



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on April 25, 2011

## L.A. Times: Border Agents Bored; Ariz. Sheriffs: Border Out of Control

If you believe the Los Angeles Times, the U.S. border with Mexico is a sleepy place where nothing much ever happens. The headline over its article of April 21 explained the border thusly: “Plunge in border crossings leaves agents fighting boredom.”

The problem with the *Times* piece is this: Its evidence for the border being “boring” for agents comes from the Yuma sector of the border, where the government erected fencing to stop illegal aliens from crossing.

As well, it seems to ignore more authoritative voices, and reprises a demonstrably false talking point recently from Homeland Security Janet Napolitano that nothing much is wrong with efforts to control the border.



### The *Times* Piece

[The \*Times\* explains](#) how successful federal efforts to stop illegal immigration and drug smuggling on the border have been:

Porous corridors along the 2,000-mile border do remain, mostly in the Tucson area, requiring constant vigilance. But beefed-up enforcement and the job-killing effects of the great recession have combined to reduce the flood of immigrants in many former hot spots to a trickle.

Apprehensions along the Southwest border overall dropped more than two-thirds from 2000 to 2010, from 1.6 million to 448,000, and almost every region has lonely posts where agents sit for hours staring at the barrier, watching the “fence rust” as some put it. ...

To stay alert, agents are encouraged to walk around or take coffee breaks. Some agents play video games on their mobile phones or read books. There are agents known as “felony sleepers” who intend to slumber — bringing pillows or parking in remote areas — but most dozers are victims of monotony who nod off despite their best efforts to stay awake.

[The \*Times\* reported](#) that an agent in the sleepy [San Diego sector](#), “where apprehensions are at their lowest since the early 1970s,” was caught napping in his car. As well, “no area has more action-starved agents than the Yuma sector,” but that is because, according to the *Times*, the government finally did something about the [Yuma sector](#), which covers 126 miles of border between Imperial Dunes, Calif., and the Yuma-Pima County line:

Then double and triple fencing went up. Stadium lighting was installed. Every arrested immigrant, instead of being returned to Mexico, was jailed. Outside town, workers laid steel barriers on previously wide-open borders to block drug-smuggling vehicles from driving through.



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From 2005 to 2010, apprehensions of immigrants dropped 95%, from 138,460 to 7,116. Vehicle drive-throughs fell from 2,700 to 21 during the same period. Farmers are now able to plant crops in once-trampled fields. And residents don't find immigrants hiding under their cars anymore.

More than 900 agents, triple the number from 2005, are now stationed in what is one of the slowest sectors along the entire border.

It's worth observing that the Border Patrol still catches 1,200 illegals every day even if the [Times' figures](#) are correct.

## **The Border Is Out of Control**

The rosy picture of border agents enjoying a siesta is a snapshot of very small sections of the 1,969-mile border with Mexico.

The border security expert for the Government Accountability Office told the Senate Homeland Security Committee in March that the rest of the border is virtually unguarded. As [The New American reported](#) in early April, GAO's Richard Stana said that border agents can stop illegals across less than 150 miles of the border. And across another 700 miles, agents catch them only after giving chase *inside* the United States.

### [Said Stana:](#)

Our preliminary analysis of these Border Patrol data showed that the agency reported a capability to deter or detect and apprehend illegal entries at the immediate border across 129 of the 873 southwest border miles and 2 of the 69 northern border miles. Our preliminary analysis also showed that Border Patrol reported the ability to deter or detect and apprehend illegal entries after they crossed the border for an additional 744 southwest border miles and 67 northern border miles.

As we previously observed in December 2010 and February 2011, and through selected updates, Border Patrol determined in fiscal year 2010 that border security was not at an acceptable level of control for 1,120 southwest border miles.

Stana's testimony [flatly contradicts](#) Napolitano's assessment of the situation. As well, the figure [Stana gives](#) for how much border is under control, 129 miles, matches almost exactly with the 126-mile Yuma Sector discussed in the *Times*.

Recent testimony from two county sheriffs in Arizona offers more persuasive evidence that the border is indeed a war zone out of control and that the federal government doesn't much care.

[Fox News revealed](#) on April 1 that federal agents have been ordered not to arrest illegals at the border but instead to "scare them back" into Mexico. [Cochise County Sheriff Larry Dever](#) told the network a Border Patrol supervisor admitted that his agency had been ordered to reduce the number of arrests.

"The senior supervisor agent is telling me about how their mission is now to scare people back," Dever said in an interview with FoxNews.com. "He said, 'I had to go back to my guys and tell them not to catch anybody, that their job is to chase people away. ... They were not to catch anyone, arrest anyone. Their job was to set up posture, to intimidate people, to get them to go back.'"

Dever is particularly concerned because, again, Napolitano has repeatedly said the border is in good shape. At the end of March, Napolitano was in El Paso [and declared](#), "[T]here is a perception that the



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border is worse now than it ever has been. That is wrong. The border is better now than it ever has been.”

As well, speaking at a leftist confabulation in Washington, [she offered](#) a similar assessment:

It is simply inaccurate to state, as too many have, that the border with Mexico is overrun or out of control. This statement — I think sometimes it’s made to score some political points — but it’s wrong. It’s just plain wrong.

[Dever told](#) Fox the claim is hogwash. “Janet Napolitano says the border is more secure than it’s ever been,” he told Fox. “I’ve been here for 60 years, and I’m telling you that’s not true.”

The [Border Patrol denies](#) Dever’s allegations, for which Fox offered no documentary evidence. The network has since reported that border agents [have flooded](#) Dever with calls and emails backing his claim.

## **Babeu Explains the Boredom**

[In testimony](#) before the Senate Homeland Security Committee in April, [Pinal County Sheriff Paul Babeu](#) corroborated Dever’s claims and offered details about the war he is fighting:

Over half of the illegals entering America come through Arizona. According to U.S. Border Patrol, last year alone they captured 219,300 in the Tucson sector. ... Of those illegals that were caught, 17 to 30 percent of them already have a criminal record in the United States.

[Babeu also told](#) the committee that his department’s calls to the Border Patrol to turn over illegals have increased from 188 in 2007 to 370 in 2010. As well, vehicle pursuits and drug seizures have increased, and Mexican cartel members have brought their gang wars and executions to Arizona.

Babeu [flatly stated](#) that he has ordered his deputies to fight back.

He also explained to the committee why agents in the Yuma sector of the border are bored.

America can secure the border if we replicate the success of what was accomplished in the Yuma Sector. The Yuma Sector has now attained a 96% reduction of illegal border crossings. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan is developed largely from the learned successes of the Yuma Sector during Operation Jump Start. The Senator McCain/Kyl 10-Point Border Security Plan needs to be implemented to attain a secure border with Mexico.

[Babeu wants](#) 6,000 soldiers deployed along the border.

*Photo: A Border Patrol agent stands on a ranch fence line with children taken into custody in South Texas brush country north of Laredo, Texas:*

*Ap Images*



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