



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

JUN 18 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE  
COMMANDER, U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND

SUBJECT: Establishment of the National Defense Area in connection with the National  
Emergency at the Southern Border

This memorandum directs the Secretary of the Air Force to take all necessary action for the establishment of a National Defense Area (NDA) to be administered by the Air Force on and along the Rio Grande River for approximately 250 miles in Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, Texas, along the U.S./Mexico border.

The Secretary of the Air Force will direct his staff to prepare and submit the necessary package to transfer federal land from the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) through the General Services Administration (GSA), to support the Department of Defense (DoD) operations, using a compressed, accelerated process. The Air Force will provide oversight and funding for land transfer activities, signage, fencing, and fees, necessary, to delineate the NDA. Upon receipt of the transfer from the IBWC, the Air Force will accept the lands, place them on DoD property rolls, and issue an order to establish the lands as a part of Joint Base San Antonio.

The Air Force will permit the IBWC to continue to access and manage land, as necessary, along the southern border. The Air Force will execute a Memorandum of Agreement at the lowest practical level between DoD, the Department of Homeland Security, GSA, and IBWC on the conduct of operations in the NDA including, patrolling, temporary detention of unauthorized personnel and maintenance, construction and upgrade of both existing and planned border barrier on the NDA.

The Secretary of the Air Force remains responsible for implementing DoD installation security consistent with DoD Instruction 5200.08, but Commander, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), will support installation security through the execution of the mission in Executive Order 14167. The Secretary of the Air Force and Commander, USNORTHCOM, will coordinate closely to facilitate USNORTHCOM's mission and to cooperate on installation matters under the responsibility of the Air Force. In support of the NDA, USNORTHCOM will be prepared to immediately install signage and fencing on the NDA in accordance with Department of the Air Force standards once established and will be prepared to immediately conduct operations in the NDA.

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cc:

Secretary of the Army

Secretary of the Navy

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment)

Under Secretary of Defense (Policy)

General Counsel of the Department of Defense

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Legislative Affairs)

Assistant Secretary of Defense (Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs)

Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs

Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers