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## Obama to Send Up to 1,200 Troops to Border

By RANDAL C. ARCHIBOLD

LOS ANGELES — President Obama will send up to 1,200 National Guard troops to the Southwest border and seek increased spending on law enforcement there to combat drug smuggling after demands from Republican and Democratic lawmakers that border security be tightened.

The decision was disclosed by a Democratic lawmaker and confirmed by administration officials after Mr. Obama met on Tuesday with Republican senators, several of whom have demanded that troops be placed at the border. The lawmakers learned of the plan after the meeting.

But the move also reflected political pressure in the president's own party with midterm election campaigns under way and with what is expected to be a tumultuous debate on overhauling immigration law coming up on Capitol Hill.

The issue has pushed Janet Napolitano, the secretary of homeland security, into something of a corner. As governor of Arizona, she demanded that Guard troops be put on the border. But since joining the Obama administration, she has remained noncommittal about the idea, saying as recently as a month ago that other efforts by Mr. Obama had made the border "as secure now as it has ever been."

The troops will be stationed in the four border states for a year, White House officials said. It is not certain when they will arrive, the officials said.

The troops will join a few hundred members of the Guard already assigned there to help the police hunt for drug smugglers. The additional troops will provide support to law enforcement officers by helping observe and monitor traffic between official border crossings. They will also help analyze trafficking patterns in the hope of intercepting illegal drug shipments.

Initial word of the deployment came not in a formal announcement from the White House — indeed, it was left to administration officials speaking on the condition of anonymity to fill in some details — but from a Democratic member of the House from southern Arizona who is running in what is expected to be a competitive race for re-election.

"The White House is doing the right thing," the congresswoman, Representative Gabrielle Giffords, said in a statement announcing the decision. "Arizonans know that more boots on the ground means a safer and more secure border. Washington

heard our message.”

Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican whose opponent in a coming primary has relentlessly criticized him on immigration, said Tuesday that he welcomed Mr. Obama’s move but that it was “simply not enough.”

Mr. McCain called for the introduction of 6,000 National Guard troops to police the Southwestern border, with 3,000 for Arizona alone. In a letter to Senator Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, two Obama administration officials said that the proposal infringed on his role as commander in chief and overlooked gains in border security.

Calls for sending the Guard to the border grew after the shooting death of an Arizona rancher in March that the police suspect was carried out by someone involved in smuggling. Advocates of the controversial Arizona state law giving the police a greater role in immigration enforcement played up what they described as a failure to secure the border as a reason to pass the law.

Gov. Jan Brewer of Arizona, a Republican who is running for a full term, has requested Guard troops at the border but decided not to use her authority to do it herself, citing the state’s tattered finances. The governors of New Mexico and Texas also pleaded for troops.

From 2006 to 2008, President George W. Bush made a larger deployment of Guard troops under a program called Operation Jump Start. At its peak, 6,000 Guard troops at the border helped build roads and fences in addition to backing up law enforcement officers.

Those Guard troops contributed to the arrest of more than 162,000 illegal immigrants, the rescue of 100 people stranded in the desert and the seizure of \$69,000 in cash and 305,000 pounds of illicit drugs.

The soldiers will not directly make arrests of border crossers and smugglers, something they are not trained to do.

Rick Nelson, a senior fellow who studies domestic security at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, said that the additional spending could improve security over the long term but that the National Guard deployment was not sufficient for “an overwhelming change that will change the dynamics on the border.”

“This is a symbolic gesture,” he said. “At the end of the day, the face of border security is still going to be Customs and Border Protection, the law enforcement community. It’s not going to be the National Guard.”

Democrats and Republicans who agreed with the move rushed to take credit for it, including Ms. Brewer, who said her signing of the new Arizona law had pushed the administration.

“I am pleased that President Obama has now, apparently, agreed that our nation must secure the border to address rampant border violence and illegal immigration without other preconditions, such as passage of ‘comprehensive immigration reform,’ ” she said.

