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February 8, 2019

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Patrick M. Shanahan
Acting Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1300

Dear Secretary Nielsen & Acting Secretary Shanahan,

I am writing to you today to express my opposition to the concertina wire strung along the U.S.—Mexico border barrier directly located in a major residential area and pedestrian thoroughfare in downtown Nogales, Arizona. I have received numerous constituent concerns about the safety of the concertina wire since November when it first appeared, and have only received more with the latest intensification. The economies, people, and cultures of our borderlands are deeply intertwined, and this razor wire is an ugly stain on a vibrant relationship between these two sister cities.

Numerous residents and local officials have expressed their opposition to the current concertina wire and were never informed by the military of its placement until the project began on February 1. According to Mayor Arturo Garino, the town's code prohibits the use of razor wire except in industrial areas and storage parks, and when used it must be at least six feet above the ground. The razor wire along the border wall is at ground level and would cause serious injury to anyone who touches it. This raises serious concerns about the safety protocols—or lack thereof—governing those making the decisions concerning the troop deployment at the border.

One thing is clear: this is simply a manufactured crisis at the border. Border communities remain some of the safest cities in the country, and the vast majority of those presenting themselves at our ports of entry are families seeking asylum after fleeing unimaginable violence in their home countries, the United States has legal obligations to asylum-seekers.

The Nogales City Council recently passed a resolution condemning the use of the concertina wire at the border, and I support them in these efforts. Border communities are already some of the most militarized communities in the United States. Forcing them to act as a photo

opportunity to reinforce the false narrative of rampant lawlessness at the border promulgated by the President is nothing short of ridiculous. I urge you to take the safety and concerns of Nogales residents into consideration and remove this needless wire.

I look forward to hearing a response from you, and hope you take my concerns—and those of Nogales residents—into consideration.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress