

Border Patrol agents to build fence

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Border Patrol agents handy with a hammer are being diverted from enforcement duties to finish 70 miles of fencing on the shared border with Mexico. The Border Patrol is "going back into the fence-building business," said a memo last week asking for agents with construction experience, The Washington Times reported Tuesday. The agents are pitching in as the Bush administration withdraws half the National Guard troops sent last year to complete 70 miles of border fence by the end of the fiscal year on Sept. 30. "The president's game of pretending to enforce our border continues. He has never been serious about this issue at all," said Rich Pierce, executive vice president of the National Border Patrol Council, which represents the agency's 11,000 non-supervisory agents. Last year, the Bush administration sent 6,000 National Guard soldiers to help with construction and free the Border Patrol to recruit and train 6,000 new agents. Last week, the administration said the program was on track and the Guard troops would be cut to 3,000 by September's end. As of June, 13 miles of new border fence had been built, The Times reported.

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