

Border Wall Nearly Collapses During Testing, 13 Prototypes 'Breached' Along Mexican Border

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News Week, 9/19/18

A U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) report on President Donald Trump's proposed border wall shows more than a dozen points were "breached" during tests along the Mexican border.

Prototypes for the barrier between Mexico and the U.S. failed to meet the standards of "non-penetrable," with the recently released CBP report revealing that several test teams were able to breach sections of the wall. The heavily redacted report showed how the \$20 million Otay Mesa border wall designs will need to undergo significant improvements before any construction plans can be implemented.

In at least one case, test crews were able to make the prototype wall completely "unstable" to the point of collapse.



This summer, the Government Accountability Office released a report warning that President Donald Trump's proposed border wall will likely be much costlier than expected. Reuters | Kevin Lamarque

Several breaching scenarios were tested by experts from CBP, U.S. Special Operations Command and members of the Marine Corps. The tactical teams tested whether they could breach, scale or otherwise penetrate the walls in a real-life

scenario along the nearly 2,000-mile southern border. The report does not mention an effective remedy to stop tunneling as a way of bypassing the proposed border wall.

A CBP representative defended the wall's failure to stop the tactical teams, telling KNSD-TV that highly specialized equipment and an excessive amount of planning went into the successful breaches.

"The wall is never going to be all end-all, but what it is able to do is...slow down illegal traffic crossing the border and gives the Border Patrol not only a safer environment to work in but it also allows us time to identify and interdict that traffic and deploy appropriate resources to deal with it," CBP union spokesman Joshua Wilson said. "What I think we'll see is a hybrid of several different designs, taking the best features of each."

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This summer, the Government Accountability Office released a report warning that the wall will likely be much costlier than expected. The border's varying topography and issues related to land ownership are expected to dramatically increase the wall's price tag.

Andrea Guerrero of Alliance San Diego, a nonprofit supporting social equality and immigrants, joined critics of the wall who say it's an unnecessary and bloated project.

"It's troubling because this wall is a wasteful wall, a harmful wall and an irresponsible wall," Guerrero told KNSD-TV. "The report confirms what we've always believed: that this is a bad idea."

Responding to the wall's poor effectiveness, CBP issued a statement Monday clarifying that the tests were simply to identify potential features to be added to the final structure.

"As is the case with any barrier, the eight border wall prototypes were not and cannot be designed to be indestructible. Rather, this capability enables Border Patrol to impede or deny efforts to scale, breach, or dig under such a barrier, giving agents time to respond," the agency said in the statement.

Guerrero said that one of the border wall mockups was so unstable following a breaching exercise that test administrators feared it would collapse entirely.