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Border agents hold 3 after 2nd shooting

By Eric Swedlund
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

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U.S. Border Patrol agents Wednesday arrested three suspected drug smugglers they say shot at an agent on the Tohono O'odham Nation, the second time in less than a week agents have been shot at.

An agent on patrol on Arizona 86 east of Why about 7 a.m. saw a pickup truck with suspicious bundles in the bed, said Andrea Zortman, an agency spokeswoman.

The truck went north on Federal Route 34 before turning onto a dirt road near the Tohono O'odham village of Hickiwan.

One passenger in the truck fired at the agent five times, but neither the agent nor his car was hit, Zortman said. The truck drove off and agents

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found it about a mile away, with 493 pounds of marijuana in the bed. The three suspects were found about two hours later and detained.

Zortman said the incident is still under investigation and the suspects haven't been identified. She also said it is unknown what charges will be filed against the men, who are believed to be Mexican nationals.

On Friday, a drug smuggler fired on agents while fleeing back to Mexico in the Potrero Canyon area west of Nogales, Zortman said.

The smuggler missed the agents, fled across the border and was not captured.

Zortman said the incidents highlight the growing frustration and aggression of drug smugglers.

● Contact reporter Eric Swedlund at 629-9412 or at eswedlund@azstarnet.com.

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