

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 12,2006

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It has come to our attention that you are considering making an announcement in the near future about the stationing of 10,000 National Guard troops on our nation's southern border. While we agree that more resources are needed to secure our borders and ports of entry, such a major deployment of our forces raises a number of questions that we believe must be answered before proceeding.

We write to ask that you provide additional information to Congress and the American people on your proposal to direct military forces to assume a role for which they were neither trained nor recruited.

Specifically, questions that we have about a potential mass deployment of troops to the Southwest border include:

- Which troops will be deployed and how will this deployment affect the ongoing commitment of 24,000 Army National Guard troops in Iraq and Afghanistan? How will this affect the 24-month call-up restriction?
- Under what authority will troops be deployed?
- What is the projected cost of a troop deployment to the Southern border, and have funds been identified for allocation to this new mission?
- What are the rules of engagement under which these troops will serve?
- Which agency will lead the operations? Will military troops be under the control of the civilian leadership of the Border Patrol which has the primary responsibility for securing our nation's borders?
- What provisions have been made for the detention of persons in the border region by military members?

- What plans have been made to ensure that interoperable communications are available to allow military and civilian law enforcement personnel to communicate?
- Will Air Force or the other military branches provide air support? Has the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for aerial surveillance been coordinated with the Federal Aviation Administration and will UAV aircraft including the Air Force's Predator be available to support this troop deployment in light of the shortage of these air vehicles in Iraq and Afghanistan?

Mr. President, these are serious questions that must be answered before we consider a major deployment of forces to participate in law enforcement activities on our borders. We urge you to carefully consider whether it is in the best interest of our nation to add yet another mission to the agenda of our over-stretched military.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to learning more about your plans.


Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

Sincerely,


Solomon Ortiz
Member of Congress