Mexican officials are months into talks to overhaul the 24-year-old trade agreement. Late last month, the parties indicated they had cleared what had been a sticking point on auto-industry issues, a move that could put them on track to reach a possible deal as early as this month. Trade analysts

have suggested the U.S. may be interested in a quick end to Nafta talks in light of the administration's recently announced trade actions against China.

The "caravan of people" Mr. Trump attacked Tuesday is an annual event that leaders say aims to raise awareness about the tens of thousands of Central Americans who, facing gang violence and political unrest in one of the world's most violent areas, flee every year to Mexico or the U.S. Many are turned back, extorted or kidnapped along the way.

This year, however, the protest has caught the attention of Mr. Trump, who has attacked Mexico every day since Sunday for not stopping the protesters or migrants more broadly. Mr. Trump has also been lashing out at Congress for not passing a legislative replacement for a program protecting immigrants brought to the U.S. as children, which he ended last year, and he has kept up demands for full funding for his wall on the southern border.

"Mexico is doing very little, if not NOTHING, at stopping people from flowing into Mexico through their Southern Border, and then into the U.S.," Mr. Trump tweeted Sunday. "They laugh at our dumb immigration laws. They must stop the big drug and people flows, or I will stop their cash cow, NAFTA. NEED WALL!"

Mexican Foreign Minister Luis Videgaray responded to Mr. Trump's comment Sunday with a tweet of his own denying that his government was doing nothing to control migration. "Every day Mexico and the U.S. work together on migration throughout the region. Facts clearly reflect this," he said. "Upholding human dignity and rights is not at odds with the rule of law."

Mexican and U.S. officials, facing national elections this year, have pressed for a relatively quick deal on Nafta, while their Canadian counterparts have held out for an agreement that would preserve key structures from the existing Nafta, including a dispute-settlement system that can challenge tariffs levied by the Trump administration.

Still, Mexico's chief Nafta negotiator, Kenneth Smith, tweeted on Tuesday that "it will be the substance of the #negotiation that drives any potential conclusion." Mexican officials have said previous demands by Mr. Trump that Mexico pay for a border wall are unacceptable and jeopardize ties between the countries.

U.S. trade representative Robert Lighthizer is set to meet Mexican Economy Minister Ildefonso Guajardo in Washington on Wednesday to chart the path toward a possible Nafta deal, according to a spokesman for Mr. Guajardo. Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland is tentatively expected to visit Washington on Thursday or Friday, but a spokesman declined to confirm her schedule. A broad group of officials was set to meet in the Washington area this month, but no formal negotiating round has been announced.

U.S. lawmakers would get a vote on any significant overhaul of Nafta, and officials are running out of time to reach a deal that could be considered before a new Congress takes office in January. Mr. Trump has sought the renewal of trade authority granted by Congress that expedites passage of trade deals but includes built-in delays for hearings and public comment.

Mr. Trump's threat to cut aid to Honduras is one of a series of such warnings he has issued in the first 14 months of his administration, on which he hasn't always followed through.

The U.S. plans to send \$65.8 million in aid to Honduras in fiscal year 2019, according to the State Department, though none of those funds have yet been obligated or spent.

Last year, Mr. Trump vowed to cut aid to any countries that didn't back the U.S. decision to declare Jerusalem the capital of Israel. Months later, the administration signed a more than \$6 billion memorandum of understanding with Jordan, whose king had warned Mr. Trump against the move.

Mr. Trump has, however, slashed funds for the United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees, after repeatedly threatening to do so, and he has frozen bilateral assistance to the Palestinians, after repeatedly threatening to do so.