

## Mexico Will Create Border Force to Thwart Illegal Immigration from Central America

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National Review, July 9, 2018



Mexico's president-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador speaks during a news conference after a meeting with the Confederation of Industrial Chambers in Mexico City, Mexico, July 9, 2018. (*Alexandre Meneghini/Reuters*)

Mexican president-elect Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador plans to establish a distinct border-police force to combat illegal immigration as well as drug and weapon smuggling from Central America, his future chief of public security Alfonso Durazo [told Bloomberg in an interview](#) published Monday.

"We're going to create a border police force that will be highly specialized," said Durazo in the interview. "They need to apply the law."

The newfound emphasis on curtailing illegal immigration comes amid President Trump's now years-long public pressure campaign on Mexican officials to assume some degree of responsibility for stemming the tide of Central American immigrants passing through Mexico on their way to the U.S. in recent years.

Durazo said the new border-police force will be accompanied by a broader effort to address the socioeconomic issues that have prompted the surge in migration from Central America.

The future public-security chief argued that Mexico has failed to curtail illegal immigration due to an overemphasis on enforcement and an underemphasis on the humanitarian side of the problem.

“The legitimate use of force by the state is a resource,” he said. “But it shouldn’t be the first resource, it should be the last one.”

In order to fight corruption, which Durazo said facilitates human trafficking and drug smuggling, the new administration plans to significantly increase salaries and benefits for law-enforcement officials.

Lopez Obrador, who will take office on December 1, is scheduled to meet with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Friday, and they are expected to discuss immigration.