

NBC's *Today*

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7:01:06 a.m. [TEASE]

10 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Biden at the Border]

SAVANNAH GUTHRIE: Biden at the border. The President makes his first visit there since taking office. What he's saying about how to address the flood of migrants and critics saying it is too little, too late.

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7:07:28 a.m.

2 minutes and 53 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Biden Makes First Visit to the Border]

HODA KOTB: President Biden is starting this week in Mexico attending a key summit with fellow North American leaders. One major focus, the migrant crisis. And yesterday, the President made his first trip to the southern border before taking office, a visit some critics say should have taken place a lot soon. NBC's chief White House correspondent Kristen Welker is right there for us in El Paso, Texas. Hey, Kristen, good morning.

KRISTEN WELKER: Hi, Hoda. Good morning. The President's agenda in Mexico will include urgent talks on climate change and the economy, but the most pressing issue will be the crisis at the border in El Paso. Migrants finding various ways to go over or under the fence behind me, even cutting through it. All of it creating a fraught back drop for the President's first face-to-face visit with the border. President Biden touching down in Mexico overnight after visiting the southern border for the first time since taking office two years ago. While in El Paso, the epicenter of the ongoing migrant crisis, Mr. Biden met with Border Patrol officials and toured a services support center, though he did not directly meet with migrants. When asked what he learned —

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN: They need a lot of resources. We're going to get it for them.

WELKER: This high-stakes trip comes amid a surge nationwide. Border Patrol says it stopped a record 2.6 million migrants crossing illegally last year. As soon as he arrived in El Paso, the President was met with criticism from all sides. Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott handing the President a letter on the airport tarmac, blasting Mr. Biden's policies as weak and arguing the visit came two years too late.

GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT (R-TX): He should have been down here day one to fix the problems that he created.

WELKER: Humanitarians say the President's new immigration policy could put lives in danger. That policy seeks to expel 30,000 migrants a month who unlawfully entered the U.S. from Venezuela, Nicaragua, Haiti, and Cuba. All of it adding to a tense backdrop in El Paso, where migrants line the cold streets outside this church, like Maria Rodriguez, who said she risked her life seeking a better life, fleeing violence in Venezuela with her two children and a nephew. Their harrowing journey lasted four months and included hiding in a garbage truck for five days. [TO RODRIGUEZ] Five days hiding. [SCREEN WIPE] Joe Barrassa (sp?), who lives in El Paso, says he empathizes with the migrants but says his small community cannot support the surge and something needs to be done. [TO BARRASSA] What do you want to hear from president Biden today?

JOE BARRASSA: I want him to do something about it finally, for sure. I want him — not just empty promises. I want him to actually do something.

KOTB: That was Kristen Welker for us there in El Paso, Texas.

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8:04:52 a.m.
31 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Biden Makes First Visit to the Border]

KOTB: President Biden arrived in Mexico City overnight with a two-day summit meeting with North American leaders. Yesterday, he made his first trip to the U.S./Mexico border since taking office. His visit to El Paso included a walk along a stretch of the wall and discussions with border officials. Later, he visited a migrant service center. The President was greeted by Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott, who handed him a letter, demanding that he enforce immigration laws. The Border Patrol says it stopped a record 2.6 million migrants from crossing illegally last year.