

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION TO DEPLOY ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL TO SANCTUARY CITIES

U.S. Customs and Border Protection sending 100 officers and agents to supplement operations targeting illegal immigrants

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February 14, 2020

WASHINGTON – The Trump administration is deploying 100 officers and agents from the southern border to sanctuary cities in the U.S. to assist in arrest operations targeting immigrants who are in the U.S. illegally, according to two people familiar with the plan.

The operation is the latest move in the administration's feud with cities and states that have adopted policies limiting law-enforcement cooperation with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to share information about immigrants in custody or detaining them at the request of federal immigration officers.

The personnel are being sent by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the parent agency of the Border Patrol, to assist ICE officers in cities including New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, these people said. Operations will also take place in Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, New Orleans, Houston, Newark, N.J., and Detroit, these people said.

In a statement, acting ICE Director Matthew Albence said the refusal by the 10 cities to cooperate with deportation officers has spread ICE's resources thin.

"ICE is utilizing CBP to supplement enforcement activity in response to the resource challenges stemming from sanctuary city policies," he said.

The people familiar with the plan didn't provide details on how many officers or agents would be sent to each location or when. The deployment is planned to last from February through May, one of the people said.

The planned operation was first reported by the New York Times.

President Trump has long criticized sanctuary jurisdictions, saying they protect criminals who should be deported and endanger Americans. The issue is popular with his supporters, and he cites it frequently on the campaign trail.

Sanctuary jurisdictions argue that the administration's policies are discriminatory and cooperation would discourage immigrants from cooperating with local police. The dispute has escalated in recent weeks.

The Department of Homeland Security last week barred New Yorkers from enrolling in expedited-traveler programs, including Global Entry, after the state last year passed a law allowing illegal immigrants to apply for driver's licenses and shielding state driver's license records from federal immigration officials. New York state responded Monday by filing a lawsuit against the administration, arguing the decision was unconstitutional. Mr. Trump,

acting Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo met in the Oval Office on Thursday to discuss the matter.

The Justice Department has also filed lawsuits against New Jersey, California and a Washington state county whose policies all, in different ways, curtailed cooperation with ICE.

Mr. Trump, in a White House speech Friday before the National Border Patrol Council, the border patrol's union, again criticized sanctuary policies, taking aim specifically at California, which declared itself the first sanctuary state in 2017.

"They're all over the place and a lot of people don't want them," he said. "They don't want them in California...The politicians want them for whatever reason."

The officers and agents being deployed are specially trained intelligence and tactical teams from across CBP. One of the people familiar with the plan said these personnel are being shifted from the border in part because they don't fall within the collective-bargaining unit of the Border Patrol's workforce, making them easier to move.

Among them are members of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit, a small division within the federal agency that focuses on "high risk" enforcement and security operations. Members of the unit have been involved in high-profile operations, including a raid in Miami in 2000 to seize a 6-year-old Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez, from the home of his relatives.

BORTAC agents are typically deployed to areas along the border to track drug smugglers and raid stash houses where smugglers routinely hold migrants until relatives pay a ransom.

DHS said in a statement that while some of the personnel being moved are trained in tactical operations, others are from different sectors and jobs. "These officers have also been trained in routine immigration enforcement actions which is what they have been asked to do," the statement said.

"We have seen the horrible tactics of ICE agents. To add this kind of force in our neighborhoods is unacceptable," said Angelica Salas, executive director of the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, an immigrant advocacy group.

Deploying the tactical unit to cities in the interior of the U.S. will leave fewer specially trained agents along the border during what the Trump administration last year declared a "national emergency." The White House extended that state of emergency declaration for another year after it was set to expire Saturday.

Mr. Trump twice last year announced that ICE would begin nationwide roundups of people in the U.S. illegally. The first planned raid, in June, was postponed amid concerns, including over officers' safety. The second raid, in July, resulted in small-scale operations in New York City.

Gil Kerlikowske, former CBP commissioner in the Obama administration and a former Seattle police chief, said BORTAC agents have been deployed for a variety of nonborder missions, including manhunts and armed attacks, but that is far different from the administrative arrests that ICE officers generally make.

"This isn't anything that would make any sense for them," Mr. Kerlikowske said, adding that this deployment would detract from the training the unit usually does when it isn't conducting operations.

ICE's arrest efforts have been stymied in recent years by uncooperative police agencies and immigrant-advocate efforts to inform people about their rights in such situations.

ICE officers can't enter a home without a warrant, so if they don't have one they can't go in unless residents allow them to.

Community groups routinely hold know-your-rights presentations to explain that unauthorized immigrants or people living with them can simply keep their doors closed, forcing ICE to either wait until the wanted person leaves the building or try to arrest the person another time.