

Trump Administration to Utilize NJ Military Base for Migrant Housing

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The Trump administration is moving forward with plans to house immigrant detainees at a New Jersey military base, a decision that has ignited criticism from state Democrats who argue it misuses military infrastructure. Federal officials maintain that the move is temporary and will not interfere with military operations.

According to the United States Department of Defense, portions of Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst in Burlington County will be converted into what they describe as “soft-sided holding facilities.” Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth emphasized in a letter to Representative Herb Conway that the decision will not impact military readiness or ongoing operations.

Despite these assurances, several Democratic lawmakers from New Jersey expressed opposition in a joint statement, accusing the administration of politicizing the military to support immigration enforcement. “This is an inappropriate use of our national defense system,” the statement read. The lawmakers also voiced concerns about potential Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in local communities, claiming the move could erode public trust.

The statement was signed by Senators Cory Booker and Andy Kim, along with House Representatives, including Donald Norcross, Rob Menendez, Josh Gottheimer, and others. Their objections reflect broader tensions over immigration enforcement policies and the role of the military in managing border-related issues.

This isn’t the first time Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst has been used to support federal efforts related to migration. In 2021, the base temporarily sheltered thousands of Afghan refugees following the United States’ withdrawal from Afghanistan. Spanning over 42,000 acres, the installation supports joint operations from the United States Army, Navy, and Air Force and employs approximately 45,000 personnel.

Additionally, the Defense Department has announced plans to convert sections of Camp Atterbury in Indiana into similar temporary migrant facilities. However, specific timelines for when either site will begin operations remain unconfirmed.

The conversation around immigration enforcement continues to be a deeply divisive issue, but the Trump administration appears committed to utilizing available federal resources, including military infrastructure, to address ongoing border and immigration challenges.