
Mexico: AMLO Tips Army to Build Urban Development Center

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The Army will be in charge of the construction of housing projects and transportation infrastructures.

The army will build an urban development center in Mexico City, [President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador](#) (AMLO) said Thursday, stressing that private companies will not be allowed to take control of one of the last strips of undeveloped land in the country's capital.

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"It's not going to be a private real estate company, it's not a private business. It is the government, in this case, the secretary of defense which carries out the urbanization," AMLO said.

The project, whose value could reach up to US\$1.5 billion, will be undertaken on a 30-hectare site, which is part of a 125-hectare military base, located inside Mexico City's downtown.

The announcement is consistent with previous statements by the president. Prior to becoming a candidate, the leftist president had attacked what he calls

"neoliberal" practices of past administrations which benefited business elites over ordinary citizens.

At the beginning of the year, former [President Enrique Peña Nieto](#) had planned to sell the military base, but put the plans on hold after local residents opposed the possible transformation of a large green site into an urban development location.

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"Airport in Santa Lucia will be built by the Army. President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said that, thanks to the successful repurchase of Mexico's New International Airport bonds, the way is finally cleared to solve this matter."

Lopez Obrador reassured his countrymen that 70 out of the 125 hectares of land would become a new public park, which has been conceived of as an expansion of Latin America's oldest and largest urban park, the 'Chapultepec Forest.'

In early December, Defense Secretary Luis Sandoval said the Mexican army planned to build luxury homes on the site. However, [AMLO](#) did not give any specific details about the type of urban project that could be developed on the rest of the site.

"[On that part of the city] the square meter is very expensive. It is a residential site having very luxury apartments... in such site that kind of houses are going to be made and sold," Saldoval said, according to an official document which quoted his speech.

The funds, Sandoval further added, from the sale of the project would be used to

build facilities for 85 battalions of the future National Guard.

On Friday, President Lopez Obrador also said that the Mexican army will build Mexico City's new international airport on the grounds of what is now a military base in Santa Lucia.

The new civilian airport will replace a controversial multi-million project, in Texcoco, which was canceled due to social mobilizations against it.
