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New Border Incursion In Hudspeth County


For the second time in two weeks, American law enforcement officers say men carrying high powered automatic weapons and who appeared to be Mexican soldiers violated the international boundary and crossed into the United States in Hudspeth County, East of El Paso. In the past the Mexican Consulate in El Paso had stated that their Government policy is that no armed Mexican soldiers are allowed closer than three miles to the U.S. border.

The latest incident happened just before sunset on Tuesday night, as a KFOX crew was on the scene. As a Hudspeth County sheriff's deputy was describing what happened during a reported incursion last week - suddenly one 'soldier' emerged from the brush on the Mexican side of the border and darted back under cover. Moments later though, two other men who appeared to be soldiers marched across a clearing, in plan view. Shortly after that, the Deputy spotted soldiers who were well hidden and out of camera range crossing into the United States - attempting to flank the Deputy and the news crew.

According to the Deputy "They are doing the classic thing, flanking around each side of us and actually coming up into the U.S. and trying to figure out what we are doing, they are looking at us very heavily."

Reporter Ben Swann replied, "So I guess it's time to go." The Deputy

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responded "Yeah, it would definitely be time to get out of here."

Just a week ago a caravan of three vehicles were spotted on I-10 by Hudspeth Deputies and chased to the same area of the border. One vehicle was captured, a second made it across the Rio Grande safely and a third vehicle became stuck in the river. As deputies converged on the scene, they say a Humvee approached from the Mexican side, and heavily armed men in military clothing crossed into the United States to rescue the smugglers. The vehicle was burned on the Mexican side of the river bank.

After this latest incident on Tuesday night, the U.S. Border Patrol reports that they were contacted by Mexican authorities who admitted the men were Mexican soldiers. Border Patrol Assistant Chief Robert Boatright told KFOX "Mexican officials got in touch with our Mexican liaison unit to advise us that they had requested the assistance of the Mexican military and that they were down in Hudspeth County." But he tells us this contact only occurred after the Mexican soldiers had been spotted by the Sheriff's Deputy.

Wednesday afternoon, the Mexican Consulate released a statement saying the heavily armed men were not Mexican Soldiers, but were State Police, investigating last week's smuggling incident. Consulate officials say the men will be in the area for the next several days.

Local law officers say as word of the latest incident spread on Wednesday morning, they were told that Texas Governor Rick Perry was releasing nearly \$4 million dollars in additional funding for Operation Linebacker, to assist in their efforts to secure the border. Meanwhile, a delegation of local law enforcement officers will be discussing their concerns with members of Congress and the Department of Homeland Security - first in Houston this week, then in Washington, D.C. next week.

But in the meantime, this latest incident only heightens concern among law officers, and those who live along the U.S. side of the border. The Deputy involved in Tuesday's incident told KFOX, "If it's going to take a bunch of us getting killed down here on the river to show everybody that this is a problem, then its going to happen, one of these days it will happen."

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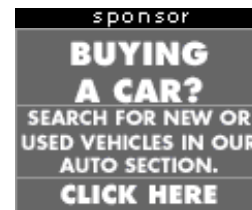
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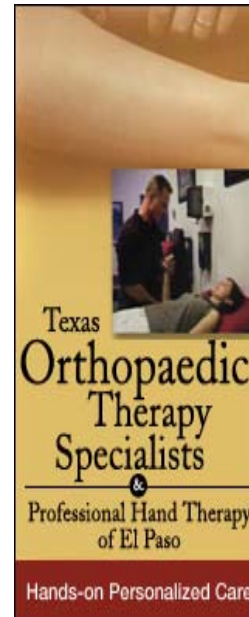
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