



Media Advisory: Embargoed until 16 September 2019

US BORDER MILITARIZATION DRIVEN BY ARMS AND SECURITY INDUSTRY RATHER THAN TRUMP, ARGUES NEW REPORT

(Davis/Tucson/Amsterdam, 16 September 2019) – The world’s biggest arms firms, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Raytheon and Boeing, are among the key corporations that have shaped border policy over the last three decades and then profited from the massively expanding budgets for border militarization, reveals a new report by the international research group Transnational Institute (TNI).

The report, *More than a Wall: Corporate Profiteering and Border Militarization*, argues that rather than Trump, it is these global corporations with their political and media allies that make up a border-industrial complex which poses the biggest obstacle to a humane and compassionate response to migration.

Examining the development of border policy and expenditure over the last three decades, the report shows that the influence of the border-industrial complex has led to more than a doubling of budgets in the last 15 years (\$9.1 billion in 2003 to \$23.7 billion in 2018) and an incredible overall 1875% increase since 1990 (when it stood at only \$1.2bn). It has also solidified a predominately militarized response to migration in which the US government continuously fortifies the border with the latest military technology rather than address the underlying causes of migration.

The research explores in depth the contracts issued by the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency and the political donations and activities of the corporations that most benefit. It reveals that major arms firms (as well as security and IT firms) are not only the biggest winners of border control expenditures, but also the most active donors and lobbyists in Congress on border policy.

- Between 2006 and 2018, CBP issued contracts worth \$26.1 billion which exceed the accumulated Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) budgets from 1975 to 1998.
- The report identifies 14 companies as the 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, UNISYS. While dominated by the arms industry, they also include security and IT firms and one major consultancy firm (Accenture).
- One contract in 2009 issued to Lockheed Martin of \$945 million for maintenance and upkeep of surveillance planes was equal to the total entire border and immigration enforcement budgets from 1975 to 1978 (around \$923 million).
- The major CBP contract winners Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Atomics, General Dynamics and Raytheon are also the biggest campaign contributors to members of the Congress Appropriations Committee and Homeland Security Committee responsible for budgets and policy related to borders. Between 2006 and 2018, these corporations that provide border security services gave \$27.6 million and \$6.5 million to the Appropriations and Homeland Security Committee members respectively. While this lobbying also relates to military expenditure, border contracts are also central to the same corporations’ business.
- Many of the same border security corporations firms are also the most active in lobbying within Congress. In 2018, the largest border and immigration budget in US history followed intense lobbying by representatives of these firms (General Dynamics lobbied 44 times, Northrop Grumman 19, Lockheed Martin 41 and Raytheon 28, in addition to lobbyists by other border-security giants including L3 Technologies, IBM, Palantir, CoreCivic and Geo Group).
- Between 2003 and 2017, at least four CBP commissioners and three DHS Secretaries went onto homeland security corporations or consulting companies after leaving government.

This lobbying is accompanied by constant interactions between border security corporate executives and government officials, in particular at annual Border Security Expos. The event currently includes a pre-Expo golf day and a series of seminars where border-security corporations are able not only to hawk their wares, and promote their latest technological 'solutions', but also develop a common perspective, language and policy approach to border security.

The evidence on the US border-industrial complex parallels research on the European Union by the Transnational Institute (TNI). In a previous 2016 report, *Border Wars: The arms dealers profiting from Europe's refugee tragedy*, TNI's research showed that arms firms in Europe were also both the principal beneficiaries and most influential corporations in shaping EU policy on borders and migration that has led to rising death tolls for migrants.

Researcher and author of the report, *More than a Wall*, Todd Miller said: "This report reveals the profound and pervasive connections between security and arms corporations and the politicians who both make border policy and determine the money allocated to its enforcement apparatus. All too often these very entrenched and lucrative bonds are hidden from the public eye and, thus, erased from the public conversation. The exact opposite needs to happen: the fact that giant corporations are both benefiting from and driving border militarization needs to be front and center of one of the most important discussions happening in the United States at this time."

Co-editor of the report and researcher for Transnational Institute, Nick Buxton added: "Militarisation of borders worldwide is increasingly driven by the world's largest arms firms who are reaping huge profits while creating an ever more deadly environment for migrants who cross borders. What is worse, these same arms firms are often fuelling the conflicts that force people to migrate. If we want a humane and compassionate solution to migration, a first step must be putting an end to the arms industry's involvement in politics and policy."

Hannah Taleb of border humanitarian aid organization, No More Deaths, which co-sponsored the report said, "US border policies, over the past three decades, have continued to push migration further and further into these deeply militarized zones. This has not only boosted corporate profits, but also caused untold human suffering. No More Deaths has decided to co-sponsor this new report because of the important link between US Customs and Border Protection spending and the massive crisis of death and disappearance of migrants in the US borderlands.

NOTES

- The report is embargoed until 16 September 2019 and will be available at www.tni.org/morethanawall
- An executive summary of the report is available in Spanish
- Researcher Todd Miller, a journalist and author who has researched and written on border issues for more than 15 years. His books include *Empire of Borders: The Expansion of the U.S. Border Around the World* (Verso, 2019), *Storming the Wall: Climate Change, Migration, and Homeland Security* (City Lights, 2017), and *Border Patrol Nation: Dispatches from the Front Lines of Homeland Security* (City Lights, 2014).
- Transnational Institute (TNI) is an international research institute committed to building a just, democratic and sustainable world.

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