

Cat-and-Mole Games on the Mexican Border

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Highlight: Although authorities in Mexico and the United States celebrated this week after uncovering a tunnel used by smugglers, the traffickers are unlikely to stop digging.

Body

Authorities in San Diego and Tijuana, Mexico, trumpeted the news this week that they had seized more than 17 tons of marijuana and closed down a tunnel used to smuggle drugs under the border between the two countries.

As [NBC San Diego reported](#), United States officials announced on Wednesday that they had discovered the tunnel the day before, when they arrested two men driving a truck packed with three tons of marijuana from a warehouse near the Mexican border.

Investigators seized another six tons of drugs in the warehouse. About 400 yards away, Mexican authorities found another eight tons of marijuana in a warehouse.

Journalists in Mexico were given [a tour of the tunnel](#), which was sophisticated enough to have wooden supports and an electrical system, perhaps used to power lighting and ventilation.

Bales of marijuana seized from around the tunnel were marked with labels for Captain America, Bud Light and Sprite, apparently a coded system to identify their owners.

The Los Angeles Times [reported](#): "Dozens of the packages were labeled with pictures of Captain America, the symbol used by a major operator of the Sinaloa drug cartel in Tijuana, said Mexican Gen. Gilberto Landeros Briseno, in an interview with the Mexican media."

While the law-enforcement agents on both sides of the border celebrated the apparent blow they'd struck against the smugglers, that they made an almost identical announcement, in the same part of San Diego, 12 months ago suggests that the cartels do not stop digging when one of their tunnels is put out of commission.

As [The Associated Press reported](#), "more than 70 tunnels have been found on the border since October 2008." In a raid last November, the task force found two tunnels linking San Diego and Tijuana, lined with rail tracks.

After those tunnels were discovered, United States officials distributed [this video news release](#), showing images of the tunnel and tons of seized marijuana over music that seemed to have been borrowed from a movie soundtrack.

After that raid, American officials sought to maximize the publicity for their victory over the cartels, inviting television crews from [CNN](#), [the BBC](#) and [The A.P.](#) on tours of the most sophisticated tunnel.

But even in the midst of that publicity barrage, as his agency sought to convey the message that it was disrupting the smugglers, one United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent, Tim Durst, sounded a less optimistic note in an interview with The A.P. "This is somewhat of a cat-and-mouse game," he observed. "As long

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as there's a demand for the supply of drugs in the United States, then the drug smuggling organizations are going to continue to move." And, presumably, to dig.

- [Move to Legalize Marijuana in California Sparks Fears About Drop in Prices](#)
- [L.A. City Council and D.A. Spar Over Medical Marijuana Law](#)
- [Thousands Sign Up for Virtual **Border** Patrol](#)
- [Fun With California's Marijuana Laws](#)
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