



58 Former National Security Officials Decry Trump's Border Wall And Bogus Emergency

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February 25, 2019

A bipartisan group of 58 former national security officials on Monday issued a blistering critique of President Donald Trump's efforts to build a barrier along the U.S.-Mexico border, saying there was "no plausible" justification for declaring a national emergency.

"We have lived and worked through national emergencies, and we support the President's power to mobilize the Executive Branch to respond quickly in genuine national emergencies," reads the letter from the group, which includes former Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and John Kerry. "But under no plausible assessment of the evidence is there a national emergency today that entitles the President to tap into funds appropriated for other purposes to build a wall at the southern border."

The 13-page statement, which was first reported by The Washington Post, is expected to be entered into the Congressional Record on Monday. The president declared a national emergency earlier this month in an effort to unilaterally build his wall after Congress stonewalled his demand for \$5.7 billion to do so. Many have accused him of manufacturing a crisis in the absence of a genuine emergency.

The group of officials on Monday echoed those sentiments. Signatories include former CIA Director John Brennan, former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, former Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano and former Ambassadors to the United Nations Thomas Pickering, Samantha Power and Susan Rice.

"The President's actions are at odds with the overwhelming evidence in the public record, including the administration's own data and estimates," the group wrote.

A Cato Institute analysis showed that undocumented immigrants in Texas are 44 percent less likely to be incarcerated than native-born U.S. citizens, according to the letter. The declaration also stated that a border wall will not reduce human and drug trafficking because most opioids are brought in through ports of entry and because most victims of human trafficking arrive in the U.S. with valid visas.

The House is expected to vote on a measure to reverse the order this week, and Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) has promised to move "swiftly" on the resolution. She has accused Trump of undermining "the separation of powers and Congress's power of the purse, a power exclusively reserved by the text of the Constitution to the first branch of government, the Legislative branch, a branch co-equal to the Executive."

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While the measure is expected to pass in the House, it's unclear how it will fare in the Senate, and the White House has signaled that Trump will not sign it. It's unlikely there are enough supporters in Congress to override his veto.

A group of 16 states has also filed a federal lawsuit to challenge the emergency declaration, calling it unconstitutional.