

National Guard To Withdraw Half Of Its Forces Assisting U.S. Border Patrol

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Washington, D.C. (AHN) - The National Guard will slash the number of troops stationed along the U.S.-Mexico border in half, according to a new deployment order.

The Pentagon will cut the number of soldiers assisting the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency from 6,000 to 3,000, following a surge put in place by President George Bush last year to help combat illegal immigration and the drug trade.

President Bush initiated "Operation Jump Start" which put a mostly volunteer force along the 2,000-mile-long border with Mexico. The troops helped take care of administrative duties, freeing up Border Protection agents to keep vigil and make arrests.

National Guard Bureau spokesman Army Maj. David Kolarik said that the deployment "was never meant to be a permanent solution."

"It was just an intermediate measure to provide support for border security efforts until they brought the additional resources and personnel in line that they needed," Major Kolarik said.