



## Viewpoint

### **'Border security' exports: dividing lands across the globe**

April Humble, June 2014

Border control has become big business in recent years. European and North American companies dominate the international security industry, within which border security technologies play a key role. Border security capabilities now flow out of the west and have facilitated a heightening of border controls across national state borders around the globe. Western governments work alongside their favoured companies to expand the industry. The growth of global border security sales and systems has a huge impact on mobility dynamics, local politics and human rights across the world.

The international agenda for heightened border security accelerated greatly after 9/11, driven by the USA with Europe following closely behind. Since 2001, the number of reinforced, securitised borders – marked both by high-tech surveillance, monitoring and access control systems, and low-tech fences, checkpoints and guards – has more than tripled across the globe. [1] We are living in a world riddled with more borders than ever before. [2] This is changing old and new mobility dynamics in areas that previously paid little heed to national boundaries and where borders were largely open and porous. It is now also harder for people considered undesirable or unwanted to migrate, as increasingly sophisticated systems are deployed by states with the intention of only admitting the entry of 'desirable' migrants. Increased border securitisation now affects human movement, such as travel to access trade and livelihood opportunities; nomadic communities; and people seeking better living conditions or fleeing danger and conflict across the globe.

Western private security and defence industries have played and continue to play a key role in this development. Border security's rise to prominence on the international political agenda dovetailed with the desire of businesses to expand into new, highly-profitable global markets. The world's top security and defence corporations - the

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[1] Tessie Humble, 'Pressure at the Levees – Exploring the Growth of Border Securitisation and its Impact on Climate Induced Migration', 2011, unpublished thesis submitted in part fulfilment of BA in Peace Studies and International Relations, Leeds Metropolitan University

[2] As well as the heightened importance given to national borders, the state border has also effectively moved 'inward', with the monitoring and security checks of migrants, particularly suspected 'illegal immigrants', increasing. That includes through increased immigration status checks, raids on suspected irregular migrants and deportations.

businesses that dominate the border security industry – are all based in Europe and North America and have powerful business strategies to increase their market share. With the assistance of states and governments, a strong and increasing flow of border security systems and technologies is streaming out of the west and dividing lands across the globe.

### **The defence and (border) security industry**

Arms corporations – often referred to as defence and, increasingly, security companies – dominate the border security market. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) most recent annual study of the biggest arms dealers across the world shows that of the largest 100 companies listed, 73 (almost three quarters) were European or North American. Of the companies making up the top 10 on the list, all were European or North American. Even within the top 20, all but two were from the USA or Europe. [3] The West leads the global arms industry.

In Europe, the four giants of the industry are Thales (France), BAE Systems (UK), Airbus Group (European multinational, formerly called EADS) and Finmeccanica (Italy). In the USA, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman and United Technologies lead the industry. All of these companies supply border control technologies as part of their core business activities. The number of smaller companies also producing and trading in border control technologies in Europe and the USA totals hundreds, if not thousands.

The mechanisms used to monitor and control cross-border migration are becoming increasingly diverse and sophisticated. Technologies include: fences and walls, sniper towers, biometric passports, iris scanners, cameras, land and sea radars, satellite surveillance, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs, known more popularly as drones, equipped with surveillance rather than weapons systems), and even mounted robots with guns operating via sensors that tell them when and at which target to shoot (reportedly currently in use on the Israeli-Gaza border [4] and the North-South Korea border). [5] The number of components that constitute border security systems is continuously increasing, creating new opportunities for companies already operating in the border security industry that wish to diversify their products and sales, and for companies with ambitions to enter the industry.

### **Trading in nation state fortresses**

The highly complex fortifications Europe and America have created around their own borders showcase what is possible for, and what can be sold to, the rest of the world.

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[3] This does not include Chinese companies. This is due to insufficient data to make accurate comparisons. See: SIPRI, 'The SIPRI Top 100 arms-producing and military services companies in the world excluding China, 2012', *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, 2014, <http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/production/Top100>, accessed 23 May 2014

[4] Lewis Page, 'Israel deploys robo-snipers on Gaza border', *The Register*, 5 June 2007, [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/06/05/israel\\_robo\\_sniper\\_gaza/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2007/06/05/israel_robo_sniper_gaza/), accessed 23 May 2014

[5] Sean Alfano, 'South Korea uses robot to patrol Demilitarized Zone border it shares with North Korea', *Daily News*, July 13 2010, <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/world/south-korea-robot-patrol-demilitarized-zone-border-shares-north-korea-article-1.464609>, accessed 23 May 2014

Contracts to install various types of border security systems in countries across the world are becoming increasingly common. These large, comprehensive contracts can be extremely lucrative for the winning company or consortium.

For example, in 2013 the American security giant Raytheon won a three year contract to implement a maritime border security system in the Philippines worth \$18 million (around £10.7 million or €13.2 million), paid for by the US Defence Threat Reduction Agency. [6] On a larger scale, in 2009 the European multinational defence and aerospace company Airbus Group - at this time still known as EADS - beat off fierce international competition to secure a contract to provide technical and logistical support to Saudi Arabia to improve its border security. The deal covers all of Saudi Arabia's land and sea borders, some 9,000 kilometres, with Airbus Group providing all equipment required for full surveillance, from new radar stations to camera systems and reconnaissance aircraft. This package is reported to be worth \$2.8 billion for Airbus. [7]

Also in the Middle East, a huge contract was awarded to Raytheon by the government of Jordan in 2013. The deal (paid for by the US Defence Threat Reduction Agency, like the Philippines deal noted above) was valued at \$35.9 million (£21.3 million or €26.3 million). Under the almost three-year long contract, Raytheon will design, develop and implement an integrated surveillance system for part of Jordan's land borders. As part of the deal Raytheon will also provide equipment, maintenance, repair and training. [8]

The Middle East is traditionally an area where people are highly mobile. Nomadic pastoralists, such as the Bedouin who span the whole of the Middle East and North Africa, have been moving across national boundaries for between four and seven millennia. Utilising trade routes, mobility to seek livelihoods and seasonal migration, often across borders, are also age-old dynamics, which constitute means of survival and make up the fabric of the demographics within the region; they are now being directly threatened by these border security developments.

### **Single sales and enormous profits**

Outside these comprehensive security packages, border security deals are made in the form of one-off sales of technologies or contracts for the short or long-term supply of equipment or services. For example, French company Thales recently made adaptations to a UAV called Fulmar to heighten its maritime border surveillance capabilities. Fulmar is operational in South Asia where it is used for coastal border

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[6] Courtenay Howard, 'Philippines government selects Raytheon for border security automatic identification system, integration, and training', *Military & Aerospace Electronics*, 24 August 2013, <http://www.militaryaerospace.com/articles/2013/08/raytheon-border-security.html>, accessed 27 May 2014

[7] Agence France-Presse, 'EADS wins Saudi border security deal', *Defense News*, 2 July 2009, <http://www.defencetalk.com/eads-wins-saudi-border-security-deal-20270>, accessed 20 May 2014

[8] Raytheon, 'Raytheon awarded DTRA security contract', *Defence Talk*, 15 April 2013, <http://www.defencetalk.com/raytheon-awarded-dtra-border-security-contract-47466/>, accessed 20 May 2014.

surveillance missions. [9] In southern Africa, Saab Grintek Technologies (SGT), whose parent company is the Swedish aerospace and defence company SAAB Group, was contracted to provide security measures along South Africa's northern and eastern borders. [10] The operation, known as NOREX I (the Northern border of South Africa), is run by the South African Defence Force. Part of this border security includes a 225 kilometre electrical fence which runs along the border with Zimbabwe. The fence caused the deaths of at least 100 individuals attempting to cross the border before February 1990, at which time it was changed to emit a non-lethal electrical shock. [11] As in the Middle East, mobility is essential for livelihoods and for cultural traditions, such as for seasonal workers or nomadic communities like the Kalahari San Bushmen. The sealing off of borders poses a direct risk to the continued survival of such communities because it restricts their access to essential services, to livelihood means, to hunting grounds, and to sources of safe water.

The security industry turns over an immense annual profit. The total sales of the 100 largest arms companies listed by SIPRI amounted to \$395 billion (£234.8 billion or €289.6 billion) in 2012. Companies with headquarters in North America and western Europe accounted for 86.7% of these total sales. [12] The border security market was estimated to reach just under \$33.6 billion (£20 billion or €24.7 billion) in 2013. [13] Figures are not available for how this profit is divided between states, and it is a difficult area to monitor accurately for many reasons, several of which are listed below. However, given the predominance of western firms it is reasonable to assume that they take the bulk share of the profits generated by the border security market.

### **The difficulties of monitoring**

One difficulty in monitoring the border security industry is that it is not always apparent - to external observers and/or to the manufactures - whether products, such as surveillance technologies, will eventually be utilised for border security activities. Another impediment is that companies do not always disclose details of transactions for confidentiality reasons. This was the case in Thales' sale of the Fulmar UAV: they did not reveal to which country the sale had been made and there was therefore no

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[9] 'Thales Offers Spanish UAV for Coastal Surveillance', *Unmanned*, 13 February 2013, <http://www.unmanned.co.uk/unmanned-vehicles-news/unmanned-aerial-vehicles-uav-news/thales-offers-spanish-uav-for-coastal-surveillance>, accessed 23 May 2014

[10] Defence Web, 'SANDF receives first upgraded border safeguarding base', *Defence Web*, 6 December 2012, [http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=28765:sandf-receives-first-upgraded-border-safeguarding-base&catid=111:SA%20Defence&Itemid=242](http://www.defenceweb.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=28765:sandf-receives-first-upgraded-border-safeguarding-base&catid=111:SA%20Defence&Itemid=242), accessed 23rd May 2014

[11] 'Norex Border Fence', *Global Security*, undated, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/rsa/fence-norex.htm>, accessed 23 May 2014

[12] Sam Perlo-Freeman and Pieter D. Wezeman, 'The SIPRI top 100 arms-producing and military services companies, 2012', *SIPRI*, January 2014, <http://books.sipri.org/files/FS/SIPRIFS1401.pdf>, accessed 21 May 2014

[13] ASD, 'Border Security Market Outlook 2014-2024', May 2014, <https://www.asdreports.com/shopexd.asp?id=111080&desc=Border+Security+Market+Outlook+2014-2024>, accessed 21 May 2014

way of knowing where exactly this heightened border surveillance was active and what effect it was having on surrounding communities and mobility dynamics. [14]

The fact that many different types of companies are involved in the border security trade also increases the difficulty in precisely tracking the industry. The means for securing borders varies from surveillance to physical interception structures. The companies that trade products destined for the securing of borders span many markets and specialise in a vast range of technologies and services; from IT and mobile phones to aircraft. For example, the German company Siemens is commonly known as an electrical company for household goods but also offers “integrated security solutions” which they say can “help you manage risks and mitigate threats” and which they market for border control. [15] Another example is the above-mentioned robot mounted with sensors and a machine gun deployed along the border between North and South Korea. This technology was developed by Samsung, most commonly known for their household technologies, in partnership with Korea University. [16]

### **Securing bases across the globe**

The defence and border security industry very much operates in a global market. Expanding into and securing dominance in new geographical/geo-political areas in order to win contracts and regional customer loyalty is both a highly attractive prospect and a very competitive undertaking. More than just trading with different countries, many western defence and security corporations are branching out to have permanent regional and national centres. Raytheon has dozens of business centres worldwide spanning the Middle East, Asia and Australasia. [17] Aerospace, defence and security giant Thales has its headquarters in Neuilly-sur-Seine, Paris, but in the last few years has branched out, setting up 12 offices across the world including in Asia, Oceania, North America and Africa. The corporation employs over 60,000 people across South Africa, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, India, China, South Korea, Singapore, Mexico, and Brazil. [18] It is also becoming common for large defence and security corporations to create permanent overseas branches that have much higher degrees of autonomy, such as the British company BAE systems

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[14] ‘Thales Offers Spanish UAV for Coastal Surveillance’, *Unmanned*, 13 February 2013, <http://www.unmanned.co.uk/unmanned-vehicles-news/unmanned-aerial-vehicles-uav-news/thales-offers-spanish-uav-for-coastal-surveillance>, accessed 23 May 2014

[15] Siemens, ‘Integrated Security Solutions’, undated, [http://www.siemensgovt.com/cap\\_ss\\_integrated\\_security.html](http://www.siemensgovt.com/cap_ss_integrated_security.html), accessed 23 May 2014

[16] Dhiram Shah, ‘Samsung develops machine gun sentry robot costs \$200k’, *New Launches*, 3 November 2006, [http://newlaunches.com/archives/samsung\\_develops\\_machine\\_gun\\_sentry\\_robot\\_costs\\_200\\_k.php](http://newlaunches.com/archives/samsung_develops_machine_gun_sentry_robot_costs_200_k.php), accessed 23 May 2014

[17] Raytheon, ‘Global Presence’, undated, <http://www.raytheon.com/ourcompany/global>, accessed 22 May 2014

[18] Thales, ‘International Presence’, undated, <https://www.thalesgroup.com/en/worldwide/about-us/international-presence>, accessed 22 May 2014

which has founded BAE Systems Australia, BAE Systems India and BAE Systems Saudi Arabia. [19]

These strategies fall in line with common international business practices, but the consequences are often highly damaging to local politics, border communities, mobility flows and individuals. Securing local bases allows for the strengthening of relations on the ground with local ministers and border agencies. The highly sophisticated sales and marketing teams of giant corporations can influence local politics and policies concerning border controls and mobility. The result is often the creation, or enhancement, of a perceived need for increased border security, and the interception of cross-border movement in areas that were traditionally porous and where cross-border migration has taken place for cultural and survival reasons long before nation states were constructed.

More of an immediate and obvious danger is when companies secure local bases in regions where instability and conflict exist, such as in many parts of South Asia or the Middle East. The larger picture is corporations working to secure sales of border security technologies that are deployed to prevent cross-border mobility except for those deemed permissible, in areas where, for many, migration is essential to their way of life or to flee hostile and dangerous situations.

### **The support of states**

States play a crucial role in facilitating the expansion of the border security market, often by (co-)organising events to promote the industry and the sale of border control capabilities. These events provide spaces for private defence and security companies to showcase technologies and systems. Since 2001, the number of these fairs, commonly organised through public-private partnerships, has proliferated in Europe and the USA. The clientele that attend are usually state ambassadors and delegates from state departments and border agencies. Some of the key events within this domain include: Milipol (France and Qatar), Counter Terror Expo (UK), Security Essen (Germany), Homsec (Spain), ISS World (several), Border Security Expo (US), and IFSEC (International Fire and Security Exhibition and Conference) (UK).

Summits between border security companies, agencies and states are also organised to facilitate discussion across international boundaries on how to enhance border security. These events are often hosted or partially funded through partnerships between state and private bodies. One of the world's biggest border security summits, World BORDERPOL Congress, was held in London in 2013 and hosted by Border Force (formerly UKBA), [20] who are part of the UK Home Office. These events provide platforms for the giants who lead the border security industry, largely Western corporations and border agencies, to dispense their expertise to the international audiences in attendance on the 'need' for heightened border security

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[19] BAE Systems, 'Our Business', undated, available at [http://www.baesystems.com/our-company-rzz/our-businesses?\\_afLoop=5795124909000](http://www.baesystems.com/our-company-rzz/our-businesses?_afLoop=5795124909000), accessed 22 May 2014

[20] Borderpol, '2nd World BORDERPOL Congress 3rd-4th December 2013 Central Hall Westminster, London, UK', undated, <http://www.seasecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/WBC-8pp-Pre-Con.pdf>, accessed 22 May 2014

and how it can be achieved (i.e. through the purchase of technology and the training of and cooperation between border agencies).

Western governments further facilitate the border security market by taking delegates from corporations abroad to advertise their products. In early 2013 James Brokenshire, British Conservative MP and Minister for Security, took a group of just under 25 representatives of 'homeland security' companies to India to present their services to various Indian governmental bodies and other interested parties. [21] The participating companies included multinational arms giants such as BAE Systems, G4S, Thales and AgustaWestland. The 'on-the-ground costs' of the trip - such as receptions, ground transport, conference facilities, and promotional literature - were entirely subsidised by UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), a UK governmental department, and its partners and sponsors in India. [22] Between 2007 and 2010, it is estimated that the total subsidies paid by the British government for UK arms exports, including both defence and security sales, were between £668.3 million at its lowest and £751.2 million at its highest. [23]

The desire of Western governments to facilitate the growth of the international security industry is evident and has grown to form concrete policies at US, European national government and EU levels. For example, due to "the significant potential for market growth," the European Commission has drafted a specific 'Security Industrial Policy' as part of its Europe 2020 initiative, which aims to advance the economy of the EU. [24] In 2013, the UK government launched the 'Defence Growth Partnership', which aims "to modernise and reshape the way we work to improve the conditions for the future success of the UK Defence Sector" – with one aim being to identify "synergies" between the civil and defence sectors. [25] The US Defence Threat Reduction Agency has financed numerous border security systems across the globe, as noted above. The global activities of western security corporations are directly aided by states through policies and practical and financial support.

### **Blurred lines of accountability**

When states help to propel the role of private industry in border securitisation they shift accountability away from the nation state and into the blurred areas of international business and transboundary activities. Thus it becomes unclear whose place it is to consider the effects of border securitisation on foreign policies and

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[21] M. Somasekhar, 'Security thrust to Indo-UK ties', *The Hindu Business Line*, 1 February 2013, <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/opinion/security-thrust-to-indouk-ties/article4369373.ece>, accessed 21 May 2014

[22] 'Secret mission? UK "homeland security" firms were in India three weeks before David Cameron's February trade mission', *Statewatch*, 15 April 2013, <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2013/apr/03uk-india-homeland-security.html>, accessed 23 May 2014

[23] Ibid.

[24] European Commission, 'Security Industrial Policy', 26 July 2012, <http://www.statewatch.org/news/2012/jul/eu-com-security-industry-com-417-12.pdf>, accessed 21 May 2014

[25] Defence Growth Partnership, 'Securing Prosperity: A strategic vision for the UK Defence Sector', September 2013, <https://www.adsgroup.org.uk/community/dms/download.asp?txtPageLinkDocPK=53126>, accessed 27 May 2014

internal politics, and on communities, cultures, traditions, livelihoods and survival mechanisms. Who is liable for the interception of migrants seeking better living conditions or sanctuary from danger? Although it is states who take the legal decisions to enforce tighter migration controls, behind these actions corporations are highly instrumental in driving the global trend of securitising borders and dividing lands.

Today we are living in a world with increasingly divided lands, with movement between nations for those deemed undesirable or unwelcome – the economically poor or originating the ‘wrong’ part of the world – being harder than at any point in history. This is a reality that is being largely pushed by the interests of multinational corporations who straddle the western hemisphere. The border security industry, supported by western states, is a huge international force that is changing the shape of nations and the lives of individuals the world over. Restricting human mobility is having hugely damaging effects across the globe on local politics, cultures, survival means, and human rights. If this development continues unchecked, the activities of Western corporations will continue to divide lands, stifle human movement and encourage human rights abuses across the globe.

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