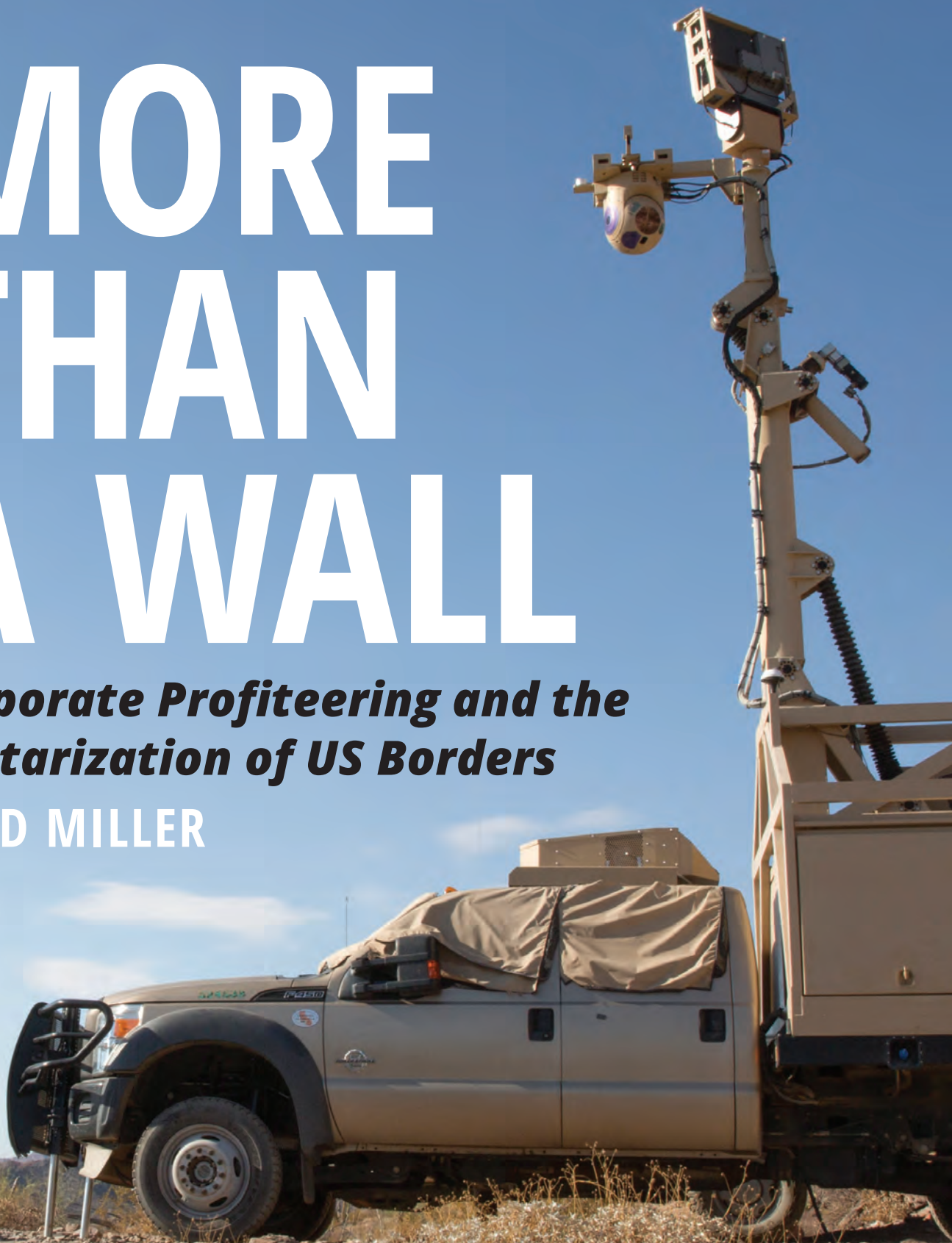


# MORE THAN A WALL

***Corporate Profiteering and the  
Militarization of US Borders***

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*Raytheon office in Arlington, Virginia & Northrop Grumman office in Falls Church, Virginia.  
Border Patrol Checkpoint in Ajo, Arizona and surveillance tower near Why, Arizona.*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

US President Donald Trump's obsession with 'building a wall' on the US-Mexico border has both distorted and obscured public debate on border control. This is not just because there is already a physical wall – 650 miles of it – but because Trump's theatrics and the Democrats' opposition to his plans have given the impression that the Trump administration is forging a new direction on border control. A closer look at border policy over the last decades, however, shows that Trump is ratcheting up – and ultimately consolidating – a long-standing US approach to border control.

This report looks at the history of US border control and the strong political consensus – both Republican and Democrat – in support of border militarization that long pre-dates the Trump administration. It shows how this political consensus has been forged to a significant degree by the world's largest arms (as well as a number of other security and IT) corporations that have made massive profits from the exponential growth of government budgets for border control. Through their campaign contributions, lobbying, constant engagement with government officials, and the revolving door between industry and government, these security corporations and their government allies have formed a powerful border-industrial complex. The evidence shows that it is these corporations – and their role in border infrastructure and policies – that have led to a predominantly militarized response to migration and thereby become the single biggest impediment to a humane response to migration.

## LONG HISTORY OF BOOMING BUDGETS FOR BORDER MILITARIZATION

The report begins by tracing the history of border control and militarization. It shows how US budgets for border and immigration control massively increased from the mid-1980s, a trend that has been accelerating ever since. These budgets rose from \$350m in 1980 (then run by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)) to \$1.2 billion in 1990; \$9.1 billion in 2003 and \$23.7 billion in 2018 (under two agencies, the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)). In other words, budgets have more than doubled in the last 15 years and increased by more than 6000% since 1980. This growth was matched by a similar growth in border patrol from 4,000 agents in 1994 to 21,000 today. Under its parent CBP agency (which includes an Office of Air and Marine Operations, investigative units, and the Office of Field Operations) there are 60,000 agents, the largest federal law-enforcement agency in the United States.

Importantly, it shows that modern US border control involves much more than a wall. The physical barriers on which Trump focuses for campaign purposes are but one feature of an extensive technological border-control infrastructure that penetrates deep into the US interior and into the border regions of Mexico as well as countries in Central America and the Caribbean and beyond. Since 1997, the US government has been steadily expanding the use of surveillance and monitoring technologies, including cameras, aircraft, motion sensors, drones, video surveillance and biometrics at the US-Mexico border. Border Patrol agent Felix Chavez, speaking at the Border Management Conference and Technology Expo

in El Paso in 2012, acknowledged this border arsenal, saying that 'in terms of technology, the capability we have acquired since 2004 is phenomenal'.

In line with the 1946 revisions to the Immigration and Nationality Act – and a 1957 decision by the Justice Department – border-control measures extend 100 miles inland, thus expanding the market for the border industry to an area where more than 200 million people, two-thirds of the US population, reside. This is reinforced by US Border Patrol strategies that emphasize a 'multi-layered' approach to patrolling the border. What is more, an active policy to externalize US border enforcement to prevent migrants getting anywhere near US borders – particularly since 9/11 – means there are both funding and active programs to train foreign border guards and transfer resources and infrastructure to other countries for border policing. Elaine Duke, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has called these international programs 'the away game of national security'.

This has created a seemingly limitless market for border-security corporations. For example, VisionGain argued in 2014 that the global border-security market was in an 'unprecedented boom period' due to three interlocking developments: 'illegal immigration and terrorist infiltration', more money for border policing in 'developing countries', and the 'maturation' of new technologies. MarketAndMarkets projects that this will be a \$52.95 billion market by 2022.

While this is a process taking place in many regions – see TNI's *Border Wars* reports on border policies in the European Union (EU) – the US provides the single largest market for border-security corporations, which have reaped handsome rewards under Democrat and Republican administrations alike.

## **CORPORATE PROFITS FROM BORDER MILITARIZATION**

The report unveils the scale of the revenues this border-security bonanza has provided, mainly to US corporations:

- ICE, CBP and Coast Guard together issued more than 344,000 contracts for border and immigration control services worth \$80.5 billion between 2006 and 2018. ICE issued more than 35,000 contracts (costing \$18.2 billion), CBP more than 64,000 (\$27 billion), and the Coast Guard more than 245,000 (\$35.3 billion). CBP contracts alone between 2006 and 2018 exceed the accumulated INS budgets from between 1975 and 1998 of approximately \$26.1 billion. They are also certainly less than the true figures, as reports by the US Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reports have consistently criticized these departments for their poor data transparency.
- Focusing in on CBP contracts – the largest government contractor in border and immigration control – the report identifies 14 companies that are giants in the border security business. These are Accenture, Boeing, Elbit, Flir Systems, G4S, General Atomics, General Dynamics, IBM, L3 Technologies, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, PAE, Raytheon, UNISYS, among several other top firms we list in the report that are receiving contracts. They include technology and security firms, but are clearly dominated by the same global arms firms that reap rewards from high levels of US military spending. In addition, it also profiles private prison companies CoreCivic and Geo Group who along with G4S are major players in providing immigration detention services.
- The volume and value of CBP contracts has grown to the point that in 2009, Lockheed Martin landed a contract potentially worth more than \$945 million for maintenance and upkeep of 16 P-3 surveillance planes equipped with airborne and surface-to-radar systems. This one contract was equal to the total entire border and immigration enforcement budgets from 1975 to 1978 (around \$923 million). Similarly, the contract to the San Diego-based General Atomics, worth \$276 million

in 2016 for the operational maintenance of the Predator B drone systems, almost exceeds any of the INS annual budgets in the 1970s.

- The money paid out to corporations dwarfs that given to humanitarian groups supporting refugees. For example, in 2016 the Office for Refugee Resettlement designated \$14.9 million to nine non-profit agencies to help people resettle, a tiny fraction of the total contracts given to corporations to stop, monitor, arrest, incarcerate and deport people.
- Ethical scandals involving some of the big ten border-security corporations have done little to slow down the revenue stream. UNISYS was found guilty in 2005 of over-billing taxpayers for almost 171,000 employee hours; Flir Systems was found guilty of bribery in 2015; G4S has faced charges for mistreatment and even the death of detainees in the US and UK.

Tracking US government contracts for border-security operations overseas is harder to calculate as they are disbursed by multiple agencies through more than 100 programs. The report shows, however, that Raytheon is one of the most significant players – receiving over \$1 billion between 2004 and 2019 from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency – which has included significant border-building operations in Jordan and the Philippines. According to Raytheon’s own sources, it has deployed border ‘solutions’ in more than 24 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Americas, covering more than 10,000 kilometers of land and maritime borders. This included deploying more than 500 mobile surveillance systems, training more than 9,000 members of security forces, and building 15 ‘sustainment centers’.

Corporations have not been the only ones to benefit. Universities and research institutes have also cashed in through nine Centers of Excellence (COEs) on Borders, Trade, & Immigration that in 2017 received \$10 million directly, with another \$90 million dedicated to research and development (R&D). The University of Houston, University of Arizona, the University of Texas El Paso, University of Virginia, West Virginia University, University of North Carolina, University of Minnesota, Texas A&M, Rutgers University, American University, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, and the Migration Policy Institute all receive DHS funding. According to the DHS, these COEs have developed more than 100 targeted tools, technologies, and knowledge products for use ‘across the homeland security enterprise’. The COEs have received \$330 million of additional investment from ‘external sources’, presumably the private sector, for homeland security research, development, and education. Other research corporations working with the COEs include MITRE, SAS and Voir Dire International, LLC.

## **THE CONSOLIDATION OF A BORDER-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX**

The report shows that corporations’ success in winning ever bigger contracts is not an unexpected bonanza, but has been engineered by the same corporations’ growing involvement in US politics. The main beneficiaries of border contracts are also the same companies making the most campaign contributions, doing the most lobbying, meeting most often with government officials, and entering government as advisors and staff in strategic positions of influence. In this way, they have shaped the border-militarization policies from which they have profited.

With data from the opensecrets.org database – run by the Center for Responsive Politics – the report reveals that:

- The border-security corporate giants are also the biggest campaign contributors to members of the House Appropriations Committee, the congressional body that regulates expenditures of the federal government, or earmarks the money for potential contracts. Between 2006 and 2018, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Boeing contributed a total of \$27.6 million

to members of the committee. During the 115th Congress (2017–2018), Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin were the top two contributors with \$866,194 and \$691,401 respectively offered to members of the Appropriations Committee, along with Raytheon, Boeing, Deloitte, and General Dynamics, all making donations of over \$500,000. While these were all companies winning military contracts and were also lobbying on military issues, they also received substantial contracts from CBP.

- The top seven contributors to the House Appropriations Committee members (2017–2018) are all CBP contractors: Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Honeywell International, General Dynamics, Deloitte LLP, Boeing, and Raytheon.
- The border-security corporations also make the biggest campaign contributions to members of the strategic House Homeland Security Committee, which handles legislation on border and immigration control. Between 2006 and 2018, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Boeing contributed a total of \$6.5 million to members of the committee. In the 115th Congress (2017–2018), Northrop Grumman donated \$293,324, General Dynamics \$150,000 and Lockheed Martin \$224,614.
- Unsurprisingly, the positions of politicians on these committees frequently align with the interests of their corporate donors, regardless of party affiliation. Texas Democrat Henry Cuellar, for example, was one of many Democrats in 2018 who argued in the media for technological solutions to border security. He failed to mention, however, that his largest campaign contributors came from GEO Group and CoreCivic (\$55,690), Northrop Grumman (\$13,000), Boeing Corporation (\$10,000), Caterpillar Inc (\$10,000) and Lockheed Martin (\$10,000) – all of which would benefit from government investment in border security.
- Lobbying on homeland security – of which border militarization is a significant part – has increased significantly in the last 17 years, involving many of the border-security corporations. In total, from 2002 to 2019 there were nearly 20,000 reported lobbying visits related to homeland security. In 2003 Northrop Grumman was the top lobbyist, reporting five lobbying visits where it was one of 385 clients with 637 reported visits. (“Clients” refer to either the companies such as Northrop Grumman) or separate firm that supplies a representative to one of those companies. “Visits” refer to the number of times that a client visit a congress member, a policy maker of some sort, to advocate or push for some sort of legislation or policy or the allocation of money in the annual budgets.) In 2006, this more than doubled: 724 clients with 1,428 reported visits, led by Lockheed Martin, Accenture, Boeing, Raytheon, and Unisys. And in 2018, there were 677 clients with 2,841 visits listed: including top CBP and ICE contractors Geo Group, L3 Technologies, Accenture, Leidos, Boeing, CoreCivic, and also companies such as Facebook, Microsoft, and Visa.
- The extent of the lobbying can be seen in the efforts of the top CBP contractors for the 2018 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 3355). By the time, it was signed by the president on 23 March 2018, it would be the largest border and immigration budget in US history at more than \$23 billion (the sum total for CBP and ICE). In support of the bill, representatives of General Dynamics lobbied 44 times, Northrop Grumman 19, Lockheed Martin 41 and Raytheon 28, in addition to a number of other lobbyists representing these firms and other border-security giants including L3 Technologies, IBM and Palantir. The lobbying groups massively outstripped the few advocacy and civil society organizations (CSOs) such as the Lutheran Refugee Service. The result in 2018 was the approval of the Omnibus Appropriations bill, which increased border-control budgets everywhere: the DHS budget was up by 13% at \$55.6 billion, \$16.357 billion for CBP (a 15% increase), and \$7.452 billion for ICE. The latter included funding for 40,520 detention beds per day, up by 1,196 from FY 2017. In 2017, CoreCivic Inc. reported \$840,000 in total lobbying, through four different firms, mainly for federal budget and appropriations. Geo Group reported close to \$2 million in lobbying in 2017 through six different lobbying organizations.



- This gives only a partial picture as a great deal of lobbying also takes place behind closed doors, especially on issues that are controversial, such as immigration. It also includes other forms than the registered lobbying visits. For example, between 2000 and 2005, General Atomics spent around \$660,000 on 86 trips for legislators, aides, and their spouses to build support for its business.

Along with constant lobbying and campaign contributions, the border-security giants also build powerful and fruitful relationships through their constant interactions with government officials. One of the key arenas for this are the now annual Border Security Expos that since 2005 have brought together industry executives and top officials from the DHS, CBP, and ICE. The event currently includes a pre-Expo golf day where Homeland Security and industry executives can meet casually and discuss future prospects and possible contracts.

As well as providing a place for border-security corporations to hawk their wares, and promote their latest technological 'solutions', their seminars also encourage a common perspective, language and policy approach. This is backed up by the personal networking at lunches, coffee breaks and dinners that will cement cooperation for years to come. Panels at the 2020 Expo in San Antonio include titles such as 'Identify and address new and emerging border challenges and opportunities through technology, partnership, and innovation', 'Mass Migration and Unaccompanied Children: Financial and National Security Impacts' and 'Border: Wall – Ports – System(s) – Technology – Infrastructure – Integration – Modernization'. The US Expos are paralleled in similar events across the globe, such as the Expo de Seguridad in Mexico City, Milipol in Paris and ISDEF in Tel Aviv.

As if relations between industry and government were not close enough, there is also a revolving door between corporations and government. Ex-government officials are often head-hunted by various corporations, or enter the lobbying industry – as not only lobbyists, but also as consultants and strategists.

- Between 2006 and July 2019, 177 people have gone through the DHS revolving door and 34 have worked both for the House Homeland Security Committee and for a lobbying firm.
- Between 2003 and 2017, at least four CBP commissioners and three DHS Secretaries went onto homeland security corporations or consulting companies after leaving government.
- Robert Bonner, for example, after his time as the first CBP commissioner (2003–2005), went on to join the Sentinel HS group, a Washington-based homeland security consulting firm. In 2010, CBP issued Sentinel HS a \$481,000 contract to do 'strategic consulting' over five years. This included facilitating 'discussions among senior Border Patrol leaders' at forums and conferences near CBP headquarters in Washington.

The government–industry relation has become so tight and so blurred that some government officials no longer see any distinction. At a SBNet Industry Day in 2005, Michael Jackson, the Deputy Secretary of the DHS, who had previously been Lockheed Martin's Chief Operating Officer, addressed a conference room full of would-be contract recipients: 'this is an unusual invitation. I want to make sure you have it clearly, that we're asking you to come back and tell us how to do our business. We're asking you. We're inviting you to tell us how to run our organization'.

It is no exaggeration to say that the US has a border–industrial complex as powerful as the military–industrial complex which President Eisenhower famously warned against in 1961. Indeed, many of the corporations are the same players, shaping not only military policy and procurement, but also increasingly border and migration policy. So, it is hardly surprising that a militarized and repressive approach to border and immigration control dominates US politics.

In this context, Trump's election, with his deliberately polarizing rhetoric on immigration and his support for militarized borders, provides a definite boost to the industry – albeit offering no significantly new direction. Certainly, industry has openly welcomed the increase in budgets. CBP budgets have gone from \$14,439,714,000 in 2017 to \$16,690,317,000 in 2019, an increase of more than \$2 billion to spend on more contractors, both new and existing. ICE has also seen a nearly \$2 billion increase over the same period. As the report details, however, this growth largely follows a long trajectory of border militarization that has seen a constant ratcheting up of budgets and borders over many decades.

While the focus of this report is on the corporate profit made from the massive expansion of the border industrial complex, the consequences are felt in human lives, most of all the widespread, and intentional crisis of death and disappearance in the borderlands.

In their introduction to the Disappeared report series, the border humanitarian organization, No More Deaths, which has co-sponsored this report writes, "Over the past 20 years, the US has armored border cities with walls, cameras, sensors, personnel, and military-style infrastructure...As a result, border crossers now enter the US through remote rural areas, fanning out across the backcountry region north of the border and carving a complex web of trail systems through mountain passes, rolling hills, desolate plains, and dense brushlands."

The creation of an ever more deadly journey means that "thousands of people have perished in the borderlands due to dehydration, heat-related illness, exposure, and other preventable environmental causes. Extreme heat and bitter cold, scarce and polluted water sources, treacherous topography, and near-total isolation from possible rescue are used as weapons of border enforcement."

So for concerned citizens, who have been rightly horrified by the policies pursued by the Trump administration towards migrants, it means that it is not enough to replace Donald Trump in order to establish more humane US policies on migration. The militarization of US borderlands has a long history entrenched by the corporations that thrive from it. The revenues and profits of these extremely powerful business interests depend on an ever-expanding market for border control and militarization. These border-security giants exercise strong influence on Republican and Democrat politicians in strategic positions in the executive and legislature as well as in key media positions. Any strategy to change the direction of US policy on migration will require confronting this border-industrial complex and removing its influence over politics and policy. For while those corporations who profit from the suffering of migrants remain embedded in positions of power within government and society, it will be a huge challenge to forge a new approach that puts the lives and dignity of migrants first.



**TOP TO BOTTOM**

*Humanitarian aid office in Arivaca, Arizona, a ranching community that has become heavily militarized as the region has increased enforcement efforts.*

*A vigil for lives lost during their journey through the desert at the CBP checkpoint in Arivaca, Arizona.*

*The CBP outpost between Arivaca and Sasabe, Arizona.*

# INTRODUCTION

William 'Drew' Dodds, the salesperson for the company StrongWatch, was at the top of his game when he used football metaphors to describe US policing strategy on its border with Mexico. In his telling, the international boundary line was the 'line of scrimmage', and the product he was pitching was a mobile video-surveillance system named Freedom-On-The-Move – a camera set on a retractable mast in the bed of a truck and maneuvered with an X-box controller – operated like a 'roving linebacker'. In American football, the 'line of scrimmage' is the point of contention where two teams fight for territory, which would be the international boundary line in Dodd's metaphor. And his technology would be the 'roving linebacker', or the secondary defense, able to trap anybody who got through. To his prospective buyers in the US Border Patrol, the comparison was clear – border policing was a game to be won or lost.

While showing how easy it was to maneuver the camera on Freedom-On-The-Move with a video-game controller, Dodds explained how it would fit key aspects of the border-enforcement strategy. Border crossers, he explained – using water bottles as props – often crossed the 'line of scrimmage' undetected. They were seldom caught until the 'last mile', far from the boundary line.

To listen to Dodds, a friendly US marine veteran – Afghanistan and Iraq, 2001–2004 – with the physique of a linebacker himself, was to experience a new worldview of a rapidly expanding and reinforcing border under contract. Even just 30 years ago, such high-tech US border apparatus might have seemed like a mad dream from the fringes of US society. Today, his vision of the borderlands as a football field seemed perfectly mainstream inside the brightly lit convention center in Phoenix, Arizona, where the Sixth Annual Border Security Expo took place in March 2012. Dodds was just one of hundreds of salespeople peddling their border-enforcement products and national security wares, and StrongWatch was but one of more than 100 companies scrambling for a profitable edge in a growing market.

With his vivid talk, Dodds was speaking the new language of an ever more powerful corporate world in which the need to build up border enforcement is accepted, celebrated, profited from – and rarely debated. It is a world in which billions of dollars are at stake, where nothing is more important than creating, testing, and even flaunting increasingly sophisticated and expensive technologies, weapons, and jails meant for the Border Patrol and other forces of social control, without serious thought about what their implementation might portend. It is also a world of cajoled and lobbied politicians receiving campaign contributions, where border bills are always coming and immigration enforcement budgets are always on the rise.

Adira, a 21-year-old woman from the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca is a powerful example of someone who was caught in Dodds' 'last mile' after crossing the border undetected and walking for several days through the desert. Her story was all too common in Arizona. As she described her experience in a women's shelter in Nogales, it became apparent that she had almost died and been brought back to life. US Homeland Security had formally expelled her only days before.

Still in trauma, she stared downwards, her face colorless, as she talked.

Her story of crossing the border has been told so many times before by so many people. To avoid the militarized surveillance apparatus built by the likes of Dodds, she and her companions walked through the southern Arizona desert with little – and then no – water or food. The apparatus did not stop them, it just changed their route, pushing the group into more dangerous territory. High concentrations of agents, walls, and technologies have blockaded traditional crossing points through urban areas. This was deliberate. The fact that the journey through places like the Arizona desert could be ‘mortal’,<sup>1</sup> according to the original Border Patrol strategy paper in 1994, made it a deterrent. It is worth mentioning that 1994 was also the year of the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which, while privileging large corporations, would wreak havoc on Mexico’s small farmers and small businesses. The unprecedented waves of migration that followed have often been called the ‘NAFTA exodus’.

Since it would be almost impossible to not ‘trip’ one of the thousands of implanted, unattended ground sensors – made by such companies as the Texas-based Systems & Processes Engineering Corporation –<sup>2</sup> Adira’s group went into an isolated and mountainous stretch of desert. At risk was not only that they would be arrested, but also what has become a standard Border Patrol practice of ‘scattering’ people. One way this happens is when a helicopter (perhaps manufactured by Bell or Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company)<sup>3</sup> comes down so close to the ground that a moving group can feel the force of its propellers and everybody runs in fear. Another way is that patrolling agents with AR-15s (potentially manufactured by DPMS Panther Arms)<sup>4</sup> chase groups on foot right into environmental hazards, as happened to José Cesáreo Aguilar Esparza who ran over the side of a cliff and fell to his death.<sup>5</sup>

The humanitarian aid organization *No More Deaths* calls these ‘deadly apprehension methods’.<sup>6</sup> Such chases can lead to heat exhaustion and dehydration,

blisters and sprains, other injuries due to falls and drowning, depending where you are on the border. The most prominent consequence of scattering is separation from your group, which could be deadly in a vast desert where nobody can drink enough water.

By the fourth day, the mountain began to talk to Adira, and she suspected that she was coming to the end of her young life. After she could no longer walk, the guide dragged her, telling her constantly: ‘We just have to make it to the next point’. When they reached a road, Adira remembered convulsing four times. She recalled some of her companions experiencing major spontaneous nose bleeds. And then she remembered no more. She woke up in a hospital. There were scars on her chest. Medics must have used a machine, she thought, to shock her back to life. She found out later that somebody had lit a fire to attract the Border Patrol. She was lucky not to be among the more than 7,000 corpses found in the desert since the early 1990s, or one of the thousands of people who have disappeared into its vast landscape.<sup>7</sup> From 2014 to 2018 there have been more than 30,000 deaths recorded by the International Organization on Migration (IOM). This is a ‘minimum estimate’,<sup>8</sup> since so many deaths are never recorded.

It was to catch the likes of Adira that Dodds was marketing his Freedom-On-The-Move technology. He talked to everybody, no matter who they were, as if they were a prospective buyer, someone who needed to understand that his product would fit in the surveillance apparatus perfectly, become part of a Defense in Depth strategy that stretches the border 100 miles [160 kilometers] inland. Dodds was speaking not only to a burgeoning border market, but also one he expected to be booming for years to come. He had every reason to believe that this was true since every market forecast indicated it. He wanted to make a sale.

Above Dodds, banners for General Dynamics, FLIR thermal imaging, and Raytheon (three top Customs and Border Protection (CBP) contractors) hung from the high ceiling, competing for eyeballs with the latest in aerostats – mini-surveillance blimps.

NEANY Inc.'s aerial drones and their waterborne equivalents sat on a thick red carpet next to a desert-camouflaged trailer headquarters. At various exhibits, rifle-bearing mannequins dressed in camouflage and helmets with surveillance gizmos hanging off them seemed as if they might walk right out of the exhibition hall and take over the sprawling city of Phoenix with brute force. Dodds' company, StrongWatch, like many other companies at the Border Security Expo, also sold its products to the US military. But when operations began to wind down in Iraq and Afghanistan in the early 2010s many began to actively seek new markets. As Dodds himself said, 'we are bringing the battlefield to the border'.

As this report will show, the US border-enforcement apparatus is much more than a wall. Despite the Trump administration's constant talk about 'the wall', there has been a massive US border-enforcement build-up for over 25 years, including strategies, technologies, and the deployment of personnel, policies, and practices that extend much further than the US international boundary and the wall. There are many 'walls' in the US border-enforcement regime – at many different levels – technological, biometric, judicial, carceral, and policy, all with budgets and lots of companies hoping to cash in. Corporations are receiving more lucrative border contracts than ever before; many single contracts to individual companies are larger than entire US annual budgets for border and immigration enforcement in the 1980s. More money from the corporate coffers is also flowing into the campaigns of politicians – including the key figures in drawing up border policy and appropriations (the process through which budgets are determined) – than ever before. This access to Washington and closed-door meetings of the powerful drives policy, legislation, and ever-increasing US federal budgets for border and immigration enforcement. Yet the corporate role eludes public scrutiny and the power it wields in driving policy is left out of US debates on immigration.

By the time the Trump administration took office in 2017, all these intricate power relations between public and private were already firmly in place. Prior to Trump, CBP had already issued tens of thousands of contracts, and miles of technologies and barriers stretched out across the US borderlands. This meant that the Trump administration wielded an unprecedented border- and immigration-enforcement apparatus. And, as has been evident during his years in office, it has been easy for him to ratchet it up even more. While tearing mothers and fathers from their children at the border, and confining an increasing number of people in prison camps, and pushing people like Adira into ever more desolate locations, the administration continues to issue more contracts, deploy more barriers and machinery, benefiting a powerful coterie of corporations.

Trump took office with clear plans to clamp down on the border at a time when there has never been more movement of people on the planet. Such a combination has only brightened the mood at the places like the Border Security Expo. In 2018, law-enforcement liaison with the US Border Patrol, Maurice Gill, seemed to capture the mood: 'It's free money! For us! For you! We need to operationalize *right now*'.<sup>9</sup>



*A mural of colonisation and conquest in Eloy, Arizona where one of the nation's most notorious detention facilities is located.*

*A map of the Ajo Bombing Range, one of the areas completely off limits to humanitarian efforts in the region. While thousands of remains have been discovered in the surrounding desert there is hardly any information about how many deaths have occurred on the bombing range. Local aid organizations suspect thousands.*

# HISTORY OF US BORDER CONTROL

During the 2016 US presidential campaign, 'building the wall' became Donald Trump's go-to line. It was sure to get applause from his supporters, and was presented as if he were the first person to even think about doing such a thing. It was absurd given that there was already 654 miles [1,046km] of border walls and barriers in existence. But even so, it exposed the lack of knowledge of history of US borders and border control, which goes back much further than commonly imagined.

The first formulations and expansions of what would become the southern US border, after the nation was created in 1776, emerged in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The frontier was tied to a settler colonial vision, in which the goal was to seize land, while expounding the virtues of white, European civilization. In doing so, settlers trounced, subjugated, and killed indigenous populations. At this point the term 'frontier' referred to the 'lands outside of the jurisdiction of the United States, claimed by various European powers and inhabited by assorted Indian nations, that eventually would be purchased, seized, or otherwise acquired by the United States', according to Ethan Nadelmann.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the US border was more like a frontier, and moved aggressively westward up to the 1845 Mexican-American war. Before the war, the US border started where Louisiana met Texas and went north, cutting through the southern edge of today's Oklahoma, the center of Colorado, and then stretched to southern Oregon. After winning the war, the US seized 55 per cent of Mexican territory. The military action was praised by journalists such as John L. Sullivan, who wrote '[It is] the right of our manifest destiny to over spread and possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty'.<sup>11</sup> The 1853 Gadsden Purchase – in which the US confiscated from Mexico what is now southern Arizona – set the territorial shape we know today as the United States. The international boundary

cut across indigenous lands, such as Tohono O'odham, whose territory (including ceremonial sites) extended deep into Mexico. A common saying among Native Americans and people of Mexican heritage in the US Southwest, is that 'we didn't cross the border, the border crossed us'.<sup>12</sup>

Since it was established in 1924, the Border Patrol was an agency meant to exclude specific groups of people from entering the United States. The agency enforced the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 (still in effect), the first US legislation to target a specific nationality. It also enforced immigration legislation in 1917 and 1924 that targeted a whole host of other people, including those who were 'morally undesirable', such as anarchists, idiots, and beggars, and required that people take a literacy test upon entry to the United States. In the 1930s, the US Border Patrol was involved in the mass deportation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans, and the round-up of Japanese and Japanese Americans into internment camps during World War II. In the 1950s, it also organized a mass deportation of Mexican immigrants, known as the derogatory Operation Wetback.

Even so, the agency's growth was gradual and budgets were low. Border enforcement was not a priority for Washington. Border towns grew on both sides with strong community and familial ties. In Nogales, well into the twentieth century



officials would open up the border for the Cinco de Mayo parade that criss-crossed from one side to the other as if the border didn't exist.<sup>13</sup> Separating Mexico from the United States was a flimsy chain-link fence (barbed only in certain places) that was relatively porous; people could cross back and forth and visit family members, play basketball, pay bills at the department store. The valorization of a free flow of people from one side of the border to the other was prominent even among major US political figures. In 1971, after a member of her security group cut through the barbed-wire fence on the international boundary, First Lady Pat Nixon crossed from California into the Mexican city of Tijuana during an event and told the gathered people, 'I hope there won't be a fence here too long'.<sup>14</sup> This perception, however, would radically change. As geographer Joseph Nevins wrote, '... the press played a key role in legitimating the perception of a Mexican invasion by uncritically reporting INS reports alleging that unauthorized migrants were producers of poverty, crime, and joblessness'.<sup>15</sup>

Between 1978 and 1988, the US border and immigration budgets more than doubled, from \$283.1 million to \$807.8 million.<sup>16</sup> These budgets are from the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), the agency in charge of border and immigration enforcement until such operations moved to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in 2003. This upsurge accelerated with the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act by the Reagan administration in 1986 which, while providing an extensive legalization program in the United States, also placed an emphasis on bolstering border enforcement. As sociologist Tim Dunn writes, '...the Reagan administration at times starkly framed the topic of undocumented immigration as a national security issue—e.g. invoking images of "tidal waves" of refugees and of terrorist infiltration'.<sup>17</sup>

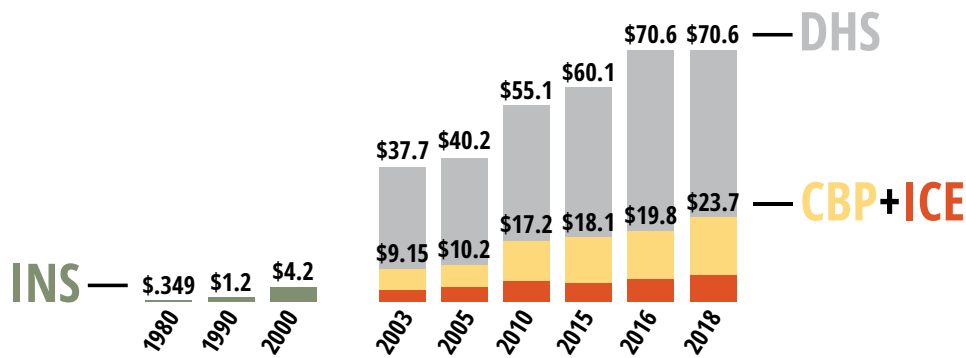
By 1994 the INS budget had doubled again to reach \$1.5 billion. Operations Hold-the-Line, Gatekeeper and Safeguard were about to usher in a new era of border control under the new strategy of Prevention Through Deterrence. These operations

concentrated Border Patrol agents, built barriers, and deployed technologies along international boundaries in cities such as Nogales, El Paso, San Diego, and Brownsville, where people had crossed back and forth with relative ease. In El Paso, for example, Operation Hold-the-Line was implemented so rapidly in September 1993 that in a major protest hundreds of people from Ciudad Juárez took over one of the international bridges and cut off traffic for several days. The central idea of Prevention Through Deterrence was that if you cut off unauthorized crossings in traditionally accessible places – like urban areas – people would give up trying to cross, deterred by the rough, isolated, and potentially deadly terrain where they would be forced to go. These operations took place just as NAFTA was finalized. As INS commissioner Doris Meissner told Congress in 1993, '... responding to the likely short-to medium term impacts of NAFTA will require strengthening our enforcement efforts along the border, both at and between ports of entry'.<sup>18</sup>

Of course, there were other justifications for what would become a historic fortification of the US border, such as the emphasis the United States has put on its counter-narcotic operations since the Nixon presidency in the early 1970s, but Meissner was correct – NAFTA would be particularly hard-hitting to Mexican farmers who could not compete with massive US grain giants like Archer Daniel Midland or Cargill. As reported by the research and advocacy group Public Citizen, 'The North American Free Trade Agreement crushed small farmers in Mexico, displacing millions in rural communities', and leading to the doubling of Mexican migration to the United States. Moreover, the importing of 'big box stores' killed an estimated 28,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Mexico. Undocumented Mexicans in the United States rose from 4.8 million in 1993 to 11.7 million in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

US President Bill Clinton addressed the issue of increased migration in the 1995 State of the Union address: 'All Americans, not only in the states most heavily affected but in every place in the country, are rightly disturbed by the large numbers of

## GRAPHIC 1: BORDER AGENCY BUDGET GROWTH 1980–2018 (IN \$US BILLIONS)



Sources: DOJ; JMD; BS: Budget Trend Data, Immigration and Naturalization Service, [https://www.justice.gov/archive/jmd/1975\\_2002/2002/html/page104-108.htm](https://www.justice.gov/archive/jmd/1975_2002/2002/html/page104-108.htm)

The Department of Homeland Security DHS budget, <https://www.dhs.gov/dhs-budget>

illegal aliens entering our country ... That's why our administration has moved aggressively to secure our borders by hiring a record number of new border guards, by deporting twice as many criminal agents as ever before, by cracking down on illegal hiring, by barring welfare benefits to illegal aliens'.<sup>20</sup>

Clinton was not lying: the post-NAFTA Prevention Through Deterrence operations significantly increased border and immigration budgets, which included building border walls. Over history, there have been various iterations of fences and barriers along the US–Mexico border, but the prominent recent shift took place in 1990s when the US Army Corps of Engineers removed the chain-link fences in towns such as Nogales and replaced them with panels of rusty landing mats from the Vietnam and Persian Gulf wars. The new walls stood at about 15 feet (4.5m).

In 1995, the INS budget was already almost doubling each year, and rising by 300 per cent a year by 2000. By 2002, the last year of its existence, the INS budget had reached \$6.5 billion.<sup>21</sup> Towards the end of the Clinton's administration, it was evident that more migrants, unable to cross through the cities, were being funneled into the desolate and deadly deserts. Further, the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IIRIRA) radically changed immigration law in terms of who could be criminalized and then deported. During the Clinton administration from 1992 to 2000, the expulsions and banishment of unauthorized

migrants went from 20,000 to 150,000 per year, particularly after 1996.<sup>22</sup>

The attacks in the United States of 11 September 2001 (9/11), forever altered the apparatus of border and immigration enforcement. In what journalist Roberto Lovato called the 'largest, most important restructuring of the federal government since the end of World War II',<sup>23</sup> the US Border Patrol moved into the newly-created Department of Homeland Security (DHS) from the Department of Justice. It created the third-largest cabinet-level department in terms of the number of employees. The Border Patrol became part of a new agency called Customs and Border Protection (CBP), on its way to becoming the largest federal law-enforcement agency in the United States. Its mission was to protect the United States from 'terrorists' and 'weapons of mass destruction'.<sup>24</sup> While to date there has been no such person or weapons interdicted at the US border, ever more funding was poured into budgets for border and immigration enforcement. The 2003 combined budgets of CBP and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) were \$9.9 billion.<sup>25</sup> This was a 1,000 per cent increase in 10 years. And things were just getting started.

While terrorists and weapons of mass destruction were not flowing over the US border, an increasing number of US and Canadian corporate executives and their operations were crossing the border in the opposite direction. The impacts of the 2005 Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) are similar to those of its predecessor,

NAFTA. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras (the three countries experiencing high rates of forced migration, economic deprivation, and violence), 'have been inundated with a doubling of agricultural imports (mainly grains) from US agribusiness'. As Public Citizen writes, 'the warnings that CAFTA would spur further displacement have unfortunately proven accurate'.<sup>26</sup>

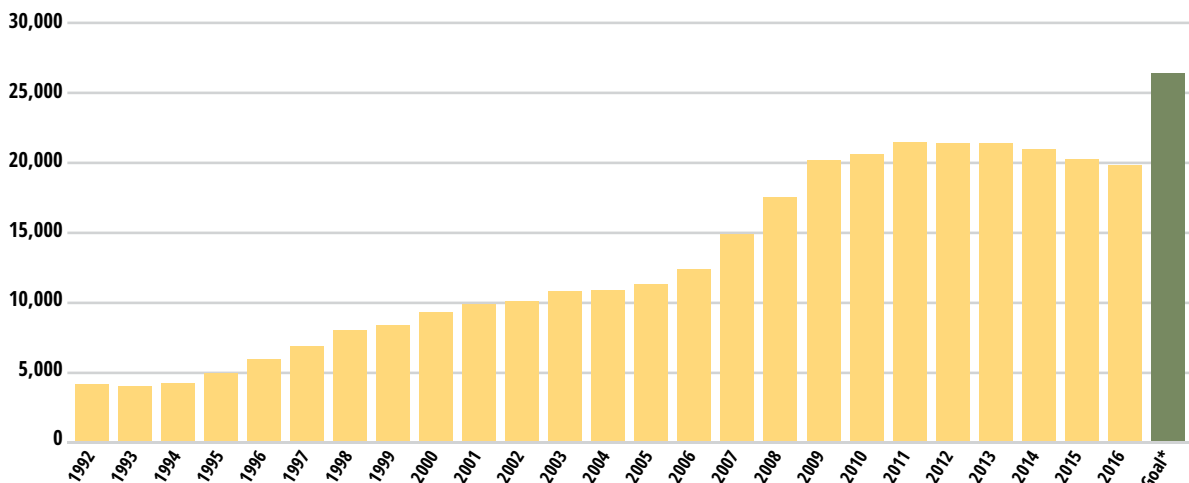
By 2006, combined CBP and ICE budgets surpassed \$11 billion, again a new record for border and immigration enforcement, only to be overtaken in 2007 when it reached \$12 billion.<sup>27</sup> These surging budgets meant mass-hiring and aggressive recruitment (efforts included a 'recruiting' racing car on the NASCAR circuit, where Border Patrol agents were the pit crew, from approximately 2007 to 2009). From 1994 to 2012 Border Patrol went from 4,000 agents to approximately 21,000, an unprecedented growth since the agency's founding in 1994 (see Graphic 2 below). Customs and Border Protection, at 60,000 agents today, became the United States' largest federal law-enforcement agency.<sup>28</sup>

In 2006, the Secure Fence Act became the largest border wall construction project ever enacted by the US government. It resulted in approximately 650 miles [1,046km] of barriers, strategically placed along the 2,000 mile [3,218 km] frontier. Such construction is indeed costly, with a price tag of approximately \$4 million per mile.<sup>29</sup>

It is also environmentally destructive since bulldozers are used before construction. The US federal government waived more than 30 critical environmental and cultural heritage laws that included the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act.<sup>30</sup> In one case, the US federal government built vehicle barriers on top of ancestral sites of the Tohono O'odham Nation in southern Arizona: 'Imagine a bulldozer parking your family graveyard, turning up bones', Tohono O'odham legislative chairman Ned Norris Jr. told the US Congress in 2008.<sup>31</sup>

After 9/11, the US federal government also created ICE under the Department of Homeland Security. Fueled by the policy shifts of the Clinton administration, ICE administered a deportation regime that would grow to include more than 250 detention centers,<sup>32</sup> many run by private companies such as CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America) and Geo Group, which charge as much as \$134 per person per day per bed (and \$319 per family).<sup>33</sup> Deportations from the United States, which had reached 150,000 a year under Clinton, grew to an annual average of nearly 400,000 during the Obama administration. By the end of his term in 2017, Obama would be responsible for more deportations than any other president's administration in history, and more than the sum of every single president in the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> Because of this, activists nicknamed

## GRAPHIC 2: SIZE OF BORDER PATROL WORKFORCE



\*21,000 authorized in FY2016, plus 5,000 announced by President Trump

Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

Obama 'deporter in chief'. But Obama was only further advancing an apparatus that was already undergoing massive growth, a churning money-making machine created by both Republican and Democrat presidents alike.

By 2012, at \$18 billion, the United States was spending more on border and immigration enforcement than all other federal law-enforcement agencies *combined*, 24 per cent more than the combined spending of the FBI, Drug Enforcement Agency, US Marshalls, and the Bureau on Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.<sup>35</sup>

When Donald Trump took office in 2017, with promises of a border wall central to his campaign, the budget had grown to approximately \$20 billion.

Before setting foot in the White House, Trump had a border arsenal unprecedented in US history. This included 650 miles [1,046 kilometers] of walls and barriers, approximately 60,000 CBP and 20,000 ICE agents,<sup>36</sup> and enforcement systems that included some of the most sophisticated technology on the market. Constitutional attorney and author John Whitehead referred to this post-9/11 DHS build-up as the creation of a 'standing army on American soil', in a 2014 op-ed.<sup>37</sup> There was, indeed, plenty for Trump to work with in order to enact his hard-line campaign promises to clamp down on immigration. The 2018 budget grew to more than \$23 billion, and with calls for significantly more walls, agents, and technologies, the border corporate nexus is only anticipating more to come.

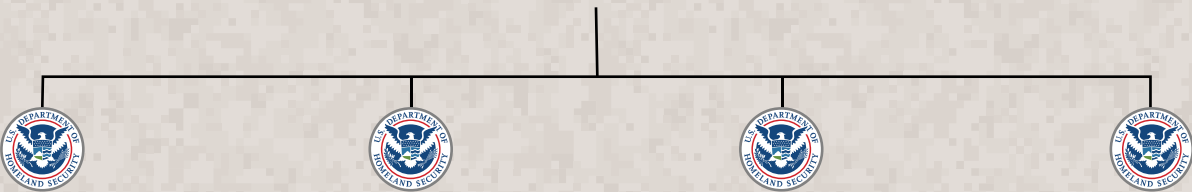
**GRAPHIC 3: US AGENCIES FOR IMMIGRATION CONTROL (2019)**



## DHS

### Department of Homeland Security

A Cabinet Department of the US Federal Government charged with counter terrorism, border, immigration, and customs enforcement, cyber security, and the protection of critical infrastructure.



### USCIS

#### U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services

Agency that administers the US naturalization and immigration system for visa, asylum, and citizen applications.



### CBP

#### Customs and Border Protection

Agency tasked with border and customs enforcement composed of the Border Patrol, Field Operations, and the Office of Air and Marine Operations. CBP monitors the entry and exit of people through the official ports of entry (POE), as well as monitors and patrols areas between the POEs, in a 100 mile jurisdiction.



### ICE

#### Immigration and Customs Enforcement

Agency tasked to enforce US immigration laws by running operations in collaboration with police in the interior, as well as the detention and deportation regime. It also has an international investigative unit.



### TSA

#### Transportation Security Administration

Agency tasked with screening passengers and their luggage at airports.



*A young boy plays in the town of Eloy, home to one of the nation's most notorious and deadly migrant detention facilities. Concertina wire from the border fence in Sasabe, Arizona.*



*A Mexican officer stands in front of the border fence in Sonoyta, Sonora.  
Panel discussion at the Border Security Expo in San Antonio, Texas.*

# BORDER–INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

## BUILDING A SURVEILLANCE FORTRESS

In 1970, the US Border Patrol installed its first motion sensors. It was from the seismic technology used by the US military at the ‘McNamara line’ in Vietnam, an electronic surveillance system placed on the border line between north and south Vietnam, using advanced acoustic and heat-detecting sensors so that the United States could monitor and blockade the Viet Cong. This included a 34-km enforced borderline and 200,000 spools of barbed wire. Even though the \$500 million investment had dubious results, the US Border Patrol installed 177 of this Pentagon project’s sensors on the US Mexico border in the early 1970s.<sup>38</sup> By 2012, 177 had grown to 12,000 implanted unattended ground sensors spread from Texas to California.<sup>39</sup> The implementation of the McNamara line, according to scholar Iván Chaar López, were the first indications of a border apparatus which would become a ‘system of systems’ in which walls, border agents, and technologies work in sync.<sup>40</sup>

Even so, by 1978, the deployed technologies and infrastructure of the Border Patrol was sparse compared to today. That year, under the Jimmy Carter administration, there was construction of sections of a 10-foot [3-metre] chain-link fence in areas of significant levels of undocumented crossings, known as the ‘Tortilla Curtain’.<sup>41</sup> This was an expansion of previous fences built in El Paso, Chula Vista, Yuma, and Tucson border patrol sectors. During that time Border Patrol had two helicopters in the Chula Vista sector (now called the San Diego sector). Fixed-wing aircraft were used in all nine sectors along the Mexico border. The Border Patrol installed closed-circuit television in short-term detention jails. And as far as electronic surveillance, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) had limited use of various radar and infrared detection systems, but had initiated research to evaluate their impact and effectiveness in the hope of building on them.<sup>42</sup>

It was during the Reagan administration (1980–1987) that the INS significantly enhanced the amount and quality of its infrastructure, much of it justified to bolster drug-enforcement efforts. Helicopters increased from two in the Chula Vista sector to nine in all borderland sectors, and to 22 by 1988. As Dunn wrote in *The Militarization of the US Mexico Border (1978–1992)*, the helicopters were also used as a ‘means of intimidating undocumented immigrants with aerial spotlights and loudspeakers’.<sup>43</sup> Most were OH-6 spotter-observation helicopters, on loan or donated by the US army, but the US Border Patrol also deployed A-Star 350 B helicopters equipped with ‘Nite Sun’ search-lights and forward-looking infrared radar, a term used to distinguish it from sideways-sweeping radar. The INS fleet of fixed-wing aircraft grew from 28 to 46 planes between 1981 and 1988. This was still far away from today’s CBP Office of Air and Marine’s 240 aircraft and 300 marine vessels run by 1,800 agents, but it was heading in that direction.<sup>44</sup>

During the Reagan years, there had been significant upgrades and increases in general surveillance equipment. For example, Washington added 278 night-vision scopes to the border arsenal, including night-vision goggles, large tripod-mounted 'starlite' and infrared scopes, and vehicle-mounted infrared telescopes, bringing the grand total to 344. The Border Patrol installed low-light-level television surveillance systems in various places to detect night-time crossings. It worked extensively with the US military, especially in the deployment of sensor systems and further developing night-time surveillance capabilities, very much a long-term development of the McNamara line. The Reagan administration's expansion could also be seen through the construction of (or scheduling of, with full funding) 22 Border Patrol stations and four roadside checkpoints. According to Dunn, the volume of equipment during the Reagan administration saw a 'substantial'<sup>45</sup> increase.

Under George H. W. Bush, the administration tripled the helicopter fleet, which reached 58 by the end of 1992. This period witnessed the prelude to the 'intrusion-detection initiative' as the electronic surveillance system started to become like today's 'virtual wall', as Border Patrol agents, using night-vision scopes and infrared radar systems, covered a much greater area with fewer personnel. Observers also widely criticized the Bush Sr administration for adopting a 'Berlin Wall' approach in 1991 when it constructed a 10-foot [3-metre] high wall made of corrugated steel along seven miles [11 km] between the San Diego-Tijuana border, a mere two years after the fall of the Berlin Wall. This new fencing reinforced and expanded the 'Tortilla Curtain' started during the Carter administration. While, as INS officials readily admitted, the wall did not stop people, it did re-route them into more isolated regions east of the wall, as did a series of intense floodlights that lit up parts of Tijuana. As Dunn writes, this exposed migrants to many more physical dangers, from rough landscapes, to a higher likelihood of exposure and vulnerability to armed criminal groups and armed military groups on anti-drug patrols, as well as diverting migrants to where Border Patrol agents would face less public scrutiny.<sup>46</sup>

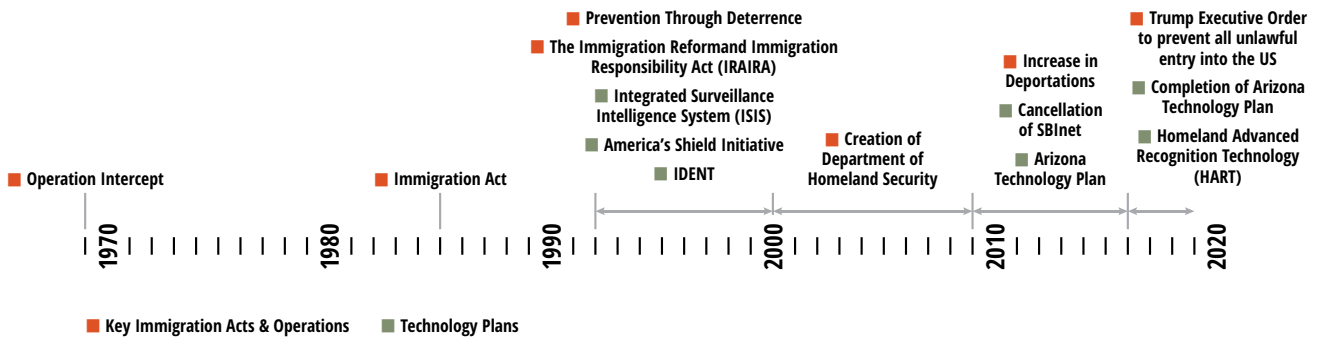
In 1994, the deployment of equipment and construction was ratcheted up under President Clinton. His administration approved a four-part deterrence strategy, based on deploying walls, technologies, and agents in towns and shifting unauthorized migrants and refugees to difficult areas where people would be deterred, or where INS would have a 'tactical advantage'.<sup>47</sup> By 2001, there was a total of 76 miles [122 km] of border wall in the spirit of this strategy, reinforcing and expanding all the previous fencing. There was also a 150 per cent increase in the number of agents on the southwest border, which went from 4,000 to more than 9,000 in a matter of six years (see Graphic 2). Between 1998 and 2000, there was a 27 per cent increase in agent hours, from 8.5 million to 11 million.

In terms of technology, in 1995, INS began development of IDENT, an automated biometric identification system, designed to capture fingerprints, photos, biographical data, and information about the arrest of unauthorized migrants. INS spent about \$34 million on IDENT between 1995 and 2000, the seeds of today's expansive biometric systems.<sup>48</sup> It also expanded surveillance systems: in just the 1999-2000 fiscal year, INS installed 107 remote surveillance systems, bringing the total to 130.

From 1997 until 2005, the United States deployed two surveillance programs known as the Integrated Surveillance Intelligence System (ISIS) and America's Shield Initiative. These were the next iterations of the 'virtual wall' or 'smart wall'. Their goal was to ensure that if someone was successful in breaching the border and getting past the agents along the international boundary, a second layer of enforcement – a concentrated surveillance zone of high-tech cameras and enhanced sensor systems – would detect them. Through these programs, the International Microwave Corporation (IMC) was awarded a contract in 1999 to 'engineer, install, manage, and provide remote surveillance equipment and support multiple sites through the United States'.<sup>49</sup> By 2004, IMC had constructed 255 Remote Surveillance Camera sites and 27 non-camera sites, such as repeater towers, and was absorbed by L-3 Communications,<sup>50</sup> which has now become one of CBP's top contractors (now renamed L3 Technologies).



## GRAPHIC 4: THE BUILDING OF US' VIRTUAL WALL, 1970–2017 TIMELINE



YEARS	KEY IMMIGRATION ACTS	TECHNOLOGY PLAN	TECHNOLOGIES/DEPLOYMENT/IMPLEMENTATION
<b>1970</b> Budget increase	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operation Intercept (1969)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deployment of technology developed in Vietnam known as the McNamara line on the U.S. Mexico border</li> </ul>
<b>1980–1987</b> <b>Reagan</b> 1980: \$349.1 billion 1987: \$902.5 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1986 Immigration Control Act</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant upgrades and increases in surveillance equipment including night-vision, infrared, and long distance cameras and telescopes.</li> <li>Expansion to 22 Border Patrol stations</li> </ul>
<b>1988–1991</b> <b>Bush Sr.</b> 1988: \$1 billion 1991: \$1.3 billion			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tripled the helicopter fleet</li> <li>Constructed a seven mile [11 km], 10 foot high fence along the San Diego-Tijuana border</li> </ul>
<b>1992–1999</b> <b>Clinton</b> 1992: \$1.5 billion 1999: \$4 billion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevention Through Deterrence</li> <li>Operation Hold-the-Line</li> <li>Operation Gatekeeper</li> <li>Operation Safeguard</li> <li>Operation Rio Grande Valley</li> <li>The Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act (IRAIRA)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated Surveillance Intelligence System (ISIS)</li> <li>America's Shield Initiative</li> <li>IDENT</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walls, increased agents, and technologies such as cameras, motion sensors, stadium lights placed in urban border cities and towns such as El Paso, San Ysidro, Nogales, Douglas, Laredo, and Brownsville</li> </ul>
<b>2000–2008</b> <b>Bush Jr.</b> 2000: \$4.2 billion 2008: \$14.3 billion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of Department of Homeland Security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SBinet</li> <li>Secure Fence Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beginning of "Virtual Wall" in Arizona</li> <li>10 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (drones)</li> <li>650 miles of Physical wall construction</li> </ul>
<b>2009–2016</b> <b>Obama</b> 2009: \$17.3 billion 2016: \$19.4 billion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in Deportations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cancellation of SBinet</li> <li>Arizona Technology Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated Fixed Tower (IFT)</li> <li>Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS)</li> <li>Mobile Video Surveillance System (MVSS)</li> <li>Mobile Surveillance Capability (MSC)</li> </ul>
<b>2017–present</b> <b>Trump</b> 2017: \$21.2 billion 2018: \$23.7 billion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Executive order changes definition of Operational Control to "mean the prevention of all unlawful entries into the United State" or complete control of the border.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of Arizona Technology Plan</li> <li>Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planned construction of IFTs on Tohono O'odham reservation.</li> <li>Move technology emphasis from Arizona to Texas primarily RVSS and MSC.</li> </ul>

All of these dynamics were further turbocharged after 9/11. While 9/11 changed the Border Patrol mission to emphasize counter-terrorism as a priority, it did not change the overall strategy of deterrence. They kept doing the same thing, but with much more firepower.

By 2006, when the George W. Bush administration implemented the Secure Border Initiative – described by Lockheed Martin as a ‘comprehensive multi-year plan to secure America’s borders and reduce illegal immigration’<sup>51</sup> – the US federal government was already ushering in a new era of surveillance into the southern borderlands. CBP began to test and implement unmanned aerial-vehicle systems, or drones, as one example. The first ones tested were manufactured by the Israeli company Elbit Systems in 2004, Hermes drones that the company had made for the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and had been (and continue to be) used in operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.<sup>52</sup> The President of Elbit Systems, Tim Taylor, commented at the time: ‘We are pleased to be supporting this important effort by providing this valuable technology and operating expertise to help the Department of Homeland Security detect and respond to border incidents. Our corporation brings extensive experience in the use of UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] and associated security systems specifically designed for border protection and we believe that the UAVs will become an integral and successful part of the homeland security front’.<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, the first contract from CBP went to the San Diego company General Atomics in 2005 for Predator B drones, the same aerial vehicles used in Afghanistan and Iraq. Subsequently, CBP built the fleet up to 10 – although one fell into the sea in 2014. ‘The prop jet Predator B meets the over land reconnaissance solutions for the Department of Homeland Security’, said CEO Thomas J. Cassidy. ‘The performance of our combat proven aircraft systems, combined with our capability to respond rapidly to the emergent needs of our customers, were key to our success, and we look forward to expanding our relationship with CBP in support of the protection of our nation’s borders.’<sup>54</sup>

In 2006 DHS implemented the technology portion of the Secure Border Initiative known as SBInet, which took over from ISIS and the American Shield Initiative with ambitions to construct a huge enforcement web of surveillance towers via a five-year contract with the Boeing Corporation. George Muellner, president of Boeing Advanced Systems BAS for Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, said, ‘Being selected to support Customs and Border Protection as they secure our nation’s borders is a testament to the strength of our team and the expertise, talent and focus that we bring to this task’. In 2011, however, DHS canceled the contract with Boeing after the system often failed to work correctly and proved too costly even for DHS.

After the 2011 cancellation, CBP shifted from contracting one company as primary technology integrator, as it had done with Boeing Corporation, to piecemeal contracts with companies with proven technology.

Starting in 2012, instead of SBInet, the various border technologies were divided up into different categories, the primary one being the Integrated Fixed Towers (IFTs), the surveillance tower backbone of the virtual wall. These were backed up by Remote Video Surveillance Systems (RVSS), Mobile Video Surveillance Systems (MVSS), and Mobile System Capability (MSC). Along with the unmanned aerial systems, imaging motion sensors, tethered aerostats, CBP deployed the lion’s share of these technologies in Arizona. At the Border Security Expo in April 2017, the director of technology acquisition for CBP, Mark Borkowski, declared that the Arizona part of the plan was mostly finished and that CBP would focus on other parts of the border, like South Texas. This will be described in more detail later in the report in the discussion on the ‘smart wall system’.

## **EL PASO 2012 BORDER EXPO: *a showcase of technologies, corporate profits and political backing***

Speaking at the Border Management Conference and Technology Expo in El Paso in 2012, Border Patrol agent Felix Chavez commented that, 'in terms of technology, the capability we have acquired since 2004 is phenomenal'.<sup>55</sup> Chavez spoke in an exhibition hall at the city's convention center, surrounded by corporate booths including Lockheed Martin's desert camouflaged quads, StrongWatch's Freedom-On-The-Move, and the Israeli company RT Technologies aerostats (surveillance balloons that hung from the ceiling).

Other speakers included Silvestre Reyes, the former Border Patrol El Paso sector chief turned congressman, the godfather of Prevention Through Deterrence with Operation Hold The Line in 1993. Reyes famously ordered Border Patrol agents to stand side by side on El Paso's international border, blockading all undocumented transit into the city. In a 2012 Democratic primary, he lost his congressional seat to Beto O'Rourke, partly due to accusations of corruption and nepotism regarding border contracts. Also present at the conference was Israeli Brigadier General Roie Elkabetz who, in one session, lectured US agents, officials, and corporate representatives on how Israel had shut down its borders.

Chavez's words not only described a boom in post-9/11 technologies, but also pointed towards future trends and dynamics. The deployment of technologies up to 2012 on the US-Mexico border included 377 remote video-surveillance systems, 195 local video-surveillance systems, 305 large-scale non-intrusive inspections systems, 75 Z Backscatter vans, 261 Recon FLIRs, more than 12,000 unattended, implanted sensors, and 41 mobile surveillance trucks (like Freedom-On-The-Move).<sup>56</sup> As Chavez was talking that day Border Patrol had reached the highest number of agents in its history.

'We have over 651 miles [1,0476 km] of border fencing [of which] 352 [566 km] is pedestrian [meaning a wall], 299 [481 km] is vehicle. We have 69 miles [111 km] of border lighting. 125 miles [201m] of wall with a road and [we are] providing maintenance to an additional 734 miles [1,181 km] of road. In addition, we have several forward operating bases employed all over the southwest border . . . clustered in Arizona and New Mexico primarily.'<sup>57</sup>

The difference in technology, Chavez said, is 'like night and day'.



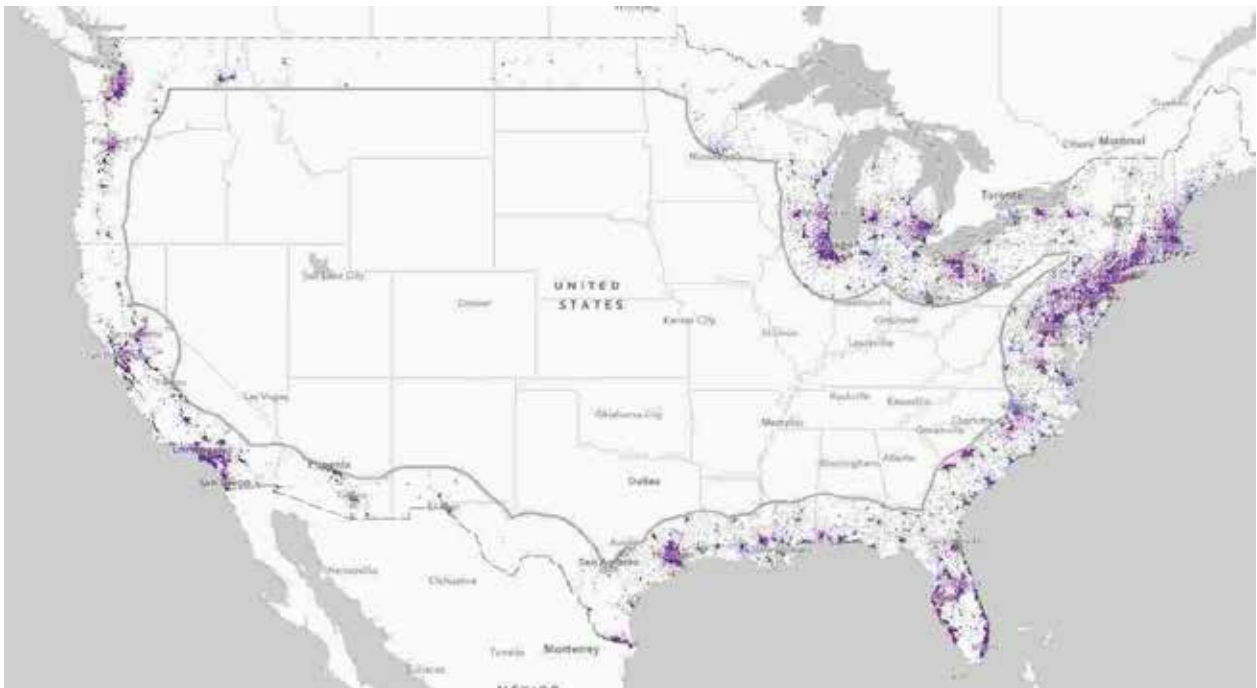
*A demonstration using dogs takes place at the Border Security Expo in San Antonio, Texas.*

## THE 100-MILE MARKET

The US border zone is much more expansive than the international boundary line or even a wall or barrier. In 1946, revisions to the Immigration and Nationality Act granted the INS what the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) calls 'extra-constitutional authority' to search any vehicle for 'aliens' within a 'reasonable distance' of any US international boundary. In 1957, with no public comment or debate, the Justice Department determined that this 'reasonable distance' was 100 miles[160 km].<sup>58, 59</sup>

In a very technical sense, the US border zone runs from the international boundary 100 miles inland, and includes southern and northern land borders as well as the coastlines. Imagine a thick band around the contour of the United States, devouring entire states such as Maine or Florida. This area covers a territory where two-thirds of the US population resides, more than 200 million people with twice the number of people of color than those living outside the border zone.<sup>60</sup> These are areas where many undocumented people live and work in many types of employment, including agriculture and construction.

## GRAPHIC 5: MAP OF 100-MILE BORDER ZONE FEATURING POPULATION CENTERS



Source: ESRI for CityLab: <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2018/05/who-lives-in-border-patrols-100-mile-zone-probably-you-mapped/558275/>

When the border jurisdiction was defined in the late 1950s, the Border Patrol had limited capacity with around 1,000 agents, north and south. But since then, particularly since the 1990s, the reach and scope of the border apparatus has vastly increased. One example would be the Border Patrol stations built in Rochester, New York and Erie, Pennsylvania in 2004. The Erie station reported that small staffing increases around 2006–2007 led to a 'commensurate increase in apprehensions'. The increase in arrests is tied to operations of agents

in Erie's Greyhound bus and Amtrak stations.<sup>61</sup> According to the CBP website, 'The future looks bright as we continue to diligently protect our station's sixty-five miles of International Border'.<sup>62</sup> As for Rochester, the justification for an office so far away from ports of entry (such as Buffalo, 90 minutes away) was that the border was along the shores of Lake Ontario.<sup>63</sup> This led to Border Patrol vehicles regularly patrolling places near Rochester, such as in Wayne County, where farm workers came for the apple harvests. In another

case, in the early 2010s, New York state troopers and Border Patrol set up road checkpoints in front of the only Laundromat in Sodus, New York during the harvest season.<sup>64</sup>

In strategy papers, the US Border Patrol stresses its 'multi-layered' approach, and that the actual US international boundary is neither the first nor last 'line of defense'.<sup>65</sup> This means two things. The first is that you can look at the US enforcement methods as a series of belts that extend deep into the 100-mile zones. In this sense, the barriers on the actual boundary are but just one layer, the virtual technological wall comprises another, the roadside checkpoints yet another, and the roving patrols complete the ultimately flexible boundary.

Moreover, within the 100-mile zones there are collaborations with the police force, such as the Rochester example. A DHS program known as Operation Stonegarden formalizes the collaboration, in which DHS provides money for local and state police to do border enforcement, which includes funds to pay officers for overtime, and for police agencies to buy equipment for border-enforcement purposes. Operation Stonegarden funds, according to its website, 'must be used to increase operational capabilities of Federal, State, local, Tribal, and territorial law enforcement, promoting a layered, coordinated approach to law enforcement within United States Border States and territories', in other words a more potent border force.<sup>66</sup>

In addition, the US military provides further support for the border apparatus, including joint missions. This is despite the 1878 Posse Comitatus law that prohibits US soldiers from arresting civilians on US soil (including border crossers), in order to limit the federal government's use of the military to enforce domestic policies.<sup>67</sup> To get around this, the National Guard and active duty deployments – such as the Trump administration's April 2018 deployment, but also previously during the Obama and Bush administrations – provide behind-the-scenes support for the CBP such as monitoring camera systems in command-and-control rooms, clearing brush from the border wall and other maintenance work – 'turning a wrench',<sup>68</sup> or putting coils of razor

wire on the border wall.<sup>69</sup> Their back-up support allows more Border Patrols to be out in the field.

It is important to note that the 100-mile border zone goes beyond the US mainland, including US territories such as Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, where the Border Patrol has a station and patrols the waters with Interceptor boats and Guardian drones.

The active externalization of US borders, particularly in the post-9/11 era, which will be discussed in more detail later, extends border enforcement out even further. Since 9/11, CBP has developed attaché positions in US embassies in 23 countries around the world<sup>70</sup> that have implemented programs to train foreign border guards and transfer resources and infrastructure to other countries for border policing. The stated intention is to stop people or items from reaching the United States well before their arrival at the border. DHS Deputy Secretary Elaine Duke called the international programs 'the away game of national security', at the 2018 Border Security Expo.

In 2004, a single sentence in the 9/11 commission report succinctly captured this shift to internationalizing the US border: '9/11 has taught us that terrorism against American interests "over there" should be regarded just as we regard terrorism against Americans "over here." In this same sense the American homeland is the planet'.<sup>71</sup>

The US border, by its very definition and through myriad operations that span from the United States across the world, is much more expansive and extensive than conveyed to the general public. In this sense, the 'market' also encompasses a vast territory, in which corporations have received numerous contracts across several agencies, including the police and military. In terms of profit, the vast 100-mile zones must already seem endless, but it is eclipsed by the even bigger global market.

## A BOTTOMLESS POOL OF PROFIT

In 2014, the company VisionGain wrote that the global border-security market was in an 'unprecedented boom period'. At close to \$24 billion, it would continue to grow exponentially, because of a 'virtuous circle' that would continue to drive spending in the long term based on three interlocking developments: 'illegal immigration and terrorist infiltration', more money for border policing in 'developing countries', and the 'maturation' of new technologies.<sup>72</sup>

Another marketing firm, Sandler Research, forecast that the border market would grow at an annual rate of 7.89 per cent. Its analysts said that borders not only 'safeguard' national security and sovereignty, but also 'economic prosperity'.<sup>73</sup> And MarketAndMarkets projected that the market would reach \$52.95 billion by 2022.<sup>74</sup> One of the drivers, it said, is the increased use of unmanned systems, in the air, on the ground, and in the water. On the world's borders, Robots will be ever more widely used. It also predicts that the biometric systems market will have the fastest growth rate, 'owing to the adoption of Biometric systems on a large scale to tackle illegal immigration, human trafficking among others'.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, the global video-surveillance market, worth \$13.5 billion in 2012, reached \$36.89 billion in 2018, and is projected to keep growing at annual rate of 13.1 per cent and reach \$68 billion by 2023.<sup>76</sup> In other words, if in 2013 video-surveillance cameras worldwide captured more than 1.7 trillion hours, these have nearly tripled and are expected to quintuple in approximately five years. While, the border industry is only a sub-market for the video-surveillance industry, these numbers illustrate a proliferation of surveillance that goes beyond borders.

As for the broader global homeland security market, MarketAndMarkets forecasts a jump from \$526.10 billion in 2017 to \$740.06 billion by 2023.<sup>77</sup> Since the market was an estimated \$305 billion in 2011, the result would be a more than 100 per cent growth in a little over 10 years.

## THE TRUMP EFFECT

When the Trump administration took office in 2017 there was an immediate impact in the stock market after it issued an executive action proclaiming that it would build a wall.<sup>78</sup> Shares of Martin Marietta Materials – which manufactures ready-mixed concrete and cement – increased by 3 per cent, bringing its market value to \$15.8 billion. Vulcan Materials, based Alabama, also grew by 2 per cent, adding to a 60 per cent increase of the previous years. The small Texas company US Concrete grew by 4 per cent. Overall, according to Fortune.com, the wall added about \$2 billion based simply on perception.<sup>79</sup>

Homeland Security Research projected significant growth in the homeland security market between 2017 and 2022 partly because 'Trump promised, throughout his campaign, a tough fight against Islamist extremism at home and abroad, and to invest in law and order'. The forecast also mentioned the 'European terror and migration crisis' and 'climate warming-related natural disasters growth'.<sup>80</sup>

This market report might also have cited the Trump administration's shift in its definition of operational control of the border. In the words of its January 2017 executive order: "Operational Control" shall mean the prevention of all unlawful entries into the United States, including entries by terrorists, other unlawful aliens, instruments of terrorism, narcotics, and other contraband'.<sup>81</sup> CBP's chief acquisition officer, Mark Borkowski, emphasized to attentive industry executives at the 2017 Border Security Expo what it meant in terms of metrics compared to past definitions: 'We've got a more demanding definition of operational control. So where I might not have needed, or thought I needed something to impede or deny, if I have to prevent all, then I have to rethink what I need to do that'.<sup>82</sup>

In other words, as Benjamin Huffman, the chief of strategic planning and analysis for CBP, said at the 2018 Border Security Expo: 'We are surrounded by insurmountable opportunity'.<sup>83</sup> Neil Gordon, a researcher with the Project on Government Oversight told the *Daily Beast*, 'It looks right now that the Trump administration's policies regarding

immigration is proving to be a relatively lucrative area for private contractors'.<sup>84</sup>

Under the Trump administration, CBP budgets have gone from \$14,439,714,000 in 2017 to \$16,690,317,000 in 2019, an increase of more than \$2 billion that could go to more contractors, both new and existing. ICE has also seen a nearly \$2 billion increase over the same period.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps that was what prompted US Border Patrol law-enforcement liaison Maurice Gill to exclaim at the 2018 Border Security Expo, 'it's free money!'

Since Trump openly declared that there would be a ramping-up of border policing and promised as many as 3 million people to be deported under his watch during his 2016 campaign, major defense companies such as Leidos, Infosys, and CACI International, as reported by Lee Fang at *The Intercept*, 'have told investors in recent days that they are poised to take advantage of Trump's immigration policies'.<sup>86</sup> When the chief financial officer of CACI, Tom Mutryn, was asked if he thought his company would have a chance to play a role in Trump's immigration agenda, he responded 'Yes, I think absolutely yes'. He said that CACI could provide 'a better system to kind of track people in the United States, an IT system where there's more robust visibility into people who are living in the United States', and for the border apparatus. When UNISYS chief financial officer Inder Singh was asked about opportunities for his company, he said, 'We would wait to see what the new President lays out in terms of priorities, but certainly things that we've heard suggest that they would be well aligned with what we do today for the country', meaning screen all passengers entering and leaving the country. Lastly, James Reagan the chief financial officer for contractor Leidos, probably spoke for an entire industry when he said that his border-security products, under the Trump effect, were 'positioned for growth'.

It is nonetheless important to note, as Brian de Vallance from the Cambridge Global Advisors was quick to point out at the 2018 Expo, that Trump was following a long trajectory in border enforcement. 'Doubling the size of the Border Patrol, building a

wall – these things have happened regularly over the years. Trump rhetoric is through the roof, but... look at the National Security strategy [a document published in the United States every two years] and the president's rhetoric is not really different from Obama's'.<sup>87</sup>

## THE MAKING OF A BORDER-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

At the SBInet Industry Day in 2005, Michael Jackson, the Department of Homeland Security's Deputy Secretary, who had previously been defense contractor Lockheed Martin's Chief Operating Officer, addressed a conference room full of would-be contract recipients: 'this is an unusual invitation. I want to make sure you have it clearly, that we're asking you to come back and tell us how to do our business. We're asking you. We're inviting you to tell us how to run our organization'.<sup>88</sup>

As Martin Lemberg-Pedersen wrote, private security companies have long been positioning themselves as 'experts on border security'. He wrote that this 'securitized transformation of Europe's borderscapes' comes with clear consequences for cross-border migrants and refugees. A previous TNI report, *Border Wars*, tells the story of how European arms and homeland security companies maneuvered into positions on influential advisory bodies on border security and then advocated for militarized approaches from which they would reap financial benefits.<sup>89</sup>

The same can be said for the United States: It was as if Jackson were announcing the arrival of a new era, one that had long been forewarned, to US border control, in which companies were not just contractors but also partners in advancing border militarization.

The border-industrial complex can be traced back to the prescient warning in US President Eisenhower's 1961 farewell speech, where he said that the United States didn't have an armament industry until World War II. But on the precipice of a bloody conflict in Vietnam, the industry was of 'vast proportions'. He noted that 'The conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry

is new in the American experience.<sup>90</sup> Eisenhower made the speech just as the US military was on the point of developing an electronic intrusion-detection system, as discussed previously, the 'McNamara line', which would be transferred to the US Mexico border.

The McNamara Line, or 'McNamara Wall', was composed of electronic sensors, signal processors, and electronic transmitters, and worked through a variety of seismic, magnetic, and acoustic sensors. The idea, according to scholar Iván Char López, was that a radio signal was sent to a display terminal where the military mapped ground movements and used that information for reinforcements.<sup>91</sup>

In 1970, a top engineer of the Defense Communication Planning Group (DCPG) – the group that created the McNamara line, undertook on-site surveys in the Chula Vista, El Centro, and Yuma sectors of the US Border Patrol. Then, with the assistance of the Sandia Corporation, with one of the first border-surveillance contracts given to this company from Albuquerque, operated by Western Electric, the Border Patrol installed 177 sensors. From 1971 to 1976, other electronic manufacturers such as Magnavox, Teledyne Geotech, and AEC supplied ground sensors and expert knowledge with approximately \$8 million from the INS.<sup>92</sup>

Though this amount was just a fraction of the INS budget, Char López writes that 'it set the conditions of possibility for, on the one hand, future collaborations between the Pentagon and INS, and on the other, for continued reliance on electronic technology for border control'.<sup>93</sup> And also, the seeds of another thing that was very new in the US experience, the border-industrial complex.

Merriam-Webster's definition of a military complex is 'an informal alliance of the military and related government departments with defense industries that is held to influence government policy'.<sup>94</sup> A very similar set of relationships has been built around US border and immigration enforcement – not only the top companies which have gained contracts with CBP, but also their influence in Washington via campaign contributions and lobbying. These practices were born in Vietnam, but the post-9/11 era was really what gave them a turbo-charge.

To understand today's border-industrial complex it has to be placed into the broader post-9/11 dynamic in which the US corporate-national security nexus has expanded into what *Washington Post* reporters Dana Priest and William Arkin describe as a terrain so vast that it is an 'alternative geography' of secretive government agencies and private security corporations.<sup>95</sup> The alternative geography has grown so rapidly that it almost defies credibility; its network of high-tech operational headquarters spanned the United States with 10,000 distinct locations, almost as ubiquitous as Starbucks coffee shops. In 2010, there were 1,271 government organizations and 1,931 private companies working on programs related to counter-terrorism, intelligence, and national security.<sup>96</sup>

These outsourcing and privatization trends are reflected in the Department of Homeland Security. In 2010 it was reported that contractors outnumbered federal employees by roughly 180,000 to 200,000.<sup>97</sup> Those numbers were so astounding to some senators that Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins wrote in a letter that 'the sheer number of DHS contractors currently on board again raises the question of whether DHS itself is in charge of its programs and policies, or whether it inappropriately has ceded core decisions to contractors'.<sup>98</sup>

It is an understatement to say that Eisenhower's warnings went unheeded. He warned almost 60 years ago of the military-industrial complex's 'total influence –economic, political, even spiritual...' and how it can be 'felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the Federal government'. What has transpired since was probably even beyond Eisenhower's thinking. When Jackson told potential contractors in 2005 that he was inviting them to tell CBP how to run its organization, he was indeed capturing a new era where business and border have blurred.





*A CCA (now CoreCivic) facility in Florence, Arizona.  
A visual interface of high-tech cameras on display at the Border Security Expo,  
demonstrating the capacity to clearly see 'targets' from miles away.*

# THE BIG CORPORATE PLAYERS

One of the principal ways private corporations receive money for border security work is through contracts with the different immigration control agencies that includes Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), US Citizenship and Immigrant Services (USCIS), and the Coast Guard. From around 2006 to 2018, ICE issued more than 35,000 contracts totaling \$18.2 billion<sup>99</sup>, CBP more than 64,000<sup>100</sup> totaling \$27 billion, and the Coast Guard has more than 245,000<sup>101</sup> totaling \$35.3 billion. During that same time period DHS awarded more than 488,000 contracts for a total of \$4.8 trillion.<sup>102</sup>

In terms of overall budgets, CBP is the top recipient (more than \$16.3 billion in 2018), but part of an even bigger immigration enforcement and homeland security apparatus through which billions of additional dollars in contracts have been doled out. For example in 2018, the ICE overall budget was nearly \$7.5 billion<sup>103</sup> and the Coast Guard \$10.5 billion.<sup>104</sup>

This report focuses on CBP contracts to provide a glimpse of a vast homeland security apparatus. exceeding the accumulated INS budgets from between 1975 and 1998 of approximately \$26.1 billion in total.<sup>105</sup> The money paid to corporations now dwarfs that given to charities. For example, in 2016 the Office for Refugee Resettlement designated \$14.9 million to nine non-profit agencies to help people resettle,<sup>106</sup> a mere fraction of the total contracts given to corporations to stop, monitor, arrest and deport people.

The amount and value of contracts has grown so much that the military monolith Lockheed Martin landed a contract in 2009 potentially worth more than \$945 million<sup>107</sup> for maintenance and upkeep of 16 P-3 surveillance planes that are equipped with airborne and surface-to-radar systems. This one contract was equal to the total entire border and immigration enforcement budgets from 1975 to 1978 (\$923 million approximately).<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the

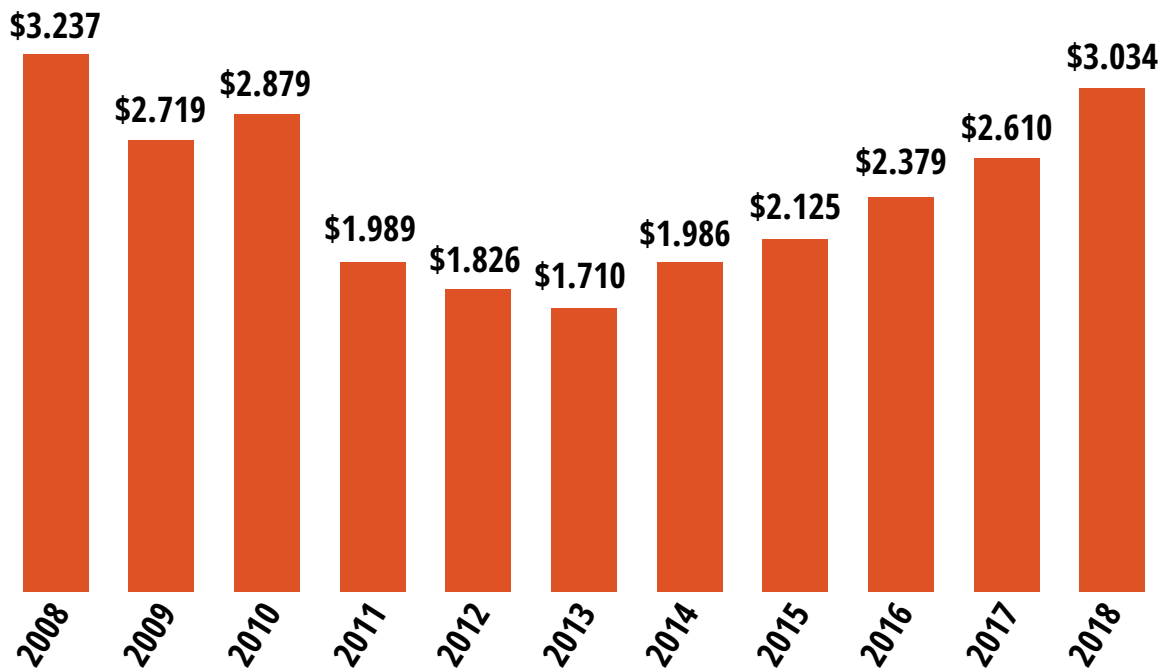
contract to the San Diego-based General Atomics worth \$276 million in 2016 for the operational maintenance of the Predator B drone systems<sup>109</sup> nearly tops any of the annual budgets for the INS in the 1970s. Companies are benefiting from a massive border and immigration enforcement system that in 2018 had an annual budget of more than \$23 billion, 126 times larger than it was in 1975 (\$181.3 million).

Based on the list of CBP contracts, this report highlights 14 companies as giants in border security business. These are Accenture, Boeing, Elbit, Flir Systems, G4S, General Atomics, General Dynamics, IBM, L3 Technologies, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, PAE, Raytheon and UNISYS. Many of these companies have reaped large contracts directly from CBP. Others are highlighted because of other border and immigration enforcement contracts they have received. For example, while Raytheon has received a cumulative \$37 million from CBP since 2008, during that same period, the company received more than a billion dollars through the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (of the Department of Defense), with a substantial portion going to border enforcement building projects in places like Jordan and the Philippines. In another example, the company General Dynamics not only has CBP contracts, but also a contract with Health and Human Services to provide “infrastructure services” for

detained undocumented children that has earned the company millions. And while Lockheed Martin and Northrop Grumman already rank among the top CBP contractors, both companies also received other major homeland security contracts such as \$11 billion from the Coast Guard (shared by both) to 'modernize the Coast Guard's Deepwater assets.'

The highlighted companies include technology and security firms, but are clearly dominated by the same global arms firms that reap rewards from high levels of US military spending. In addition, the report also profiles private prison companies CoreCivic and Geo Group who along with G4S are major players in providing immigration detention services and are the biggest winners of ICE contracts.

**GRAPHIC 6: CBP CONTRACTS TO CORPORATIONS 2008–2018  
(IN \$US BILLIONS)**



Source: <https://www.usaspending.gov/#/search/628bc28c3eb4e9407f860c9a006f373d>

**TABLE 1: THE 14 BORDER SECURITY GIANTS – THIS REPORT’S REFINED LIST OF KEY CORPORATE BENEFICIARIES OF US BORDER REGIME (2005–2019)**

CORPORATION	CBP CONTRACTS	CBP CONTRACTS (IN \$MILLIONS)	EXAMPLES OF OTHER RELEVANT BORDER AND IMMIGRATION CONTRACTS	WORK FOR BORDER CONTROL
Accenture	27	\$200		Administrative support/hiring
Boeing	17	\$1,400	Boeing 737 planes used by ICE for deportations. \$117 million in 2016 to subsidiary Inisitu in 2016 for small unmanned aircraft	Land surveillance system
Elbit	2	\$187		Surveillance towers
FLIR Systems	75	\$157	2017 \$50 million contract with U.S. Coast Guard	Night vision, thermal cameras on Mobile Surveillance Capability systems
G4S	25	\$653	Contracts with ICE for armored transportation	Transportation for arrested migrants
General Atomics	15	504		Unmanned Aerial Systems
General Dynamics	111	\$167	Contract with Dept. of Health and Human Services for detained children. 2016 contract with the Coast Guard worth \$125.6 million	Surveillance towers
IBM	145	\$1,700		Technological infrastructure and support
L3 Technologies	26	\$894	\$500 million 2019 contract with Transportation Security Administration (TSA)	Surveillance systems, cameras, sensor systems
Lockheed Martin	20	\$1,000	\$11 billion contract from Coast Guard 2002.	Surveillance planes, coastguard, cybersecurity
Northrop Grumman	17	\$340	\$11 billion Coast Guard contract 2002. \$12 million IT services contract with ICE in 2009	Biometrics, border screening, radar surveillance
PAE	21	\$1,200		Maintenance and refurbishing air vehicles
Raytheon	35	\$37	Border contracts for the Philippines and Jordan (total DTRA contracts over \$1 billion). Other contracts for U.S. Coast Guard such as one in 2001 worth \$49.2 million	Surveillance and radar system for maritime drones
UNISYS	35	\$2,000		Biometrics, license, passport detection

Source: [usaspending.gov](https://www.usaspending.gov); corporate websites, news sites<sup>110</sup>

Clearly, many of the figures are estimates and depend on what CBP, ICE, DHS, report to USA Spending, a government database that catalogs federal government spending. This database is incomplete both in terms of its listings and its details of contract values.

The recent Office of the Inspector General’s evaluation of the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) of 2014 is one indication that USA Spending consistently undercounts government expenditures and particularly its corporate contracting.

The DATA Act, implemented in 2017, expanded the federal expenditures that it required agencies to report to USA Spending and set a common standard for reporting, and coincided with the first year that the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for each department was to issue reports on the quality of the reported data.

In terms of the DHS, the OIG stated that there were ‘issues concerning the completeness and accuracy of its first data submission that hinders the quality and usefulness of the information’.<sup>111</sup> The OIG also determined that ‘DHS could not

align nearly \$1.9 billion (38 percent) of the total obligations associated with its award transactions for the quarter'. It found that 'nearly 64 percent of the 385 FY 2017/Q2 procurement and financial award transactions we tested contained inaccurate data'. In other words, all signs point to a drastic undercount that obscures, at the very least, nearly \$2 billion in private contracts, if not more.<sup>112</sup>

Another form of obfuscation are the descriptions given on USA Spending about the service categories agencies self-reported, such as 'construction of other non-building facilities', 'support management

other', 'information technology software', that does not provide a clear picture of the purpose of these contracts.

The raw data accumulated at USA Spending also contains modifications that might give an inaccurate rendering of the data, including potential glitches such reporting multi-year contracts at their full value each year. Given the potential inaccuracies, however, it remains the best database to acquire the figures, which, while they should be considered rough estimates, are also the best indications of who are the top contractors for CBP.

**TABLE 2: LIST OF LARGEST BORDER CONTRACTORS BASED ONLY ON CBP CONTRACTS AND USA SPENDING DATA**

COMPANY	CBP CONTRACTS SINCE 2008	COMPANY DESCRIPTION
UNISYS	\$2 billion	Information Technology
IBM	\$1.74 billion	Information Technology
Boeing	\$1.4 billion	Weapons and aviation
PAE	\$1.2 billion	Government services
Lockheed Martin	\$1 billion	Weapons and aviation
L3 Technologies	\$894 million	Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems
Chenega and CTSC (subsidiary of Chenega)	\$849.8 million	Government Services
G4S	\$653 million	Security company
VF Imagewear	\$544.8 million	Clothing, apparel
General Atomics	\$504 million	Weapons and Technology
Perspecta	\$493.3 million	Government Services: military, intelligence, health
Leidos	\$476.4 million	Government Services: military, intelligence, health
Sierra Nevada	\$425 million	Military, aviation, space
Mantech	\$399.2 million	Military, technology
Northrop Grumman	\$340 million	Military
ESCgov	\$339.3 million	Information Technology for military, intelligence
Global Maritek Systems	\$291.9 million	Engineering and marine services for government
Vertex Aerospace	\$281.7 million	Aerospace, aviation
Peraton	\$232 million	Security
CA Technologies	\$208.3 million	Software
Accenture	\$200 million	Consulting, Technology
Elbit Systems	\$186.9 million	Military, security
General Dynamics	\$167 million	Military, security

Source: <https://www.usaspending.gov>

# PROFILES OF 14 BORDER SECURITY CORPORATIONS

accenture

 **BOEING**

 **Elbit Systems**

 **FLIR  
SYSTEMS**



 **GENERAL ATOMICS**

**GENERAL DYNAMICS**





**LOCKHEED MARTIN** 

**NORTHROP GRUMMAN**

**PAE**

**Raytheon**

**UNISYS**

**'Why spend millions on patrol boats, when drones can deliver surveillance several magnitudes greater for a fraction of the cost. Or imagine driving up to a manned frontier and being waved straight through, because a drone hovering overhead has already positively ID'd you through facial recognition. Using drones is just one of the opportunities. Across biometrics, blockchain, body scanners and more, science fiction is becoming science fact every day - with clear applications at borders.'**

**- James Canham, Managing Director, Border Services, Accenture.<sup>166</sup>**

#### REVENUE (2018)

**\$41.6 billion**

#### EMPLOYEES

**477,000 in more than 120 countries**

#### HEADQUARTERS

Dublin, Ireland

#### DESCRIPTION

A multinational professional services company in strategy, consulting, technology, and operations.

#### TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2005 TO 2019:

**27 contracts at nearly \$200 million<sup>167</sup>**



#### PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:

**2017:** A five-year \$297 million contract tasked Accenture with recruiting and hiring 7,500 what have been called 'surge applicants', including 5,000 for the US Border Patrol (which would bring its ranks to 26,000) and 2,000 other CBP agents to work in official ports of entry. Washington was investing nearly \$40,000 for each new employee recruited. CBP contracted Accenture to perform applicant testing, screening for suitability, and application process streamlining for 'thousands of Border Patrol agents over the next several years'. CBP wanted the company to 'effectively identify top-quality applicants who can meet very challenging standards and requirements related to integrity, conduct, physical fitness, and analytical skills'.<sup>168</sup> Following significant media scrutiny because of the cost of the contract, the DHS Office of the Inspector General stated 'CBP needs to address serious performance issues on the Accenture hiring contract'.<sup>169</sup> Amid significant resistance from Accenture's workers to the Border Patrol contract,<sup>170</sup> CBP canceled it in April 2019.<sup>171</sup>

#### OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

Accenture emerged in 2001 when Andersen Consulting (Arthur Andersen, from the firm that voluntarily surrendered its licenses after the Enron scandal) closed its doors. It has a team of more than 1,000 employees dedicated to 'border management' and has worked with border-control agencies across the globe. 'Globalization and the threat of terrorism have created the need for a secure and safe society', its 'Border Services' webpage says.<sup>172</sup>

**'Locating potential security threats among the tremendous volume of people and cargo crossing borders might seem like trying to find the proverbial needle in a haystack. But by maximizing Boeing's expertise, Homeland Security & Services, a business unit of Boeing Integrated Defense Systems, intends to do just that.'**<sup>152</sup>

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$101 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**143,000**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Chicago, IL

**DESCRIPTION**

A US multinational corporation that designs and manufactures aeroplanes, rocket satellites, communication gear, and missiles worldwide.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2006 TO 2019:  
17 at \$1.4 bn.**<sup>153</sup>



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2006:** Awarded primary integrator of the CBP SBI net to develop and install a virtual detection system of surveillance towers, radar, and motion sensors in Arizona. 'Being selected to support Customs and Border Protection as they secure our nation's borders is a testament to the strength of our team and the expertise, talent and focus that we bring to this task', said George Muellner of Boeing. 'Our team is absolutely committed to making SBI net a success, and we are ready to respond immediately to our customer in the detailed design and deployment of this critical solution to enhance our nation's border security system.'<sup>154</sup>

DHS canceled the SBI net contract with Boeing in 2011, however, due to concerns about the price, timeline, and 'effectiveness' of the technology.<sup>155</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

Swift Air, a primary contractor for ICE's fleet of deportation planes also known as ICE Air, flies primarily Boeing 737 aircraft.<sup>156</sup>



**'Elbit Systems of America is a trusted provider and integrator of advanced technology border solutions for Air & Marine Operations, Field Operations and Border Patrol agents. Elbit America's integrated border security solutions provide increased situational awareness and improved border surveillance coverage.'**

- Ranaan Horowitz, Elbit Systems of America in 2018.<sup>189</sup>

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$3.68 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**12,470**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Haifa, Israel

**DESCRIPTION**

Military, homeland security, and commercial aviation company

**CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2 contracts at \$186.9 million.<sup>190</sup>**



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2004:** Hermes Drone to monitor US border.<sup>191</sup>

**2014:** To provide more than 50 Integrated Fixed Towers in Arizona. Contract worth \$145 million.<sup>192</sup>

'The IFT systems use an integrated network of command and control capabilities and sensor platforms that help keep America and our US Border Patrol agents safe', says Elbit's website.<sup>193</sup>

**2017:** To provide an in-fill radar and tower system in Texas.<sup>194</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

Elbit Systems has been a primary technology integrator for wall-enforcement systems in Israel-Palestine.<sup>195</sup>

For more information on Elbit, see page 54.

**'Protecting a country's borders is vital to its national security. It is however very challenging to detect potential intruders or smugglers in total darkness, in the most diverse weather conditions. Thermal imaging cameras can help border control professionals to meet the demands they face at night and in other low-light situations.'**<sup>185</sup>

REVENUE (2018)  
**\$1.7 billion)**

EMPLOYEES  
**3,000**

HEADQUARTERS  
Wilsonville, OR

DESCRIPTION  
Company that specializes in design and production of thermal cameras.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2008 TO 2019:  
75 contracts at \$157.4 million.**<sup>186</sup>



#### **PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2011:** A \$101.9 contract for Mobile Surveillance Capabilities, and for its ultra-long-range thermal-imaging camera which would be included on vehicle-mounted surveillance towers through its subsidiary ICx Technologies.<sup>187</sup>

#### **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

In 2015, FLIR paid \$9.5 million to settle a bribery charge filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission that involved expensive trips and gifts given to government officials from countries in the Middle East. The SEC claimed that FLIR earned more than \$7 million in profits from sales influenced by such gifts.<sup>188</sup>



**'At G4S we understand the bigger picture and the challenges of keeping borders secure.'**<sup>147</sup>

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$9.56 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**570,000**

**HEADQUARTERS**

London, UK; Jupiter, FL  
(G4S Secure Solutions)

**DESCRIPTION**

Global Security  
Company

**TOTAL 25 CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2008 TO 2019:  
\$653.3 million**<sup>148</sup>



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2013:** \$234 million contract to 'transport and guard illegal aliens from their points of apprehension until they are either returned to their country or origin for repatriation or transferred to another agency for long-term detention'.<sup>149</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

ACLU filed a lawsuit against G4S in July 2018 'on behalf of four women who were shackled by their hands and feet in a hot van during suffocating heat, causing them to struggle for breath and fear they would die'. They were among nine other detainees who, in July 2017, were transported for more than 24 hours from Richmond, VA to Bakersfield, CA.<sup>150</sup> They have faced similar charges in the UK. In October 2010, three G4S-guards restrained and held down 46-year-old Angolan, Jimmy Mubenga, on a deportation flight from the UK. He lost consciousness and later died. A jury eventually and controversially acquitted the guards of manslaughter, even though internal G4S documents had warned that the company was 'playing Russian roulette with detainees' lives'.<sup>151</sup>

**'This second Predator B aircraft, along with current orders for two additional systems and no doubt more to follow, will not only permit full operations along the southwest border, but will also offer the flexibility to support other border regions as well. This will provide CBP with a dramatic increase in its existing border domain awareness capability.'**

- Thomas J. Cassidy Jr., General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc., 2006.<sup>179</sup>

**REVENUE (2017)****\$798 million****EMPLOYEES****15,000****HEADQUARTERS**

San Diego, CA

**DESCRIPTION**

A military and technology company founded in 1955 as a division of General Dynamics.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2008 TO MAY 2019:  
15 contracts at \$504.4 million.<sup>180</sup>**

**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2005:** General Atomics received its first contract in 2005 for Predator B unmanned aerial surveillance systems to, as its president Thomas Cassidy Jr. said, 'patrol our nation's borders'. Cassidy continued, 'the performance of our combat proven aircraft systems, combined with our capability to respond rapidly to the emergent needs of our customers, were key to our success, and we look forward to expanding our relationship with CBP...'.<sup>181</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

By combat-proven, Cassidy Jr. meant that the US military had deployed such drones in Afghanistan; the Predator was one of the first unmanned aerial vehicles to fly a mission there after 9/11. The Smithsonian calls it a 'drone that transformed military combat'.<sup>182</sup> General Atomics would eventually supply 10 such unmanned aerial systems to CBP (now nine since one crashed into the sea in 2014), and in 2018 General Atomics received another \$275.9 million contract to provide maintenance on the nine drones, which sometimes fly for up to 20 hours and can 'detect moving targets on the ground and in the water'.<sup>183</sup>

'Our frontline agents deserve proven, effective technology that equips them to secure our borders and to prevent terrorism', said W. Ralph Basham, CBP Commissioner, in 2006. 'This unmanned aircraft system provides us with the situational awareness we need to more effectively deny illegal entry at our nation's borders.'<sup>184</sup>

**'Every day, GDIT is helping customs, law enforcement, and transport authorities combat terrorism, respond to natural disasters, and protect the nation. We're applying biometrics to vet foreign nationals entering the United States, deploying technology that enables intelligence-sharing between agencies, and modernizing critical systems.'**<sup>142</sup>

#### REVENUE (2018)

**\$36.19 billion**

#### EMPLOYEES

**105,600**

#### HEADQUARTERS

Falls Church, VA

#### DESCRIPTION

A global aerospace and military company and the sixth largest company in terms of arms sales.<sup>143</sup>

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS BETWEEN 2005 AND 2019:  
111, worth \$166.9 million**<sup>144</sup>



#### PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:

**2013:** Contract to upgrade the Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS), completed in 2017. 'The RVSS upgrade will continue to provide CBP and US law enforcement personnel with the advanced technology necessary to secure our nation's borders and increase agent safety through enhanced situational awareness', said Dan Busby of General Dynamics.<sup>145</sup>

#### OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

General Dynamics has worked for the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Refugee Resettlement, including providing 'infrastructure services for the shelter care of unaccompanied children', which generated \$4 bn for the company in 2017.<sup>146</sup>

**'IBM's analytics solutions can help agencies quickly analyze information, ranging from image scans, social media chatter, unstructured data and other sources of intelligence, to enforce border control while promoting trade flow.'**

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$75.59 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**350,600**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Armonk, New York

**DESCRIPTION**

Information Technology

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2003 TO 2019:  
145 contracts at \$1.7 billion.<sup>121</sup>**



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

In 2019, CBP moved to a digital cloud platform supported by IBM.<sup>122</sup>

This spawns from a prominent 2001 contract (predating DHS and CBP) worth \$1.3 billion for IBM to electronically modernize U.S. customs automated systems.<sup>123</sup>

In 2018, IBM provided CBP Office of Information Technology with a large robotic automation project to move archived information from one system to another.<sup>124</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

Google employees protesting CBP contracts in August 2019 mentioned IBM as another company providing services.<sup>125</sup>



**'L-3's employees, systems, products and services play a significant role in assisting the US military and its civilian protectors in their efforts. There is no greater honor than to help those who put their lives on the line for others and L-3 employees take great pride in the work they do to support the safety and security of the nation's protectors with the best available products and systems.'**

**- CEO Frank C. Lanza in 2004.<sup>173</sup>**

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$10.2 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**31,000**

**HEADQUARTERS**

New York City, NY

**DESCRIPTION**

A command and control, communications, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance systems company.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2008 TO 2019:  
26 for \$894 million<sup>174</sup>**



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2003:** L3 awarded numerous contracts for a variety of items including border technologies such as night surveillance systems, and 'night conqueror' cameras, sensor technology, and maintenance and logistical support for CBP's P-3 surveillance aircrafts.<sup>175</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

L3 Technologies is the company behind the body scanner used in US and other airports.<sup>176</sup> It has also received contracts with ICE for similar surveillance technologies and walk-through metal detectors.<sup>177</sup>

With a planned merger with the Harris corporation, which provides Tethered Aerostat systems deployed on the US-Mexico border, L-3's border emphasis is poised to grow in the coming years.<sup>178</sup>



**‘This investment demonstrates Lockheed Martin’s commitment to help our nation secure its borders.’**

– Bob Stevens, chairman of the board, president and CEO of Lockheed Martin Corporation about a Border Enforcement Solutions Center in which the company invested in 2006.<sup>126</sup>

**‘The Customs and Border Protection program is a great example of the benefits of effective government/ industry partnerships.’**

– Rob Weiss, Lockheed Martin executive vice-president for Global Sustainment.

**‘Our priority is to provide all of our customers with integrated life-cycle solutions that ensure operational effectiveness and readiness at best value.’**

– Rob Weiss, Lockheed Martin executive vice-president for Global Sustainment.<sup>127</sup>

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$53 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**146,000**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Bethesda, MD

**DESCRIPTION**

Defense and security firm. World’s number one in military sales.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2005 TO MAY 2019:  
20 worth more than \$1 billion.<sup>128</sup>**



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2009:** P-3 Orion contract for \$821 million for maintenance and upkeep of 15 P-3 surveillance planes that are equipped with airborne and surface-to-radar systems.<sup>129</sup> The P-3s are CBP’s ‘eyes over the ocean’, to stop vessels on both land and in the air heading to the United States, particularly for Pacific and Caribbean counter-narcotic missions.

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

While a significant proportion of Lockheed Martin’s revenues comes from its military sales, the company has been in the homeland-security market since the beginning. For example, in 2002 Lockheed Martin, along with the company Northrop Grumman, received a \$11 billion contract to ‘modernize the Coast Guard’s Deepwater assets’ over a 20-year period. ‘The nation depends on the Coast Guard to protect our homeland and secure over 95,000 miles of shoreline...’ Lockheed Martin CEO Vance D. Coffman said in 2002.<sup>130</sup>

Lockheed Martin has also received contracts from DHS, such as one to update its security operation center services and for its cyber-security platforms.<sup>131</sup> Former DHS secretary Jeh Johnson is on the company’s board of directors.<sup>132</sup>

In 2019, the company was recognized by the National Coast Guard Museum and had a wing named after it called the ‘Lockheed Martin Saving Lives by Air Gallery’.<sup>133</sup>



**'Drawing the line against terror... America's borders and its air and sea ports of entry offer a crucial line of defense against the movement of terrorists, prohibited cargo, drug traffic, and weapons of mass destruction into the country. Our trusted solutions create tough barriers against these threats – while keeping the flow of trade and legal traffic moving.'**<sup>134</sup>

#### REVENUE (2018)

**\$30 billion**

#### EMPLOYEES

**93,000**

#### HEADQUARTERS

Falls Church, VA

#### DESCRIPTION

Global arms and security company. Fifth largest producer of the world's weapons.<sup>135</sup>

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACT FROM 2004 TO MAY 2019:  
17 contracts at about \$340 million.**<sup>136</sup>



#### PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:

**2006:** A contract worth more than \$33 million to develop a land-surveillance system at 40 points of entry along the US-Mexico border.<sup>137</sup>

**2014:** \$344 million contract for enhancement and maintenance of the CBP Passenger Systems Program Directorate for CBP and 'to modernize CBP's Travel Enforcement Compliance System (TECS)' data base to 'support law enforcement "look outs," border screening, and reporting for CBP's primary and secondary inspection processes.'<sup>138</sup>

**2018:** \$95 million to be a primary integrator of CBP's Homeland Advanced Recognition Technology (HART) system that will replace CBP's previous biometric system known as IDENT.<sup>139</sup>

#### OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:

Northrop Grumman supplies a VADER radar system to four of CBP's unmanned aerial systems. Northrop Grumman's VADER (Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar) 'manhunting' technology was first used by the US military in Afghanistan.<sup>140</sup> The VADER system feeds data to an onboard processor that uses 'exploitation algorithms' to 'detect, discriminate, and track vehicular and dismounted suspicious activity in near-real time'.<sup>141</sup>

**'To counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, PAE provides border security infrastructure and support to the US government and its allies.'**<sup>157</sup>

**REVENUE (2016)**  
**\$2.2 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**  
**20,000,**  
**70 countries,**  
**all continents**

**HEADQUARTERS**  
Arlington, VA

**DESCRIPTION**  
Military and government  
service contractor  
founded in 1955.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2004 TO 2019:**  
**21 at \$1.2 billion**<sup>158</sup>



### **PRIMARY CBP CONTRACT:**

**2012:** Contract to refurbish eight UH-1N helicopters, which were delivered in 2015.<sup>159</sup> As part of its maintenance work with CBP, PAE says 'we are always prepared to travel to locations where CBP is activated for temporary duty', which included hurricanes, such as Hurricanes Maria, Irma, and Harvey in 2017. PAE relocated 103 people that year to support CBP.<sup>160</sup>

### **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

PAE has received other contracts in relation to immigration, including Immigration, Detention, and Verification, to which it has dedicated 2,000 employees to provide 'fee collection, application preparation, vetting and biometric capture for US civilian agencies'.<sup>161</sup> The company writes that it is a 'critical part of US border security', and that its 'employees perform biometric data collection, identity verification and criminal checks against National Crime Information Center database'. PAE supported all 137 of the US Citizens and Immigration Services Application Support Centers.<sup>162</sup> The company has also received contracts from the DHS Counter Weapons of Mass Destruction Office to develop technologies that could detect airborne biological threats<sup>163</sup> and has received well over \$60 million from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (the US Department of Defense), a program that generally works to strengthen the borders of other countries.<sup>164</sup>

Lastly, the company has received \$423 million from the US State Department to provide 'administrative, maintenance, training, safety and logistics/procurement support for the Colombian National Police's aviation unit'.<sup>165</sup>

**'Our team has delivered on that model supporting DTRA border security contracts across the world in southeast Asia, eastern Europe and in Jordan. In total, the systems we have installed protect 4,500 miles of borders.'**

**- Todd Probert of Raytheon**

#### **REVENUE (2018)**

**\$27.1 billion**

#### **EMPLOYEES**

**67,000**

#### **HEADQUARTERS**

Waltham, MA

#### **DESCRIPTION**

World's second-largest defense company and largest producer of guided missiles.

**TOTAL CBP CONTRACTS FROM 2008 TO 2019:  
35 for \$36.9 million.<sup>196</sup>**



#### **PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2011:** Potential \$45.3 million for SeaVue radar systems.<sup>197</sup>

#### **OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

Raytheon is a top contractor for CBP, but also for US international border operations in Jordan and the Philippines particularly. The company has received over \$1 billion in contracts from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency for border-building abroad. As Dave Waisgras, president of Raytheon Intelligence, Information and Services (IIS), says, 'Raytheon delivers border security capabilities across the globe that help protect countries from a wide range of threats'.

In 2011, Raytheon also won a contract with ICE to modernize its TECS system. Raytheon was commissioned to ensure interfacing more than 100 databases between ICE and local law enforcement in order to track and detain undocumented people. In June 2013, however, ICE terminated the contract and subsequently hired the company Palantir to complete the task.<sup>198</sup>

**'Unisys is proud to have CBP's trust in support of this critical mission, and we are excited for the opportunity to continue providing proven border security technology to CBP and to enhance the country's border security...',<sup>113</sup>**  
**- Amy Rall of Unisys, October 2016.**

**REVENUE (2018)**

**\$2.83 billion**

**EMPLOYEES**

**20,000**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Blue Bell, PA

**DESCRIPTION**

A global information technology company

**TOTAL CONTRACTS FROM CBP FROM 2005 TO MAY 2019:  
35 worth more than \$2 billion<sup>114</sup>**



**PROMINENT CBP CONTRACTS:**

**2008:** CBP tasked the company to deploy readers for Radio Frequency Identity (RFID) tags that would be embedded into passports, passport cards, and enhanced driver's licenses. This detector, installed on the inspection booth, could obtain a reference number from a distance of 20 feet [6 meters] if a person was queuing to cross into the United States it would trigger her or his record.<sup>115</sup>

**2010:** Land Border Integration Project built upon and improved the RFID technology and license-plate detection. It would be worth up to \$350 million over five years. UNISYS reported that, 'CBP and UNISYS are capitalizing on the initial success...' of previous contracts. And 2010 was also the same year the company saw a significant jump in its stock prices.<sup>116</sup>

**2016:** A revamp of the Land Border Integration contract for another five years to help CBP continue its identification of people and vehicles called Integrated Traveler Initiatives. 'By taking advantage of advances in biometrics, cybersecurity and data analytics, CBP can make our borders even safer', said Amy Rall.<sup>117</sup>

**OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:**

UNISYS has also received contracts<sup>118</sup> from DHS and in 2014 one of its executives became Chief Information Officer at ICE.<sup>119</sup>

In 2005, UNISYS over-billed taxpayers for almost 171,000 hours in 2005 by charging the Transportation Security Administration \$131 an hour for employees who were paid less than half that amount.<sup>120</sup>

# MORE THAN A WALL

## Corporate Profiteering and the Militarization of US Borders

# THE BORDER-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

### CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

LOCKHEED MARTIN, GENERAL DYNAMICS, RAYTHEON, BOEING, NORTHROP GRUMMAN (2005-2018)



### LOBBYING VISITS

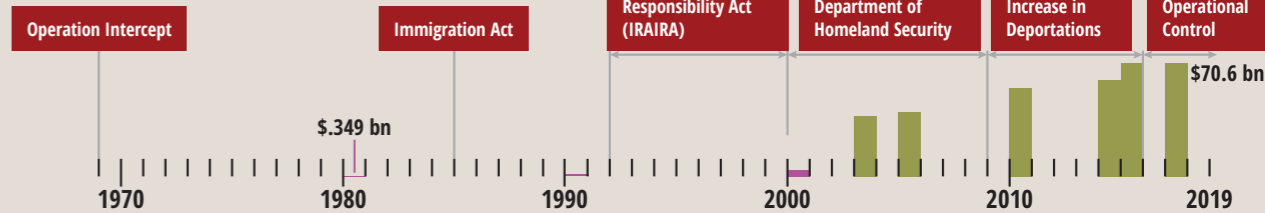
OF TOP 5 CORPORATE BORDER SECURITY FIRMS (2005, 2008, 2012, 2017)

- L3 Technologies: 43 (previously L-3 Communications)
- Lockheed Martin: 42
- Accenture: 37
- Correction Corporation of America (CCA): 36
- Boeing: 35

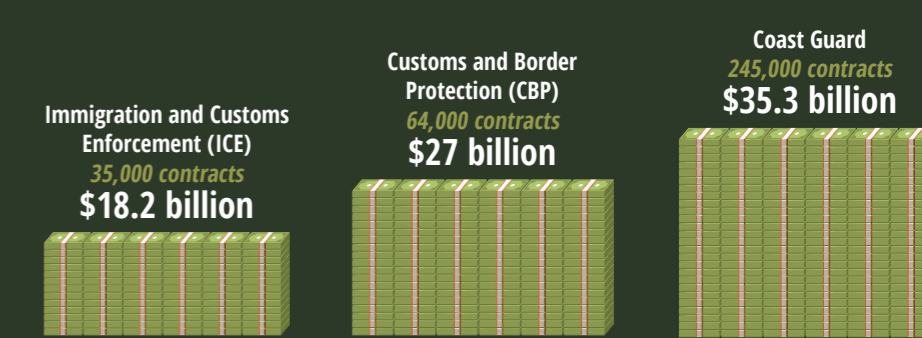
### LEGISLATION

The building of US' virtual wall, 1970-2017

- Key Immigration Acts
- Technology Plans
- Budget: Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
- Budget: Department of Homeland Security (DHS)



### GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS 2006-2018



### BORDER SECURITY CORPORATE GIANTS

(TOP 14 CORPORATE CONTRACTORS FOR CBP, 2006-2018)

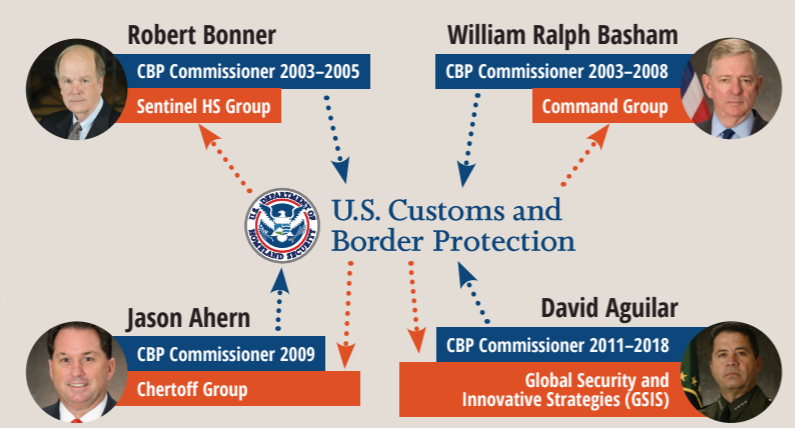


### US BORDER AGENCIES BONANZA FOR CORPORATIONS

The last 3 decades have witnessed an unstoppable boom in border spending and many arms, security, and IT firms have made millions as a result.

### THE REVOLVING DOOR

Between 2003 and 2017, four Customs and Border Protection (CBP) commissioners went onto homeland security corporations or consulting companies after leaving government.



### DEADLY CONSEQUENCES

"The US has a border-industrial complex run by the world's biggest arms firms so its deadly consequences should come as no surprise."



## **BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE SMART WALL SYSTEM**

When the Secure Fence Act of 2006 passed, CBP, through the US army corps of engineers, contracted companies – including Kiewit, Granite Construction, Sundt Construction, WGI, Tetra Tech, Western Solutions, and Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR) – for its construction.<sup>199</sup>

But what has long been constructed on the US border is much more than a wall. It is rather a whole surveillance system of cameras, sensors, and command-and-control rooms, to reinforce the wall and barrier construction on the US side of the frontier.

The walls and barriers are just one part of what Border Patrol Public Information Officer Jacob Stukenberg called, ‘a very solid system’<sup>200</sup> – one made up of three components: barriers, technology, and personnel. This ‘system of systems’,<sup>201</sup> as described by Chaar López, has been developed since 1994 when the Prevention Through Deterrence strategy was first implemented. Now, it is fuelled by larger budgets and expanding further into the 100-mile [161-kilometer] zones with ever more corporate participation and input.

The most ambitious attempt to build this system was the SBInet contract given to the arms giant, Boeing Corporation. Boeing was able to cash in on hundreds of millions before DHS canceled SBInet in 2011. The towers that Boeing was constructing, spread throughout southern Arizona, did not work. They were not designed for the terrain, did not take account of the rugged hills and canyons, nor of the rain and livestock that set off motion sensors. But the cancellation did little to stop the relentless process of border militarization; the technology reinforcements were simply recalibrated.

In January 2015, Elbit Systems and its subcontracted Tucson company International Towers began to build Integrated Fixed Towers in the Coronado National Forest just north of the US–Mexico border in Nogales. The Integrated Fixed Towers (IFTs), located about 5 to 20 miles [8 to 32 km] inland, are meant to be one of the multiple layers of US border control. The Elbit Systems of America slogan for its IFTs seemed to be a direct response to Boeing’s challenges: ‘Any threat. Any terrain. Any time’.<sup>202</sup>

## **ELBIT SELLS ITS EXPERIENCE OF WALLING IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA**

Elbit has been one of the primary technology integrators and contractor for “smart walls” in the West Bank wall system, the occupied Golan Heights, and the blockaded Gaza Strip. In 2002, the same year that Israel began construction of its separation wall, the Elbit subsidiary Ortek won a \$5 million contract to electronically securitize 15 miles of wall around Jerusalem.<sup>203</sup> Another contract \$17 million came in 2006, to continue the work. The company set up a system composed of day and night cameras, combined with a laser range finder and a sensor detection system, designed to all feed into command and control centers. In 2013, Elbit installed its system in the occupied Golan Heights along the Syrian border for a hefty \$60 million contract. And in 2015, it began developing “tunnel detection technology” for deployment around the Gaza Strip. This would become part of the 130 feet deep underground wall that Israel started building in 2017. Elbit has also developed other border surveillance systems such as Unmanned Ground Vehicles, armored and armed vehicles.

When vying for the border contract in the United States, the company advertised itself as having ‘10+ years securing the world’s most challenging borders’ and that it had a ‘proven track record’,<sup>204</sup> .

When the \$145 million contract was first announced in 2014, the late US senator John McCain – who had received a campaign contribution from Elbit Systems during the 2013–2014 election cycle – said ‘Arizonans have been waiting more than a decade for the Department of Homeland Security to place needed technology along our border to support the Border Patrol and fully secure our southern border’.<sup>205</sup>

Since 2015, Elbit has constructed most of the 53 towers CBP contracted them to build across southern Arizona. The towers range from 80 feet to 160 feet [24 to 48 meters] in height and carry day-time and night-time infrared cameras capable of seeing 7.5 miles [12 km] away. The towers are equipped with ground-sweeping radar that can make detections in a 15-mile [24 km] radius. CBP has constructed the towers to work in coordination and feed into command-and-control centers.<sup>206</sup> Resistance by the Tohono O’odham Nation to Elbit’s Integrated Fixed Towers delayed their construction for five years. In March 2019, however, the legislative council approved the IFTs. Now, what CBP calls the ‘backbone’ of the virtual wall will be completed in Arizona over the next few years.<sup>207</sup>

US President Trump has struggled to show his supporters his promised built wall – largely as it is already in existence – but it has reinforced ongoing efforts. In January 2018, CBP gave the Montana company Barnard construction a \$73 million contract to replace roughly 20 miles [32 km] of bollard-style vehicle barriers in New Mexico near El Paso.<sup>208</sup> A CBP statement said it was following the Trump administration’s executive order in January 2017 calling to ‘secure the southern border of the United States through the immediate construction of a physical wall on the southern border, monitored and supported by adequate personnel so as to prevent illegal immigration, drug and human trafficking, and acts of terrorism’.<sup>209</sup> Near El Paso, Barnard constructed another bollard-style wall, which consisted of sturdy steel posts – 20-feet [6 metre]-high bars, similar to a prison. Unlike the 2017 media display in Otay Mesa near San Diego of prototype walls presented by various private companies (each with a mini-contract), a see-

through wall is exactly what Border Patrol agents have said that they want. One agent said that the ability to see into Mexico was a ‘game changer’. Not only was there more ‘situational awareness’, but agents can also shoot into Mexico, as happened in October 2012 when Border Patrol agent Lonnie Schwartz put his gun through the posts and fired into Mexico, killing 16-year-old José Antonio Elena Rodríguez. The autopsy showed that more than 10 bullets were fired into the teenager’s back.<sup>210</sup>

The ‘smart wall’ has not extended only across land, but high into the sky and out to sea. When in 2012, CBP first equipped one of its Predator B drones with Northrop Grumman’s VADER radar systems at one of its Arizona locations, it also brought together two of its top contracting companies. With the same ‘bring the battlefield to the border’ dynamic as General Atomic’s drones, VADER can detect people from up to 25,000 feet [7,620 meters]. CBP began using VADER in Arizona in 2012 and in Texas in 2015, according to the Government Accountability Office. There were 21,384 reported ‘detections’ between 2014 and 2016, and between 2013 and 2016, the drones had a total of 20,780 flight hours.<sup>211</sup>

Similar to VADER, in 2011 CBP granted \$45 million to the Raytheon Corporation for its SeaVue maritime radar system to equip CBP with ‘Guardian’ drones, Predator Bs refashioned for maritime operations.<sup>212</sup> CBP regularly flies the Guardians over the Mona Strait, between Puerto Rico and the island of Hispaniola shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

There are other components of the ‘smart wall’. In 2013, CBP awarded General Dynamics a contract to ‘upgrade the RVSS capability’ (Remote Video Surveillance System) along the southern border. In April 2017, the General Dynamics RVSS system was given the status of ‘Full Operating Capability’. According to Ronald Vitiello, the then acting Border Patrol chief, ‘Successful partnerships like the one we have with the General Dynamics team are necessary to efficiently and effectively secure the border’.<sup>213</sup>

The RVSS can look 'deep into neighboring territory from the US side of the border, providing persistent early warning of potential crossings' with its long-range and infrared cameras. There are about 150 such towers from San Diego to Laredo.<sup>214</sup>

Mobile Video Surveillance Systems (MVSS) is another component. In 2015, a contract for these went to Tactical Micro<sup>215</sup> and Mistral for \$50 million apiece. Tactical Micro's 'Eagle' MVSS is a 'stand-alone mobile surveillance system that is designed to provide the customer with an immediate solution for various surveillance needs'.<sup>216</sup> The MVSS is much like StrongWatch's Freedom-On-The-Move discussed in

the introduction. It mounts on standard and long-wheel-drive pick-up trucks with a mast that extends anywhere from 13 to 30 feet [4 to 9 meters]. Along with cameras, radar and Laser Range Finders, it is considered the secondary line of defense.

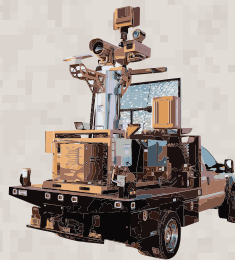
Similarly, in 2016 CBP gave Telephonics a \$13.5 million contract for a 'fully integrated and rapidly deployable mobile ground surveillance system, able to reliably detect, track and classify small and slow-moving targets encountered during border surveillance operations'.<sup>217</sup> This was the Mobile Surveillance Capability (MSC) part of the apparatus.

## GRAPHIC 7: SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGIES IN SMART WALLS



**Integrated Fixed Tower (IFT)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
Elbit Systems



**Mobile Surveillance Capability (MSC)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
Telephonics, FLIR



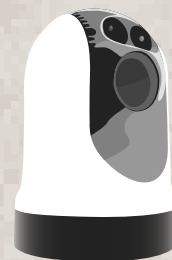
**Mobile Video Surveillance System (MVSS)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
Telephonics, FLIR



**Remote Video Surveillance System (RVSS)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
General Dynamics



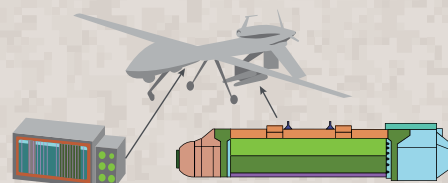
**Forward Looking Infrared Radar (FLIR)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
FLIR Systems



**Drones (UAV)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
General Atomics



**Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar (VADER)**

**KEY CORPORATIONS:**  
Telephonics, FLIR



An article published in the *Journal of Borderlands Studies* argues that the deployment of the surveillance technology is central to the broader deterrence strategy. The authors find a correlation between the location of surveillance technology, the routes taken by border crossers, and the locations where human remains have been found.<sup>218</sup> The blockades set up to stop people from crossing not only physical but also electronic borders are not innocuous, but potentially lethal, instruments.

## **BORDER-TO-PRISON PIPELINE**

In 2012, the private security company G4S received a US \$234 million contract from CBP to continue providing securitized transport for the undocumented migrants that Border Patrol arrests in the desert. 'The benefit of our CBP buses', said Kevin Johnson of G4S in 2010, 'is effectively to give CBP's staff more time to do the important work of tracking and apprehending illegal immigrants, rather than spending their valuable time transporting them long distances once they are caught'. That year G4S claims to have logged 19 million miles (30,577,536 km), transporting nearly one million unauthorized migrants across the US-Mexico border.<sup>219</sup>

Drivers, dressed in a grey uniform, black hat and black boots, drive people arrested by the US Border Patrol to nearby short-term detention facilities, where they are detained for up to 72 hours, sometimes longer. There has been much documentation of conditions in these holding cells, often referred to as *hieleras*, or ice boxes, because of their cold temperatures and cheap, thin 'foil' blankets. On 25 December 2018, an eight-year-old boy died of influenza after a combination of a grueling trip through the isolated southwestern deserts and subsequent detention in such extra-cold holding cells.<sup>220</sup> People also complain of not receiving enough food or water. In short-term detention, there have been multiple cases of abuse (including of children), as documented by ACLU<sup>221</sup> and the humanitarian aid organization No More Deaths in its report 'A Culture of Cruelty'.<sup>222</sup>

The ACLU report, which looked specifically at minors in detention, obtained over 30,000 pages

of records related to child abuse in CBP custody between 2009 and 2014. The records document a pattern of intimidation, harassment, physical abuse, refusal of medical services, and improper deportation. The records also reveal the absence of meaningful internal or external agency oversight and accountability. Among other examples, the report alleges that CBP officials ran over a 17-year-old with a patrol vehicle and then punched him several times; denied a pregnant minor medical attention when she reported pain, which preceded a stillbirth; subjected a 16-year-old girl to a search in which they 'forcefully spread her legs and touched her private parts so hard that she screamed;' and threw out a child's birth certificate and threatened him with sexual abuse by an adult male detainee'.<sup>223</sup>

While in short-term detention, Border Patrol takes the detainees' biometric data, using the technology developed by such companies as UNISYS and Northrop Grumman. After their detention, the US government formally expels some people from the country, denying any right of return. Others face a magistrate in a zero-tolerance Border Patrol program known as Operation Streamline. Both are profitable for private companies such as G4S and its 'mobile detention on wheels'.

In the case of Tucson, 75 border crossers per day are sentenced to between 30 and 180 days in prison. The same G4S-run transport, with the same armed drivers who drove people into the city from the desert, then transfers them to Florence, Arizona, a rural area a little more than an hour away, where most are incarcerated in a prison run by the private company CoreCivic (formerly Corrections Corporation of America), which will make as much as \$134 per person per day per bed.<sup>224</sup> CoreCivic's slogan is 'better the public good'.

CoreCivic also happens to be a top contractor for ICE (along with Geo Group), which indefinitely imprisons those facing deportation – people who are held administratively, and who in 2018 averaged 42,000 people each day.<sup>225</sup>

These companies know that their fiscal health relies on continuing and increasing US enforcement efforts. The more people behind bars, the better

for the bottom line. As CoreCivic put it in an annual report in 2005: 'The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction and sentencing practices or through the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by our criminal laws. For instance, any change with respect to drugs and controlled substances or illegal immigration could affect the number of persons arrested, convicted and sentenced, thereby potentially reducing demand for correctional facilities to house them'.<sup>226</sup>

A detailed report, 'Immigration Detention: An American Business' by the non-profit advocacy group *Worth Rises* in 2018 showed that profits from immigration detention don't just benefit GeoGroup and CoreCivic, but also a whole host of other corporations including financial investors, software, telecommunication, private medical, construction, food, and private equity firms.<sup>227</sup>

From the bullets in the Border Patrol guns to the final expulsion at the Ports of Entry, the undocumented cross-border migrant will traverse a world of contracts and sub-contracts, many jobs depending on the blockading, restriction, and illegalization of movement.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1994, the Department of Justice hired the consultancy firm Burkhalter Associates Inc. to undertake an external and comprehensive review<sup>228</sup> of the Border Patrol, to the tune of \$38,000. The purpose was to make the border-enforcement agency 'more effective'. The report made many suggestions for Washington to consider. One was to, as the report put it, 'mark the illegals'. They wrote that Border Patrol could 'drop invisible dye substance on illegals from helicopters during night operations which could be activated by lasers or infrared devices to assist in overhead tracking and ground apprehension. They also suggested utilizing the same substance ejected in a spray-like manner from buried sensors'. They went on to say that 'marked illegals' would be easier to identify once they 'infiltrated urban areas.' They reported that the Sarnoff Research Center had 'developed

such a substance which has been operationally deployed'.

The Burkhalter report also recommended that watch towers be equipped with loudspeakers through which guards would shout orders to 'transiting illegals'. To intensify the fear, there would be the sound of barking dogs at night. As the report explains, 'these techniques would be used for harassment purposes which could result in additional measures of deterrence'.<sup>229</sup>

Some of the early seeds of what Iván Char López calls a 'military-academic-industrial complex' were sown in the early 1970s when the INS associated with the Department of Defense's 'vast technopolitical regime', showing how technology companies have fused with the Pentagon and its mission.<sup>230</sup> One of the companies that helped the research and development (R&D) for the 'McNamara Line' was the MITRE corporation, which was founded in 1958 as a federally funded research lab.

More than half a century later, MITRE continues on the same trajectory, working with DHS to 'ensure the nation is safe from terrorism, secure from cyber threats, and resilient against natural disasters'.<sup>231</sup> According to its web page, MITRE is a non-profit company that manages federally funded R&D centers. It works across the government in military, intelligence, aviation, civil systems, judiciary, and health care. For Homeland Security it has developed the Homeland Security Systems Engineering and Development Institute, which provides 'agency-wide access to deep technical expertise'. One tangible example of this is MITRE's participation as a corporate partner with the Department of Homeland Security's Center of Excellence on Borders, Trade, & Immigration, one of nine such centers that DHS funds through various university consortiums.

The University of Houston is the lead of the Borders, Trade, & Immigration consortium, which includes the University of Arizona, the University of Texas El Paso, University of Virginia, West Virginia University, University of North Carolina, University of Minnesota,

Texas A&M, Rutgers University, American University, the Middlebury Institute of International Studies, and the Migration Policy Institute.<sup>232</sup>

According to the Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology website, through its Centers of Excellence (COEs), it has developed more than 100 targeted tools, technologies, and knowledge products for use 'across the homeland security enterprise'.<sup>233</sup> Budgets for the COEs in 2017 amounted to \$10 million, with another \$90 million dedicated to R&D. The COEs have performed research for 11 unnamed DHS components and five other federal agencies, which have contributed more than \$100 million in addition to investments in the COEs. It has brought in \$330 million of additional investment from 'external sources', presumably the private sector, for homeland security research, development, and education. This has included summer internships for university students (438 students placed in internships since 2008, 63 career-development grants, and 256 scholarships).<sup>234</sup> As written in the mandate: 'The purpose of this center or centers shall be to establish a coordinated, university-based system to enhance the nation's homeland security'.<sup>235</sup>

The initial COE for Borders and Immigration was led by the University of Arizona and the University of Texas El Paso, starting in 2008. The University of Arizona was in charge of the R&D component, and according to the mission statement it was going to develop 'innovative technologies, proficient processes, and effective policies that will help protect our nation's borders from terrorists and criminal activity, facilitate international trade and travel, and provide deeper understanding of immigrant dynamics and determinants'.<sup>236</sup>

One such project saw Aerospace Mechanical Engineering students studying locust wings in order to develop miniature surveillance drones that they called Micro Air Vehicles. 'The flight of birds and insects is still not well understood', an unnamed researcher told a reporter for KVOA, Tucson's NBC affiliate. Another graduate student explained further, holding a micro-drone that had wings: 'You can have one Border patrol agent execute a

program launching twenty of these, and you can fly twenty trails at once and he can be watching a video display and basically be doing the job that otherwise would take far more Border Patrol agents'. The reporter was impressed. He gushed that these 'toys', which could make pinpoint stops and move through thin crevices, could one day 'help secure the US Mexico border' by going after 'terrorists, drug smugglers, and other intruders'.<sup>237</sup>

The CEO of the University of Arizona Tech Parks, Bruce Wright, said in a 2012 interview: 'If we're going to be on the border on a day-to-day basis, with all of its problems and issues, and there's a solution to it, why shouldn't we be the place where the issue is solved and we get a commercial benefit from it?'<sup>238</sup> Indeed, Wright was thinking beyond the 57 companies already in southern Arizona (some in the Tech Parks) that focused on border technologies. He was looking to make the area the number one cluster of border-technology companies in North America. Besides benefitting from its connection with the R&D through the Center of Excellence, the Tech Parks was one place where surveillance technology could be developed, tested, evaluated, and demonstrated, Wright said. It had 18,000 linear feet [3,280 meters] of fencing surrounding its 'solar zone', a solar-technology-centric research area ideal for testing sensor systems along a future border wall. On any of the roadways in its 1,345 acres [544 hectares], it could set up mock border-crossings or checkpoints to test new equipment and methods. It drew on faculty and graduate students from the college of engineering. Using 'rapid-response teams', they offered third-party evaluations of border control technology.<sup>239</sup>

The research areas of the Border, Trade, and Immigration COE are: Cross-border movement of people: monitoring and facilitation and Organized Crime, Cross-border Movement of Goods: Port of the Future and Trade Compliance, and Homeland Security Enterprise Education and Workforce Development. Besides MITRE, other corporations working with the COE include SAS, a company that does data analytics, presumably from the research centers, to be used by the Department of Homeland

Security; and Voir Dire International, LLC, which specializes in international security, intelligence, and policy research and analysis.

The external advisory board of the Border, Trade, and Immigration COE includes former CBP commissioner and Border Patrol chief David Aguilar of the private global security consulting company GSIS and retired US Coast Guard Rear Admiral Tom Atkin, who was Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Global Security in the Department of Defense. The rest of the advisory board is made up of other government officials, representatives from the private sector, and law-enforcement bodies.<sup>240</sup> There is, however, no representation from civil society or immigration rights organizations, and thus no challenge to 'border security', in terms of practice or even conceptually.

Three students at the University of Arizona found this out the hard way in early 2019 when they protested against the presence of the US Border Patrol giving a presentation on campus. The students were criminally charged. 'The backlash we have received since speaking out has been overwhelming and violent. We are now being investigated and harassed by the University of Arizona police department, and criminally prosecuted', one of the students, Denisse Mendoza Melchor, said to the Guardian. 'This campus is unsafe in general, however that has now been heightened since the investigation started.'<sup>241</sup> After a forceful response from university students and faculty, the university dropped the charges in April 2019.<sup>242</sup>

## SELLING BORDER MILITARIZATION

In 2006, the US Border Patrol, knowing that it was expanding massively, hired private companies Image Media Services and JWT INSIDE to manage its image. According to the Image Media Services website, 'all great brands are built around a compelling story. To shape a company, to sell a product, or achieve a goal—an emotional connection needs to be made'.<sup>243</sup>

With this philosophy, the Border Patrol's message was revamped while it was hiring 6,000 new agents (going from 12,000 to 18,000 en route to today's

approximately 21,000). The new brand would symbolize that the Border Patrol was going beyond its traditional mission of, as the CBP publication put it, 'intercepting illegal aliens, smugglers, and drugs'. The brand would signify that the Border Patrol would guard 'our nation from a wider scope of threats than ever before', in sync with the post-9/11 counter-terror priority mission of CBP. A new brochure even carried a brand image with the words *Protected by US Border Patrol* stamped over an outline of the United States, surrounded by a light green circle. The brochure warned that 'facing threats to America at our border frontiers puts Border Patrol agents on the front line of the war on terror'.<sup>244</sup>

CBP and the Border Patrol have long had programs specifically designed to sell their mission to the greater public, such as Explorer programs for groups of young people. In its Boy Scouts of America program, 14–21-year-olds 'explore' being an agent as a possible future career, and learn how to arrest and interrogate people, along with learning about different technologies CBP deploys in the deserts and checkpoints.

The Explorers program has been around since the late 1950s and is designed for young people to explore potential career opportunities. In the 1950s, Border Patrol proposed to General Mills that its agents should be promoted on breakfast cereal boxes like other superheroes. It didn't happen then, but after 9/11 the Explorers program took a distinctive turn towards counter-terrorism and border patrol, much like US politics.<sup>245</sup> CBP participates in a 'Shop With a Cop' holiday program, in which agents, along with other law-enforcement personnel, accompany young children who have been determined to be 'in need', usually to a local Walmart, to buy \$100 in clothing or shoes. And for adults, different CBP stations around the country have Citizen Academies, a multi-week program to teach targeted community members (designed to attract those who are particularly influential) to learn about CBP's mission and activities.

There has also been a certain savvy-ness on social media. For example, on the CBP Instagram

page during the US Black History Month in 2019 CBP posted a picture of Border Patrol agents in 1961 as deputy marshals so that the University of Mississippi's first African American student could attend. The Instagram account includes photos of men and women of different nationalities inspecting flowers and fruit, playing with children, riding on horseback, and providing hurricane relief in Puerto Rico. Other pictures include happy dogs being petted by young children, or agents standing on top of drug contraband, and images of sleek helicopters, fast boats, and futuristic-looking surveillance equipment like the Tethered Aerostat Radar Systems. The image of dozens of migrants contained under the bridge in El Paso, Texas on 27 March received 3,462 likes.

By 2018, in an effort to improve CBP's 'digital modernization' capacity, Salesforce, a 'customer relationship management team' was hired for its two computer-based analytics products. According to a company press release dated 6 March 2018, Community Cloud and Analytics would be used to 'recruit and support new agents' and Service Cloud would 'modernize' the employment process from 'hire to retire', as well as any 'digital engagement' with the border guards and 'citizens'.<sup>246</sup>

## **BORDER SECURITY EXPOS**

Since 2005, an annual Border Security Expo brings in top industry and top officials from the DHS, CBP, and ICE. The event now includes a pre-Expo golf day where Homeland Security and industry executives can casually come together and discuss future prospects and possibly contracts. There are two full days of conferences that look at different parts of the industry, from biometrics to land-border systems to targeting – to name but a few. There are also fully catered lunches and evening events offering further opportunities to synergize. Panels at the 2020 Expo in San Antonio include titles such as 'Identify and address new and emerging border challenges and opportunities through technology, partnership, and innovation', 'Mass Migration and Unaccompanied Children: Financial and National Security Impacts' and 'Border: Wall – Ports – System(s) – Technology – Infrastructure

– Integration – Modernization'.<sup>247</sup> It enables CBP officials to talk directly to industry about where the agency is headed, what kinds of technologies it wants developed, and what kind of contracts it can offer in the future. As the Border Security Expo website puts it: 'Expert Insight. Innovative Solutions. Critical Connections'.<sup>248</sup>

Officials can amble through the expo halls dominated by camera systems, and various types of robots and drones, with vendors eager to explain what they can do in terms of monitoring, surveillance, detection, and incarceration. One reason the Border Security Expo website suggests that companies should exhibit is to 'Tap into multi-billion-dollar budgets for security equipment, products, and services'. At the 2012 Expo, DRS Technologies booth proclaimed this promise: 'You Draw the Line and We'll Help You Secure It'. At the 2016 Expo, the San Antonio company Timberwatch displayed a new surveillance system that looked like the natural world. The barrel cactus could be stuffed with surveillance cameras, and the tree stumps, 'ideal for the Montana border', could fit border agents inside them. Corporations can also participate directly in ceremonies honoring agents who were killed or who died while on duty. At the 2017 Border Security Expo a representative from General Dynamics Information Technology department, a company that has received CBP contracts, facilitated the 'Fallen Heroes' ceremony: 'The brave agents who gave their lives to protect our borders and defend our freedoms, they're forever bound and together in an unbreakable bond of honor. In Border Patrol they say it's "honor first"'.<sup>249</sup>

The Border Security Expo is but one example of many such gatherings where vendors meet prominent figures of border and security apparatus. There are industry days, such as when Michael Jackson asked the industry executive to tell CBP what to do. There are expos for the US northern border, and an international summit. And there are huge expos across the world such as the Expo de Seguridad in Mexico City, Milipol in Paris, ISDEF in Tel Aviv – venues where US companies, as well as others from all over the world, come to talk with governments.

Since 2016, the last day of activities includes a trip to a gun range, where agents in mock scenarios engage in shooting competitions. As event director John Moriarty at the Bandera range in April 2017 stated 'There's a renewed interest in border security. There's anticipation that there's going to be investment made on the border, so that creates a lot of interest in this space and we're seeing that for sure'.<sup>250</sup>

## INTO THE FUTURE

In April 2018, in a testing scenario the DHS required a small drone to 'fly unnoticed by human hearing and sight' along a 'predetermined route observing and reporting unusual activity and identifying faces and vehicles involved in that activity comparing them to profile pictures and license plate data.' This was part of the DHS Robotic Aircraft Sensor Program-Borders (RASP-B), that also tested the drone's ability to map terrain in 3D and detect any changes.<sup>251</sup>

Such advanced technology, drones equipped with facial recognition and biometric technology, offers a glimpse to the future of border policing, and the types of technologies and products that industry will further develop.

A CBP expansion of its drone fleet would certainly follow the projections of the general drone market, expected to leap from \$17.82 billion in 2017 to \$48.88 billion in 2022 (this includes estimates for military, homeland security, and law enforcement).<sup>252</sup>

The focus on biometrics also mirrors the massive growth in the global biometric market, which includes facial recognition technology that is expected to surpass \$50 billion by 2024.<sup>253</sup> In US border enforcement, the use of biometrics is already substantial.<sup>254</sup> Pilot programs for facial recognition began in 2018 when the US government started to obtain images of people in their cars and on flights entering and leaving the country. The foundation for this included previous secretive tests in Arizona and Texas in which authorities obtained a 'massive amount of data', including images of 'people leaving for work, picking up children from school, and carrying out other daily routines'.<sup>255</sup> Now such facial recognition is at the Anzalduas port of entry in Texas, and the Nogales and San Luis ports of entry in Arizona.<sup>256</sup> This technology is not limited to US land borders. By the end of 2018, it was being used in 15 airports and DHS says it will cover 97% of departing passengers by 2022.<sup>257</sup>

As things stand, the 100-mile border market is poised to grow exponentially. The trends to keep an eye on will be more drones and high-tech cameras, radar systems, and biometrics, all fuelled by the dynamic interrelationship between the surveillance industry, government, and homeland security forces that relies on a narrative of fear.



*A memorial service held for 16 year-old Mexican national José Antonio Elena Rodriguez who was shot and killed by CBP agent Lonnie Swartz through the border fence in Nogales, Arizona. Swartz was ultimately acquitted of all charges after many years of litigation. The ruling has been appealed by the Rodriguez family.*

*A security camera from the CBP station in Sasabe, Arizona.*

# BUILDING A POLICY WALL OF FEAR

When Arizona congressional representative Martha McSally stated that it was time to ‘build a policy wall alongside a physical wall’,<sup>258</sup> it wasn’t a surprising position for the retired Air Force veteran. In this instance McSally – the chair of the Border and Maritime Security subcommittee – was talking about stopping the April 2018 ‘border caravan’, the Holy Week pilgrimage of asylum-seekers first brought to the attention of the media after a series of tweets made by President Donald Trump on his way to church on Easter Sunday.

McSally’s words painted a similar scenario as Trump’s tweets: 1,500 people were coming north to ‘exploit the system’. In McSally’s account, there was not a word about the possible array of root causes behind the exodus, including longstanding US policies in Central America supporting economic oligarchies (often following US corporate interests) and military dictatorships. Instead, during her opening remarks to the congressional hearing in Washington on 22 May 2018, McSally called *Pueblo Sin Fronteras* (People Without Borders) – the group organizing the caravan – an ‘extremist advocacy group’ with the stated purpose of ‘abolishing borders’.<sup>259</sup>

That was just one snapshot of many of McSally’s rhetorical flourishes focusing on the border since being elected to the US House of Representatives in 2014. In her run for the US Senate, one of her campaign’s core demands was spearheading solutions to ‘secure the southwest border’.<sup>260</sup> To justify the build-up of the border she made it known that her district was located on the border in southern Arizona and that the policies she supported would protect her constituents.<sup>261</sup> Regardless of the accuracy of that claim – McSally has also been booed at town halls in southern Arizona for her border positions and polls have demonstrated that people who live in the US–Mexico borderlands tend to oppose more enforcement<sup>262</sup>– she also positions herself adeptly as a former Air Force pilot to underscore her iron-fisted approach. What she didn’t mention in her failed senate run was that

the coffers of her campaign were filled with dollars from companies looking for border contracts.

Among the top campaign contributors to McSally during the 2018 election cycle, for example, were Raytheon Corporation (\$49,420), Northrop Grumman (\$19,997), Lockheed Martin (\$19,868), Boeing (\$14,630), and General Dynamics (\$12,691)<sup>263</sup> – all top contractors for CBP. McSally also received contributions from companies based in other countries such as BAE Systems (UK), which contributed \$10,750<sup>264</sup> and Elbit Systems (Israel) which came in with \$8,500.<sup>265</sup> McSally received Elbit’s second-largest political contribution, just behind Texas Rep. Kay Granger, a long-serving congressional representative, who has been influential on the appropriations process, through which money is designated in budgets for the US federal government.

Of the 28 bills that McSally sponsored for the 115th Congress 2017–2018, many sought to bolster the border apparatus. This included the Immigration Advisory Act of 2018, the Office of Biometric Identity Management Authorization Act of 2018, the C-TPAT Reauthorization Act of 2017, and the Southwest Border Security Threat Assessment Act of 2017, among others. One comprehensive bill co-sponsored by McSally in January 2018 was the Securing America’s Future Act. According to a press release issued by McSally’s office, while providing DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood



Arrivals) 'beneficiaries' a three-year renewable legal status, the bill 'addresses the porous southern border by authorizing the construction of a border wall, investing in new technology, and improving modernizing, and expanding ports of entry'.

Packed into the bill was \$38 billion to fund border policing, and further construction of a 'border wall system' of barriers, walls, technologies. In essence, a multi-billion-dollar extension of existing border-security measures. It would mandate CBP's Air and Marine Operations to undertake 95,000 flight hours per year, and require the drones to operate 24 hours per day for five days a week. It would hire 5,000 Border Patrol agents, increasing the rank and file of the agency to 26,000. It would also put \$110 million into Operation Stonegarden, supporting the collaboration between CBP and state and local police, which includes extra federal money for police departments to buy technologies to assist CBP in border policing and surveillance. If this bill had passed, many of McSally's campaign contributors would benefit. In June 2018, the bill was eventually defeated in the House but its proposals will undoubtedly feed into new bills.

## CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

The campaign contributions to McSally are just one snapshot of much larger sums of money proffered to members of the House Homeland Security Committee. During the 115th Congress, for example (the 2017–2018 cycle), top CBP contractors showed up in force in terms of cumulative finance for the House Homeland Security committee members. Northrop Grumman led the charge with \$293,824. Lockheed Martin gave \$224,614. Other companies with contributions of over \$150,000 include General Dynamics (RVSS) and the Boeing Corporation (SBI net).<sup>266</sup> Taken together, via many different companies, the total received by the 31 members is approximately \$54.6 million (of course each member, with affiliations with other committees and individual regional concerns, received contributions from many sectors).

The same corporate players were the largest campaign contributors when the House Homeland

Security Committee first became a standing committee during the 109th Congress (2005–2006): Lockheed Martin (\$161,612), General Dynamics (\$126,050), and Northrop Grumman (\$125,050).

<sup>267</sup>The cumulative contributions for the 35 members of the committee for this Congress amounted to \$38.6 million, demonstrating that this money has been incrementally increasing over the years. The committee has the responsibility of handling legislation on homeland security and can amend, approve, or table such bills. While it is very hard to directly connect campaign contributions to specific bills, the large contributions indicate the industry's expectation of potential contracts from the newly formed Department of Homeland Security.

During the 2005–2006 109th Congress, top CBP contractors were also the top contributors to members of the House Appropriations Committee, the congressional body that regulates expenditures of the federal government, or earmarks the money for potential contracts. Appropriation bills create the substance of the homeland security apparatus, designating its budgets, and allotting money to different agencies and programs from the US treasury. Top contributors to this critical committee included Lockheed Martin (\$490,750), General Dynamics (\$390,900), Northrop Grumman (\$307,110) and Raytheon (\$271,450). They were made on the cusp of significant increases in DHS, CBP, and ICE spending that would become a dominating force in US politics in this post 9/11-era.<sup>268</sup>

Ten years later at the 115th Congress, Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin were the top two with \$866,194 and \$691,401 respectively for contributions to appropriations, along with Raytheon, Boeing, Deloitte, and General Dynamics, all making donations of over \$500,000.<sup>269</sup> While these were all companies winning military contracts, they also received substantial contracts from CBP. It is worth noting that the top seven contributors are all contractors for CBP, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Honeywell International, General Dynamics, Deloitte LLP, Boeing Co, and Raytheon Co. (In comparison there were only two CBP contractors in the top 10 contributors for the 109th Congress).

**TABLE 3: CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE**

<b>109TH CONGRESS (2004 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$123,750
General Dynamics	\$105,625
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$229,375</b>
<b>109TH CONGRESS (2006 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$161,612
Northrop Grumman	\$125,050
General Dynamics	\$126,050
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$412,712</b>
<b>110TH CONGRESS (2006 CYCLE)</b>	
<b>NONE</b>	
<b>110TH CONGRESS (2008 CYCLE)</b>	
Raytheon	\$148,750
Boeing	\$125,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$274,550</b>
<b>111TH CONGRESS (2008 CYCLE)</b>	
<b>NONE</b>	
<b>111TH CONGRESS (2010 CYCLE)</b>	
Raytheon	\$184,500
Boeing	\$171,550
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$356,050</b>
<b>112 CONGRESS (2010 CYCLE)</b>	
Boeing	\$156,650
Raytheon	\$143,500
Lockheed Martin	\$110,758
Northrop Grumman	\$99,700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$510,608</b>
<b>112TH CONGRESS (2012 CYCLE)</b>	
Raytheon	\$177,999
Lockheed Martin	\$171,456
Boeing	\$170,750
Northrop Grumman	\$134,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$654,205</b>

<b>113TH CONGRESS (2014 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$279,500
Lockheed Martin	\$240,500
Raytheon	\$213,730
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$733,730</b>
<b>114TH CONGRESS (2014 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$200,200
Lockheed Martin	\$174,500
Raytheon	\$164,750
General Dynamics	\$123,300
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$662,750</b>
<b>114TH CONGRESS (2016 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$251,480
Northrop Grumman	\$215,050
Raytheon	\$158,351
General Dynamics	\$150,327
Boeing	\$132,120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$907,328</b>
<b>115TH CONGRESS (2016 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$225,820
Northrop Grumman	\$171,085
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$396,905</b>
<b>115TH CONGRESS (2017-2018)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$293,324
Lockheed Martin	\$224,614
Boeing	\$171,279
Raytheon	\$168,270
General Dynamics	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,007,487</b>
<b>116TH CONGRESS (2018 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$196,564
Lockheed Martin	\$147,734
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$344,298</b>

**TOTAL: \$6,524,829**

Source: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)

**TABLE 4: CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

<b>109TH CONGRESS (2004 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$397,950
Lockheed Martin	\$392,711
General Dynamics	\$292,500
Boeing	\$263,150
<b>109TH CONGRESS (2006 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$490,750
General Dynamics	\$390,900
Northrop Grumman	\$307,110
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,188,760</b>
<b>110TH CONGRESS (2006 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$432,250
General Dynamics	\$329,400
Northrop Grumman	\$284,260
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,045,910</b>
<b>110TH CONGRESS (2007-2008)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$501,600
General Dynamics	\$425,900
Northrop Grumman	\$383,900
Raytheon	\$374,600
Boeing	\$320,400
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,006,400</b>
<b>111TH CONGRESS (2008 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$474,100
General Dynamics	\$382,900
Raytheon	\$361,400
Northrop Grumman	\$360,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,579,000</b>
<b>111TH CONGRESS (2010 CYCLE)</b>	
Boeing	\$543,500
Lockheed Martin	\$522,550
Raytheon	\$394,500
General Dynamics	\$391,750
Northrop Grumman	\$352,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,204,550</b>
<b>112 CONGRESS (2010 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$355,800
Boeing	\$343,150
General Dynamics	\$254,300
Raytheon	\$238,500
Northrop Grumman	\$220,900
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,412,650</b>
<b>112TH CONGRESS (2012 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$474,500
Boeing	\$368,700
Northrop Grumman	\$365,900
Raytheon	\$335,000
General Dynamics	\$318,310
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,862,410</b>

<b>113TH CONGRESS (2012 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$465,000
Northrop Grumman	\$364,150
Boeing	\$351,959
General Dynamics	\$313,310
Raytheon	\$307,250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,801,669</b>
<b>113TH CONGRESS (2014 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$537,800
General Dynamics	\$334,500
Northrop Grumman	\$580,600
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,452,900</b>
<b>114TH CONGRESS (2014 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$588,950
Lockheed Martin	\$566,200
Raytheon	\$397,600
Boeing	\$378,649
General Dynamics	\$340,100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,271,499</b>
<b>114TH CONGRESS (2016 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$721,879
Northrop Grumman	\$602,410
Boeing	\$434,825
Raytheon	\$384,100
General Dynamics	\$337,850
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,481,064</b>
<b>115TH CONGRESS (2016 CYCLE)</b>	
Lockheed Martin	\$720,180
Northrop Grumman	\$595,810
Boeing	\$458,408
Raytheon	\$378,100
General Dynamics	\$332,950
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,485,448</b>
<b>115TH CONGRESS (2018 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$866,200
Lockheed Martin	\$691,774
General Dynamics	\$518,475
Boeing	\$503,421
Raytheon	\$475,655
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,055,525</b>
<b>116TH CONGRESS (2018 CYCLE)</b>	
Northrop Grumman	\$752,971
Lockheed Martin	\$652,249
Boeing	\$466,268
General Dynamics	\$463,655
Raytheon	\$412,523
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,747,666</b>

**TOTAL: \$27,595,451**

Source: www.opensecrets.org

The campaign contributions are made because corporates know from experience that these pay off in larger revenue down the line. According to the Center for American Progress, ‘federal contracts were more likely to be awarded to firms that have given federal campaigns higher contributions...’.<sup>270</sup> This is corroborated by a study by political scientist Christopher Witko, who found a significant relationship between contributions and the receipt of future contracts.<sup>271</sup> By looking into campaign contributions and contracts from 1979 to 2006, he found that for each extra \$201,220 of contributions, a company can expect to attain 107 more contracts and an average of an additional \$5.3 million in revenue.

As put by the Center for Responsive Politics, ‘the primary goal of much of the money that flows through US politics is this: Influence. Corporations and industry groups, labor unions, single-issue organizations—together, they spend billions of dollars each year to gain access to decision-makers in government, all in an attempt to influence their thinking’.<sup>272</sup>

**TABLE 5: CBP BUDGET AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS**

YEAR	CBP BUDGET	HOUSE HOMELAND CONTRIBUTIONS	APPROPRIATIONS CONTRIBUTIONS
2006	\$7.1 bn	\$412,712	\$1,188,760
2010	\$11.4 bn	\$356,050	\$2,204,550
2015	\$12.7 bn	\$662,750	\$2,271,499
2016	\$13.6 bn	\$907,328	\$2,481,064
2018	\$16.3 bn	\$344,298	\$2,747,666

In 2019, after the longest government shutdown in US history ended on 25 January, the US Congress created a conference committee, mandated to come up with a funding deal for border immigration enforcement. A special investigation by the publication *Sludge* found that more than half of the 11 politicians who were tasked to determine the budget appropriations had received \$170,000 from private prison companies GEO Group and CoreCivic, which, as discussed previously, have received extensive ICE contracts.<sup>273</sup> In 2018, for example, the companies received \$358 million in contracts, and in the 2018 cycle donated \$62,500 to six conference committee members.

One of those members, Texas Democrat Henry Cuellar, told journalist Alex Kotch that ‘GEO is one of the largest employers in my district and plays an important role in maintaining our public safety. Without [private detention centers], rapists,

murderers, and other offenders would not be incarcerated and instead present a clear threat to our communities’.<sup>274</sup> From 2007 to 2018 Cuellar received more money from GEO Group and CoreCivic (at \$55,690) than any other politician, Democrat and Republican alike. For the 2017–2018 election cycle, GEO group was the largest donor to Cuellar with \$32,400. But the influential congressman also received significant amounts from all the companies interested in developing surveillance technology, biometrics, aircraft, and border barriers, such as Northrop Grumman (\$13,000), Boeing Corporation (\$10,000), Caterpillar Inc (\$10,000, whose bulldozers and other machinery are seen all over the US borderlands, creating access roads for the Border Patrol), and Lockheed Martin (\$10,000).<sup>275</sup>

In 2018, Cuellar penned an article for CNN titled ‘The answer to border security is technology, not a wall’. Cuellar pointed out, without revealing any

campaign contributions, that 'a more efficient use of limited tax dollars would be to invest heavily in state-of-the-art detection technologies'.<sup>276</sup> This mantra that technology is the answer, and not a wall, has become a standard line for the Democrats during the Trump years. For example, before the end of the above-mentioned government shutdown, No. 3 House Democrat Rep. James Clyburn suggested that they give Trump the \$5.7 billion he requested for the wall, but insist that his administration use it on drones, X-Rays and sensors, and more Border Patrol agents.<sup>277</sup>

In the end, the conference committee did pass a bill that included more than 40,000 'beds' per day for ICE detention. However, as a result of the increased scrutiny of private prisons since Trump took office, several Democrats rejected or returned campaign contributions to the GEO group in 2018 in view of the perceived discrimination against immigrants of color and Muslims, though it has long been the former who have filled the GEO group detention centers. The Democrats included Rep. David Price, Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, and Senator Amy Klobuchar and Rep. Eric Swalwell, who in 2019 were both running for president in the Democratic primary.<sup>278</sup>

## **LOBBYING IN THE NAME OF FEAR**

The last time that the United States almost passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill was in June 2013 when the US Senate passed the bipartisan 'Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act'. While a section of the bill was dedicated to a qualified form of legalization for undocumented people, had it been passed by the House of Representatives,

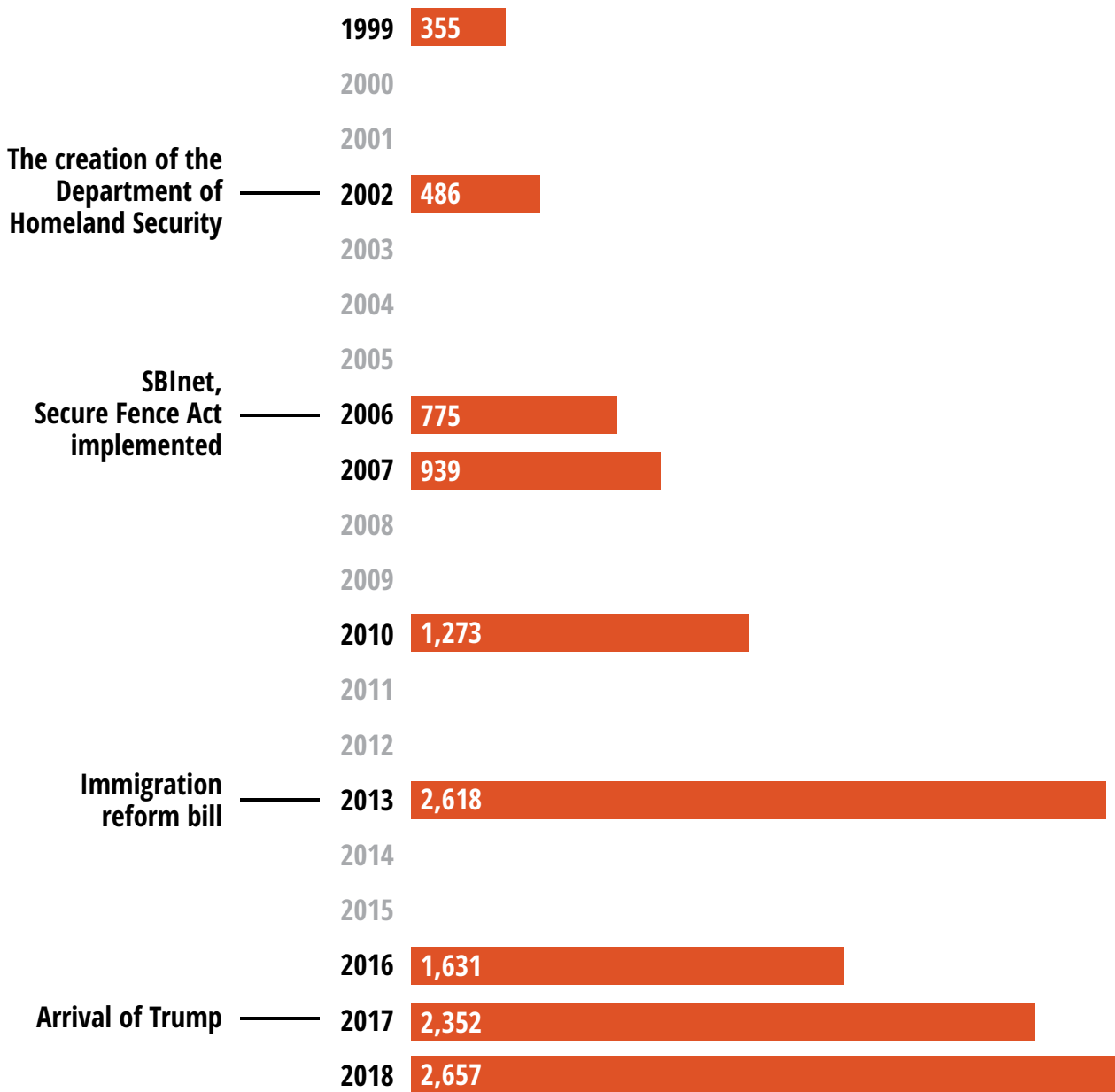
that bill would have injected \$46 billion for border militarization, including a list of products manufactured by specific corporations.<sup>279</sup> Since 2009, the specific corporations listed on the Senate bill had collectively donated \$11.5 million to federal political candidates and campaigns. In other words, their investments paid off handsomely.

Indeed, this one particular bill gives a unique glimpse into the world of lobbying and campaign contributions.

In 2013, all the Senate co-authors of the Act, Democrat and Republican alike, took money from the top contractors' political-action committees (PACs), the term used to describe a committee set up usually by specific corporate interests to raise and spend money to elect or defeat candidates. The PACs frequently donate to both parties to ensure influence regardless of election results. Before the potential bill was debated, between 1 April and 30 June, the lobbying and contributions intensified, as reported by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). Northrop Grumman, for example, spent \$3.5 million on lobbying, United Technologies \$2.20 million and EADS North America \$906,440. The United Technologies lobbying team included Alfonso D'Amato, former senator from New York State.<sup>280</sup> All of this amounted to, as calculated by AFSC, \$74,250 on lobbying per day.

The lobbying for that 2013 border and immigration bill reached new heights, with 1,618 registered lobbying visits, mainly by corporations. To give an idea of the shift, lobbyists who reported that they were advocating on general immigration issues, according to disclosure reports, lobbying visits (or reports) more than doubled from 1,273 in 2010 to 2,618 in 2013.<sup>281</sup>

## GRAPHIC 8: TIMELINE OF LOBBYING VISITS RELATED TO IMMIGRATION, 1999–2018



Source: [www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)

In 2013, the final bill mandated that DHS purchase six Northrop Grumman-manufactured radar systems (VADER) totaling over \$55 million, 15 of the United Technologies Blackhawk helicopters (since bought by Lockheed Martin) at over \$250 million, and eight helicopters from EADS North America. The latter was just a small addition to the 84 'Light Enforcement Helicopters' already being delivered by its subsidiary, American Eurocopter. The last delivery of this single largest 'procurement of assets' of CBP's Office of Air and Marine was made in December 2013.<sup>282</sup>

Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy called the bill a 'Christmas wish list for Halliburton',<sup>283</sup> invoking the US company with the infamous reputation of profiteering from the Iraq war. And the trade magazine *Homeland Security Today* said it would be a 'treasure trove' for corporations in on the border-security market, promising 86 integrated fixed towers, 286 fixed-camera systems, 232 mobile-surveillance systems, 4,595 unattended ground sensors (to add to or enhance the existing 12,000), 820 handheld equipment devices, and 28 license-plate readers.<sup>284</sup>

Although the bill did not pass, it served as a blueprint. DHS, for example, purchased more of the VADER systems from Northrop Grumman (there are now four).<sup>285</sup> Similarly, in 2014 (as discussed above) CBP awarded the contract for the construction of 53 Integrated Fixed Towers to Elbit Systems. In 2013, General Dynamics won the contract to upgrade the Border Patrol Remote Video Surveillance Systems, worth approximately \$100 million over 10 years.

While lobbying for immigration issues has continued since then, in 2017 the numbers almost equaled the 2013 peak with 1,438 registered visits. And for the broader picture, lobbying on immigration from 1998 to 2018, shows upticks of lobby visits in 2006–07 corresponding with the passage and implementation of the Secure Fence Act and SBInet, again in 2013 as just noted, a slow decline from 2014 to 2016 (though higher than numbers pre-2006), before another surge in lobbying from 2017 after the Trump administration took office.

Homeland security lobbying as a whole – where you would find the companies lobbying for border enforcement – showed a significant upsurge following 9/11, hugely increasing through the early 2000s and peaking in 2008, and then plateauing until 2018. To give an indication just how much the lobbying on the homeland security front has increased, in 2003 Northrop Grumman was the top lobbyist, reporting five lobbying visits where they were one of 385 clients with 637 reported visits.<sup>286</sup> In 2006, this more than doubled: 724 clients with 1,428 reported visits, led by Lockheed Martin, Accenture, Boeing, Raytheon, and Unisys.<sup>287</sup> In 2013, corresponding with the comprehensive immigration bill discussed above, there were 665 clients with 2,682 reported visits, including L-3 Communications, Lockheed Martin, and General Dynamics, all of which registered 15 lobbying visits; Boeing and Leidos had 12 each and General Atomics had nine.<sup>288</sup> And in 2018, there were 677 clients with 2,841 visits listed: including top CBP and ICE contractors Geo Group, L3 Technologies, Accenture, Leidos, Boeing, CoreCivic, and also companies such as Facebook, Microsoft, and Visa.<sup>289</sup> From 2002 to 2019 there were nearly 20,000 reported lobbying visits.

**TABLE 6: TIMELINE OF CORPORATE BORDER SECURITY FIRMS AND LOBBY VISITS 2005–2017**

COMPANY	2005	2008	2012	2017
Northrop Grumman	6			
Lockheed Martin	11	18	13	
L-3 Communications (L3 Technologies)		13	14	16
Correction Corporation of America (CCA)		12	12	12
General Atomics		12	10	
Raytheon	6	11		
Accenture	15	10		12
BAE Systems		9		
Unisys		9		
General Dynamics	4	8	19	
Boeing	4 (SBInet)		20	11
<b>Total Clients</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>667</b>
<b>Number of Visits / Reports</b>	<b>1,204</b>	<b>2,911</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>2,768</b>

As Megan Janetsky from the Center of Responsive Politics reported, 77 lobbying visits specified the 'border wall' as their principal issue in 2017, indicating a 'Trump effect'. As with campaign contributions, it is difficult to ascertain exactly what impact lobbying has, but its influence and creation of access to influential policy-makers definitely serves corporate interests. Political scientists Eleanor Neff Powell and Justin Grimmer state, '... there is growing consensus [among researchers] of the disproportionate influence of the economic elite, the avenues of influence themselves remain opaque'.<sup>290</sup> However, as Lee Drutman writes,<sup>291</sup> it was the early 2000s when corporate lobbying began to exceed the combined budgets of the House and Senate, noting that the biggest companies have some 100 lobbyists on their staff and that 'for every dollar spent on lobbying by labor unions and public-interest groups together, large corporations and their associations now spend \$34', and that this corporate lobbying has 'increasingly come to overwhelm every other potentially countervailing force'. Past corporate victories include rolling back regulation, lowering their taxes, and helping move public opinion in favor of less government interference.

One study by US economics professors establishes a direct link between lobbying activity and shareholder wealth: 'Our results suggest that stocks of lobbying firms significantly outperform non-lobbying firms'.<sup>292</sup>

Yet even as lobbying has clearly grown, the official numbers are only the 'tip of the iceberg' according to lobbyist and strategic advisor Meredith McGehee, who notes that much of the lobbying and advocacy is 'under-the-table'.<sup>293</sup>

'On an issue like immigration or [other] controversial issues, it's actually politically smart not to get too high a profile', McGehee said 'so you want to make sure you don't show up on the lobbying disclosure reports because either it's an unpopular one or you figure there might be blowback'. This was corroborated by a Center for Responsive Politics 2017 report that underscored that 'hordes of lobbyists [were] deliberately moving into the shadows to avoid the consequences of registration'.<sup>294</sup> From 2007, there was a steady decline of registered lobbyists,

not because there is less lobbying, but because lobbyists started to hide their activity more, often by not registering.

There are many ways that lobbying can take place and not show up as a registered visit. For example, between 2000 and 2005, General Atomics spent around \$660,000 on 86 trips for legislators, aides, and their spouses. This included as many trips to the company's facilities in San Diego as to Italy, home to some of General Atomics business partners. There was a strategy to target staffers, rather than only politicians, in order to, as journalist Michael Arria reported, 'build a firm connection with the men and women who oversee the lawmakers' decisions and provide them with relevant legislative information', a sort of strategic behind-the-scenes lobbying.<sup>295</sup> And according to Gary Hopper, vice president of General Atomics Washington operation, it was important that the staffers 'know what our capabilities are, along with sister companies' capabilities'.<sup>296</sup> So that's why 'we approach them'. This included, among others, staff members of Kay Granger (who sponsored the Make America Secure Again appropriations bill in 2018), who took trips at the expense of General Atomics during that time. And there were benefits for lawmakers who either went on such trips or approved trips for their staff: Granger, for example, received \$11,000 in campaign contributions from General Atomics during the 2004 and 2005 cycles.

Notably it was 2005 when General Atomics was granted its first contract for unmanned aerial systems for Customs and Border Protection. What started at \$14.1 million for one Predator B drone opened the gateway to contracts of more than \$500 million, including one in 2018 worth a potential \$275.9 million to maintain and provide operational services to the fleet of nine in CBP possession. In 2017, General Atomics spent close to \$5 million on lobbying primarily on military and homeland security appropriations.<sup>297</sup>

The extent of the lobbying operation by the border-industrial complex can be seen most recently in the monumental efforts of the top CBP contractors for the 2018 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act (H.R. 3355), which show how intense they lobby officially – and no



doubt unofficially.<sup>298</sup> After this bill was incorporated into consolidated Omnibus Appropriations (H.R. 1625)<sup>299</sup>– passed by the Senate and House and signed by the president on 23 March 2018 – it would yet again be the largest border and immigration budget in US history at more than \$23 billion (the sum total for CBP and ICE).<sup>300</sup> To make that happen, the lobbyists of the largest CBP contractors made sure they were talking to the right people behind closed doors.

Representatives Northrop Grumman lobbied 19 times.<sup>301</sup> This did not include Matthew Lapinski of the Crossroads Strategies lobbying firm who registered three times and represents Northrop Grumman along with other companies. Lockheed Martin, whom Dina Rasor of the Project on Government Oversight called the ‘the ultimate pay-to-play contractor’, registered 41 times to lobby on this bill, and Raytheon 28 times. Linda Daschle, retired US Senator Tom Daschle’s wife, who worked with LHD & Associates, visited the halls of Congress at least 10 times advocating for this bill. Top contractor L3 Technologies, with more than \$1 billion in contracts to CBP since 2006, was one of her clients. The Israeli company Elbit Systems lobbied once, perhaps in the hope of extending its Integrated Fixed Tower contract. General Dynamics lobbied for the bill at least 44 times. Mark Numendahl, who represented Northrop Grumman, IBM, and Palantir (one of the companies singled out for protest after the Trump family separation policy in 2018) for Crossroads Strategy registered six times. Several representatives from another lobbying firm, Innovative Federal Strategy, representing top CBP contractors such as General Atomics, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, and Raytheon, registered to lobby 32 times. The lobbying groups dwarfed the few advocacy and civil society groups such as the Lutheran Refugee Service.

On the surface, there appears to be very little public discussion on the annual increases of border and immigration budgets in the United States over the years, but the reality is that most of the discussions are taking place behind the closed doors of key representatives and reinforced with thousands if not hundreds of thousands of dollars in campaign contributions. This is evident year after year with

the appropriations bills as budgets get doled out, which always involve the same high-powered lobbyists for the same high-powered companies.

In 2018, other notable interested parties who registered to lobby for the Homeland Security appropriations bill were the National Rifle Association (NRA), including executive vice-president Wayne LaPierre, representatives from the Institute of Makers of Explosives, and the Israeli–American Coalition for Action. Ridge Policy, a firm led by former DHS secretary Tom Ridge, had several representatives.<sup>302</sup>

The result in 2018 was the approval of the Omnibus Appropriations bill which included increases everywhere: a DHS budget up 13 per cent at \$55.6 billion, and \$16.357 billion for CBP (again the agency’s largest ever budget, a 15 per cent increase from the \$14.281 billion budget of 2017). Wrapped into the CBP budget was the additional \$1.57 billion for border wall construction and border technology that was originally proposed in Texas Rep Kay Granger’s denied bill ‘Make America Secure Again’, essentially a military and homeland security spending bill.<sup>303</sup> This shows again how rejected bills get folded into other larger bills. (During the 2017–2018 election cycle, Granger’s top campaign contributor by far was Lockheed Martin at \$123,360.<sup>304</sup> Northrop Grumman was also among the top five with \$20,000, along with Elbit Systems at \$14,000.)

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, despite growing calls for its abolition, received another pay raise in 2018. The \$7.452 billion budget included funding for 40,520 detention beds per day, up by 1,196 beds from FY 2017, after the dutiful lobbying of CoreCivic and Geo Group the largest private contractors, who will at least partly divvy up the \$3.076 billion slated for Custody Operations.<sup>305</sup> In 2017, CoreCivic Inc. reported \$840,000 in total lobbying, through four different firms, mainly for federal budget and appropriations.<sup>306</sup> Geo Group reported close to \$2 million in lobbying in 2017 through six different lobbying organizations.<sup>307</sup> Since October 2016, ICE has spent \$4 billion on contracts and grants to companies such as CoreCivic (\$225 million) and GeoGroup (\$560 million).

## THE REVOLVING DOOR

Former US Vice President Dick Cheney is a prime example of the how the revolving door works in US politics. When Cheney was Secretary of Defense for the George Bush Sr. administration in the early 1990s, he oversaw one of the largest privatization efforts that had ever occurred in the Pentagon. His job was to initiate contracts with companies – one for the company Brown & Root Services (BRS) that received \$3.9 million to produce a classified report (and later in 1992, an additional \$5 million to update it) detailing how a company like itself could offer logistical support to the US military in war zones across the world.<sup>308</sup> Indeed, this was BRS's specialization, having done this sort of work since the Vietnam War, where it built roads, military bases, and landing strips. At the end of 1992, BRS won a five-year logistics contract to work alongside the US military in places ranging from Zaïre (now Democratic Republic of the Congo) to Haiti, and from the Balkans to Saudi Arabia. It was soon after Bill Clinton's election in 1992 that Cheney became CEO of Halliburton Company, which owned Brown & Root Services (BRS), and consequently BRS received more than \$1.2 billion in Pentagon contracts between 1992 and 1999, while Cheney earned millions himself. But the money and influence spigot had only just started flowing. After the election of George W. Bush in 2000, Cheney went through the revolving door again right into the White House as Vice President. From the ensuing war in Iraq, BRS (which changed its name to Kellogg, Brown & Root) amassed more contracts than any other company assisting in military logistics, \$39.5 billion.<sup>309</sup>

‘There is no better example of the problematic “revolving door” relationship between government and private enterprise than Dick Cheney and Halliburton’, wrote Connor Friesdorf in *The Atlantic*.<sup>310</sup> Friesdorf points to an increasingly blurry government–corporate nexus where the biggest players bring their expertise, access, and networks within government to private industry, and vice versa.

A similar process has unfolded at the DHS. Ex-government officials often end up as top hires for different corporations, or enter the lobbying industry – as not only lobbyists, but also as consultants and strategists. Indeed, there have been 177 people who have gone through the DHS revolving door and 34 people who have both worked for the House Homeland Security Committee and a lobbying firm.<sup>311</sup>

Almost all former CBP commissioners and DHS secretaries have shuffled into the private sector or various consulting companies, giving both ‘expert opinions’ and greasing the wheels between industry and homeland security. Robert Bonner, for example, after his time as the first CBP commissioner (2003–2005), went on to join the Sentinel HS group, a homeland security consulting firm based in Washington. In 2010, CBP issued Sentinel HS a \$481,000 contract over five years to do ‘strategic consulting’.<sup>312</sup> This included facilitating ‘discussions among senior Border Patrol leaders’ at forums and conferences near CBP headquarters in Washington. And the consultancy fees? About \$240 an hour, ‘not including travel expenses or the cost of the conference’.

# GRAPHIC 9: REVOLVING DOOR OF CBP COMMISSIONERS AND DHS SECRETARIES



## Robert Bonner

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
CBP Commissioner: 2003–2005

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Sentinel HS Group

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Homeland security consulting, 2010  
'Strategic Consulting' contract



## William Ralph Basham

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
CBP Commissioner: 2006–2008

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Command Group

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Global security and intelligence  
consulting



## Jayson Ahern

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
CBP Commissioner: 2009

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Chertoff Group

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Security and 'risk management'  
advisory services



## David Aguilar

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
CBP Commissioner: 2011–2018

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Global Security and Innovative  
Strategies (GSIS)

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Global security consulting and  
strategic planning



## Tom Ridge

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
DHS Secretary: 2003–2005

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Ridge Policy Group

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Lobbying, 'We shape public policy'



## Michael Chertoff

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
DHS Secretary: 2005–2009

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Chertoff Group

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Lobbying



## Jeh Johnson

**GOVERNMENT POSITION**  
DHS Secretary: 2013–2017

**CORPORATE POSITION**  
Board of Directors Lockheed Martin

**SECURED GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS**  
Military and homeland security  
contracts



Allison Stanger, author of the 2009 book *One Nation Under Contract*, said in an interview that this was an example of 'contracting as usual. When contractors are doing so much work of government, these sorts of private companies are seen as extensions of government. When former agency employees are involved, the lines are blurred even further'.

Very blurry, indeed. After CBP's second commissioner, William Ralph Basham, completed his mandate, he founded the Command Consulting Group, a 'family of companies providing full spectrum related to safety, security, and intelligence', according to its website. The company's motto: 'In an uncertain world, experience matters.' His co-founder was Thad Bingel, also a former CBP employee (chief of staff) during the George W. Bush administration. Bingel ran into trouble when he guided DHS secretary-designate Kirstjen Nielsen through her Senate confirmation process in 2017 – meaning that he accompanied her on visits to the Senate staff before her confirmation, despite being a private consultant who represented companies that sought potentially millions in DHS contracts. The blurry lines were obscured, since Bingel was introduced, on at least some occasions, as Nielsen's aide. One of the businesses the Command Group represents is CT Strategies, a business that 'supports the mission of federal clients, most notably U.S. Customs and Border Protection and other Department of Homeland Security agencies'.

Take the case of David Aguilar, first chief of the US Border Patrol before becoming CBP commissioner 2011. As commissioner there is footage of him telling a graduating class of Border Patrol agents that you are 'the future'. He told them that they will be guarding the US borders and beyond, 'to protect a way of life'. In 2013, Aguilar went through the revolving door and joined Global Security & Intelligence services GSIS to advise clients on a 'broad range of national homeland and international security matters'. Aguilar joined a leadership team 'comprised of well-known chief executives, former Federal Government agency heads, senior advisors to Presidents, cabinet secretaries and Governors,' according to the GSIS website. Since his hiring, Aguilar has become a frequent speaker

and facilitator at border industry days and the Border Security Expo.

In 2017, Aguilar was appointed the Engagement Principal for an agreement between GSIS and Drone Aviation Corporation (DAC). GSIS agreed to advise and consult for DAC for 'Business development support for opportunities within the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Border Patrol' and 'support for opportunities within the U.S. Army'.<sup>313</sup> Aguilar's long history of employment with Border Patrol and CBP, including its highest leadership positions, was considered highly valuable. For these influential services DAC paid GSIS a monthly retainer of \$10,000. 'His practical experience combined with the proven leadership and well-established network of global business relationships brings tremendous value to Drone Aviation,' said Jay Nussbaum, Chairman and CEO of Drone Aviation 'and will be an important contributor to our efforts to serve the Border Patrol and other critical federal and foreign agencies involved in homeland security and law enforcement'.<sup>314</sup> Since CBP has publicly issued a request for further information about different drone systems, implying a future contract, DAC has positioned itself to wield tremendous influence.

It is also worth looking at the media dimension. The Washington-based Chertoff group, with its 'risk management' mission, has created a revolving door for many prominent US homeland security figures, most notably former CBP commissioner Jason Ahern and former DHS secretary Michael Chertoff, the company's founder. The Chertoff Group has also shown how the access, connections, and past government positions can create media space to sell products. Journalist Matt Bewig has accused both Chertoff and co-founder Michael Hayden (former director of the CIA and NSA) of using 'their status as former security officials to advocate publicly for policies that help their clients while downplaying their enormous financial stake in the outcome'. Bewig's most prominent cited example was when Chertoff wrote an op-ed in *The Washington Post* and appeared on national TV news shows after there was a failed attempt

to blow up an airliner on 25 December 2010 with a hidden bomb. While advocating for more screening machines, Chertoff did not disclose that a leading maker of such machines, Rapiscan Systems, was a Chertoff Group client. The Transportation Security Administration (also an agency under DHS) then ordered 300 Rapiscan machines. Kate Hanni, founder of FlyersRight.org, told Huffington Post: 'When Chertoff goes on TV, he is basically promoting his clients and exploiting that fear to make money. Fear is a commodity and they're selling it. The more they can sell, the more we buy into it. When American people are afraid, they will accept anything'.

On another occasion, Chertoff went on CNBC and said that he wanted 'more investment in biosecurity' because 'I think we are beginning to lag a little behind in terms of being able to respond to biological threats', without mentioning that the Chertoff Group had invested in BioNeutral, a New Jersey biotech start-up. Again on CNBC, Chertoff insisted there was a pressing need for cybersecurity, without mentioning the Chertoff Group's representation of the European military giant BAE Systems which works on cybersecurity.

There is more than a conflict of interest here. By giving media space to commentators like Chertoff, the rhetoric in favor of border security is normalized, encouraging a public perception of the 'need' for border enforcement. Take former DHS commissioner Jeh Johnson, for example. When the Obama administration feared that DHS would not be funded in 2015, Johnson appeared on all five Sunday morning political talk shows – CNN State of the Union, Fox News Sunday, ABC's This Week, CBS's Face the Nation, and NBC's Meet the Press where he said the threat to funding was 'unacceptable from a public safety, national security view'. And on another talk show, to stress how important it was to fund DHS, Johnson further stoked the fear narrative and suggested that Al-Shabaab threatened an attack on Minneapolis' Mall.<sup>315</sup> Johnson, who is now on the board of Lockheed Martin, has continued his media appearances on all these Sunday talk shows as a national security commentator, as has Janet Napolitano, the DHS secretary during Obama's first term.

With former CBP commissioner Ahern at the helm of 'risk management' of the Chertoff group (as with other commissioners like Bonner, Basher, Thigel, and Aguilar at other consulting groups), he has become a key connector, advising clients on a broad range of issues including 'homeland and border security management, global commerce and supply chain security, critical infrastructure protection, risk management, and strategic planning and implementation'.

These insider relationships are the oil that lubricates policy shifts and lucrative contracts. As the lobbying firm, The Normandy Group, which worked with GSIS, declares openly among its 'successes' on its Homeland Security/Defense page: 'not only does this include having strong relationships with Members and staff on the key Congressional Committees with oversight on these issues, but we also have worked successfully with our clients to establish positive relationships within the Department of Defense, The Department of Homeland Security, and various intelligence agencies. Our successes in this arena have ranged from achieving vital programmatic funding for first responder training to positioning client projects in competitive government endeavors'.

A photograph showing a desert wash with numerous footprints in the sand. In the background, there are rows of colorful folders or files. A green sign with the text "UNIDENTIFIED CASES" is visible in the upper right. A small green tag with the number "3" is also visible on one of the folders.

# UNIDENTIFIED CASES

*Files containing unidentified remains information at the Tucson Medical Examiner's office.  
Footsteps in a desert wash where migrants often pass through near Arivaca, Arizona.*

# EXPANDING BORDER PROFITS GLOBALLY

When Mexico announced its Programa Frontera Sur in 2014, there was already considerable US support and funding for border enforcement. The third pillar of the US military aid package to Mexico, known as the Merida Initiative, is called the '21st Century Border'. Mexico has received considerable equipment from Washington: X-ray vans, contraband-detection kits, biometric kiosks and accompanying databases to store facial and retinal information and fingerprints. US funds have gone to Mexico's National Institute of Migration, the Mexican Marines, and the federal police for facility construction, patrol boats, night-vision and communication equipment, and maritime sensors. Blackhawk helicopters have been spotted near Mexico's southern border, with prospects for more deliveries. The United States has also been training Mexican K-9 units, drug and contraband sniffer dogs.<sup>316</sup>

US General Lori Robinson stated in April 2017 that Northern Command was working 'closely with the U.S. interagency community and the Mexican interagency organizations to support the Government of Mexico's Southern Border Strategy to improve security on their border with Guatemala and Belize'. He said they were focusing on 'ensuring the timely delivery of a record Foreign Military Sales of over a billion dollars in UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles'.<sup>317</sup>

All of this has increased not only the capacity for cross-border intelligence-sharing, but also profits for a border industry that goes well beyond the United States.

Major corporate players such as General Electric, Raytheon, Lockheed Martin, Motorola, IBM, Dell, and many others have had a hand in building up Mexico's security apparatus, according to declassified documents.<sup>318</sup>

As put by former DHS secretary and Chertoff Group founder Michael Chertoff in 2007, 'we

work internationally to identify potential threats well before they reach our shores, strengthen our perimeter defenses, and then partner with the international community to build resiliency into our shared systems of commerce and travel so that we can have these systems secure without undermining the fundamental fluidity which is the basis of the twenty-first-century global system'.

If it was difficult to calculate precise numbers regarding contracts with CBP, it is even harder for foreign operations. To give an idea of the scope of CBP's international reach, there are 23 attaché offices around the world (and 48 from ICE). Owing to limitations imposed by the Foreign Assistance Act, however, the only departments that can distribute foreign aid are the US Department of State (DOS) and Department of Defense (DOD), not the Department of Homeland Security.

One such DOS program is the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), which has a presence in more than 90 countries. In Central America, for example, almost all of CBP training and equipment comes through the

INL – including the fleet of armored J8 jeeps for the new Guatemalan border forces known as the Tecun Uman, Chorti, and Xinca task forces that now patrol Guatemala’s international borders. The INL has annual budgets that hover at around \$1 billion.<sup>319</sup> Another DOS program is the Export and Border Security Related program (known as EXBS) that is active in more than 60 countries; the budget – though modest – jumped from \$3 million to \$33 million between 1998 and 2003.<sup>320</sup> From the DOD, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency has been and continues to be used in border-building operations and contracting major corporations such as Raytheon to carry out the work in countries including Jordan and the Philippines. DTRA’s budget in 2019<sup>321</sup> was about \$869 million. These are only a few examples of a much broader system of global expansion. Between the DOD and DOS, there are more than 100 programs that can dole out foreign assistance, and DHS is drawing increasing resources from those channels.

Raytheon is a good example of the corporate participation in this vast expansion. The company claims to have deployed border ‘solutions’ in more than 24 countries across Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and the Americas, covering more than 10,000 miles of land and maritime borders. This included, according to a document produced by the Raytheon Corp, ‘Border Security and Critical Infrastructure’, the designing and deploying of more

than 500 mobile surveillance system, training more than 9,000 members of security forces, and building 15 ‘sustainment centers’. The purpose? To ‘deter, detect, and interdict illegal activities that threaten regional and global security’. All of this has come through DTRA, and if you calculate all of Raytheon’s contracts since 2004, the total comes to well over \$1 billion.<sup>322</sup> The contract with Raytheon in Jordan alone is worth nearly \$300 million.<sup>323</sup>

The externalization of the US borders also includes pre-clearance sites, where uniformed CBP agents are stationed in airports around the world such as Dublin and Abu Dhabi, or the ‘Immigration Advisory Program’ where undercover CBP agents roam international airports in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, analyzing all passengers on flights to the United States, in conjunction with the airlines. The National Targeting Center sifts through tens of thousands of people on any given day. Alongside CBP agents are contracted employees from private companies like Deloitte.

Indeed, the outward expansion of the US border is what former CBP commissioner Alan Bersin calls a ‘massive paradigm change’,<sup>324</sup> of the post-9/11 border policing of the United States. And it coincides with European<sup>325</sup> and Australian efforts to do the same. It is projected that the global homeland security market will more than double in ten years. The prospect for profits seems endless.





*A rest area in Falfurrias, Texas where police maintain a heavy presence patrolling for migrants.*

*Monsoon season in the Sonoran desert.*

*A surveillance tower that sits behind a number of residential homes in the ranching town of Arivaca, Arizona.*

# CONCLUSION

Before US President Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1961 farewell speech, when the retired five-star general famously warned against the military-industrial complex, he said at another public event: 'The jet plane that roars overhead costs three quarters of a million dollars. That's more than a man [sic] will make in his lifetime. What world can afford to do this kind of thing for too long?'<sup>326</sup> At the time, according to National Public Radio, Eisenhower was increasingly concerned that military costs were going to become ever more expensive, take away resources from the United States' health and education and other core needs.

In his speech, which again bears repeating, Eisenhower warned about the 'total influence' of the military-industrial complex whose 'economic, political, even spiritual' impact is 'felt in every city, every State house, every office of the Federal government'.

Certainly, Eisenhower, a Republican president, could not have possibly imagined the border industry that has spawned from this – from Bell helicopters dusting and scattering groups of border crossers, to VADER man-hunting radar manufactured by Northrop Grumman attached to Predator B drones manufactured by General Atomics. He could not have imagined how the electronic fences from Vietnam turned into the virtual walls of the US-Mexico borderlands where high-tech cameras and ground-sweeping radars spot groups of families and even lone children trudging through the borderland war zones – often from places where US foreign policy has wreaked havoc.

Year after year, the budgets rise, the contracts get larger and more frequent, as the bones of the dead pile up in the borderlands. The border is a different sort of war zone – there is no wind-down, it is a permanent state of war. There is no end in sight. There are always villains to be evoked and concocted in press conferences and Sunday morning shows, and there are always profits to be made from this fear.

All this, yet when immigration bills are discussed industry is hardly mentioned – not as a player, an actor, an entity with a profit motive and with teams of lobbyists at its disposal, with access to Washington through multiple means, able to influence policy-makers, able to influence bills, able to influence who gets elected in ways much more powerful than the average person, or an average grassroots group.

Business as usual means a never-ending war; a flow of contracts that keep coming, an apparatus that keeps on expanding. The fact that private-sector participation and investment is not considered in the debate on immigration reform is a serious omission, since the profits are being made from a tragedy. But it even goes deeper than this. The confluence of the revolving door, the traffic of influences, the media access these officials have, the constant lobbying and campaign contributions, the regular networking at Border Security Expos, has had an impact of normalizing border security to the extent that it is rarely questioned.

The paradox of Trump's rhetoric on border and immigration enforcement is his suggestion of the lack of consensus that crosses the aisle in US politics on the question of a 'secure border'. That the centerpiece of his 2016 campaign could be the construction of a border wall, when a border wall already existed (and after 15 years of historic

growth of the border-surveillance system since 9/11) revealed how little the border had been discussed in the broader public domain.

And thus, rather than creating a world of draconian immigration and border policies, Trump emerges as a manifestation of many years of such dynamics. He is sustained by them, and is ratcheting them up further. There is a mistaken belief that if you remove Donald Trump, then the border and immigration horrors will be over. Nothing could be further from the truth. Huge and powerful interests have every interest to keep pushing for ever more border security. To make any progress against this will require taking on entrenched and powerful interests. The world's border expos – from the United States to Europe to Singapore to Israel – show a technology industry in constant innovation, ready to keep wedging these dividing lines between the world's peoples, particularly between the rich and disproportionately white people on one side and the poor and disproportionately people of color on the other. Every single aspect of the border has become an industry from the agent's socks and shoes to the bullets to the vehicles to the surveillance equipment. This broad exclusion apparatus and deportation regime has already affected so many lives, forcibly separated so many families, inflicted so much suffering, and caused thousands of deaths.

The migrant caravans coming north to the United States from Central American countries are stark reminders of the political, economic, and military subjugation imposed by the United States upon countries like El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, particularly since the mid-twentieth century, and often before. Structural adjustment programs and free-trade agreements under the neoliberal doctrine and the former Washington Consensus have pushed huge swathes of people to the marginalized edges, exposed them to myriad dangers, as wealth accumulates to those connected with an often violently repressive corporate class.

The legacy of US militarism, counterinsurgency, and political meddling in the region cannot be underestimated. The 1954 CIA-instigated coup

in Guatemala, at the behest of the Boston-based United Fruit Company, which spawned 36 years of oppression and armed conflict, is just one example. The US support for the 2009 coup d'état and the subsequent repressive regime in Honduras is a more recent case. US policies have contributed to the displacement of tens of thousands of people, and US carbon emissions (700 times more than the combined amount from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras since 1900) have contributed to the droughts, sea-level rise, and extreme storms that have left increasing numbers of people environmentally exposed.

These socioeconomic and ecological challenges by their very nature cannot be solved by even more threats of violence through increasingly ubiquitous militarized borders, let alone by the country behind so many of the root problems.

The constant push for more border walls, more technologies, more incarceration, more criminalization is in a holding pattern, stuck in a corporate dynamic with a growth doctrine. It is time to expose the contractors, lobbyists, campaign contributions, influence on policy-makers, and ultimately profits wielded by the border industrial complex. The 'business as usual' border regime is a recipe to make millions or even billions experience the most acute suffering inflicted on humankind. Just like tobacco firms have been removed from forums on health, and oil firms from forums on environment, we need to remove security corporations from forums and policy-making bodies on migration issues in order to find a more holistic solution.



*CoreCivic immigrant detention facility located in Eloy, Arizona.*

# REFLECTIONS BY THE PHOTOGRAPHER, LAURA SAUNDERS

One of the biggest challenges of illustrating the border is the normalization and hidden aspects of structural violence. The images included in the report serve to identify, by image and name, the many layers of brutality enacted through corporate interests in the border regions. By focusing on the individuals, communities, and spaces where this harm is visible; a complicated but important set of characters can emerge. While it is tempting to isolate these issues or narratives, the borderlands remains a complex space informed by past and present.

These layered photos identify centers of power where money and policy interact with the weaponised, occupied and surveilled terrain of remote desert and communities along the US-Mexico border. The visual language tries to find a balance of being both symbolic and exacting. These complications exist in plain sight, but are easily dismissed without further context. By putting the corporate influences within the same frame as those impacted, the distance that corporatization seeks is removed and the conflict itself is laid bare.

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*A disused door in the border fence just past the port of entry in Sonoyta, Sonora. The door once served as an open passage where residents would commonly pass through.*

*Several family photos taken in Mexico hang on the wall of a Chandler, Arizona resident. The oldest son was detained and deported several years ago. His sister remains with his mother in the United States, along with his children.*

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This report looks at the role of the world's largest arms (as well as a number of other security and IT) firms in shaping and profiting from the militarization of US borders. Through their campaign contributions, lobbying, constant engagement with government officials, and the revolving door between industry and government, these border security corporations and their government allies have formed a powerful border-industrial complex that is a major impediment to a humane response to migration.



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