

Trump Gives Border Troops Authority to Use Lethal Force, Threatens to Close the Border

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President Trump said that he has authorized American troops on the US-Mexico border to “use lethal force” if necessary to protect Customs and Border Protection personnel from migrants if they engage in violence. Trump also threatened to close “the whole border” if it becomes uncontrollable or if Americans protecting the border get hurt. Trump said that there were 500 criminals traveling with the caravan, which was reported by the Department of Homeland Security last week.

President Donald Trump said Thursday he has authorized American troops on the US-Mexico border to “use lethal force” if necessary against an approaching group of migrants while also threatening to close “the whole border.”

Trump, who was speaking with military members and reporters at Mar-a-Lago, also said there “certainly could” be a government shutdown over border wall funding in December. “If they have to, they’re going to use lethal force. I’ve given the OK,” Trump said. “If they have to – I hope they don’t have to.”

“I have no choice,” Trump said, and, without providing evidence, added, “You’re dealing with a minimum of 500 serious criminals” and “rough people.”

Earlier this week, Trump approved a memorandum that **granted new authority** to troops on the border to protect Customs and Border Protection personnel from migrants if they engage in violence. Until the new authority was granted, troops were not allowed to intervene if CBP personnel came under attack unless they needed to act in their own self-defense.

Trump has sent nearly 6,000 troops to the US-Mexico border to protect against a group of migrants coming through Mexico from Central America. Many of the migrants have said they are seeking asylum and fleeing gang violence and persecution in their home countries. Trump ordered the deployment shortly before the midterm elections, when Trump was making the fight against illegal immigration a central part of his pitch for Republicans seeking office.

Defense Secretary James Mattis said Wednesday “there has been no call for any lethal

force from (the Department of Homeland Security)," saying that any troops backing up customs personnel would not be carrying firearms but could be equipped with shields and batons.

Trump on Thursday also said "two days ago we closed the border," and added, "nobody's coming in."

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