



## **The “Border Bubble”: A Look at Spending on U.S. Borders**

*“It is safe to say that there has been more money, manpower, infrastructure, [and] technology, invested in the border-protection mission in the last three years than ever before”<sup>1</sup>*

—Janet Napolitano, Department of Homeland Security Secretary

The number of illegal border crossings, a “key indicator” of the number of individuals trying to cross the border, has been steadily decreasing in recent years.<sup>2</sup> During the same period, border security efforts have been continuously increasing, and resources that are being allocated to *further* buttress the border are continuing to grow with “no end in sight.”<sup>3</sup>

Despite the hyperbole that often surrounds discussion of our borders, they are not “out of control.” Rather, it is the willingness of politicians to throw ever greater sums of money at border enforcement programs that is out of control. The “militarization of the border,” as the process is sometimes called, has thus far been a “\$90 billion project that marshaled thousands of Border Patrol agents and National Guard, deployed manned aircraft and aerial drones, established military-style bases and a network of radio-transmission towers, and carved thousands of miles of new roads in national parks and wildlife refuges.”<sup>4</sup> The following is a brief look at the current state of border security, including technology, infrastructure and personnel.

### **TECHNOLOGY**

The 2002 Homeland Security Act created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and transferred to it many of the immigration enforcement responsibilities that were previously assigned to the Department of Justice. Customs and Border Protection (CBP)

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<sup>1</sup> See Homeland Security Newswire, “Sharp Drop in Illegal Crossers Notwithstanding, ‘Border Industrial Complex’ Keeps Growing” (Sept. 18, 2012), <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20120917-sharp-drop-in-illegal-crossers-notwithstanding-border-industrial-complex-keeps-growing>;

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* (“[I]llegal immigration has dropped sharply over the last four years, and is now at a 1971 level”).

<sup>3</sup> Ted Robbins, *U.S. Grows an Industrial Complex Along the Border*, NPR (Sept. 13, 2012), <http://www.npr.org/2012/09/12/160758471/u-s-grows-an-industrial-complex-along-the-border?sc=emaf>

<sup>4</sup> Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, *The American Prospect* (Sept. 18, 2012) *available at* <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>

was created in 2003 as a sub-component of DHS that is charged in part with securing the United States' borders and ports of entry (POE). In carrying out its mission, CBP relies heavily on technology. Its border operations have taken a two-fold approach to technological development.

CBP first works to harness the potential from already existing technologies. Recently, it has explored ways in which it can recycle the technologies deployed on the Afghan and Iraqi front lines and utilize them on the Southwest border as disengagement from these conflicts continues. So far, more than 100 types of military equipment have been tested for potential use on U.S. borders, including hand-held translation devices.<sup>5</sup>

In August 2012, CBP in conjunction with the Department of Defense (DOD) began to test the use of “aerostats” in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. These 72-foot-long blimps, which the military used to monitor insurgent activity abroad, are now being redirected to monitor drug trafficking and illegal crossings along the U.S.-Mexico border.<sup>6</sup> CBP has also deployed “mobile surveillance units, thermal imaging systems, and large-and-small-scale non-intrusive inspection equipment” to the U.S. borders.

The second prong of DHS' approach to technology development is commissioning its own new border-specific equipment. Two such projects include the numerous attempts of the failed “virtual border fence” as well as CBP-specific drone program. In January 2010, DHS announced that it was abandoning its “virtual fence” project known as the Secure Border Initiative, or *SBI*net.<sup>7</sup> While the project was originally set to be constructed along the entire 2,100-mile Southwest border, after five years and nearly a billion dollars, *SBI*net only covers 2.5% of the border—a mere fifty-three miles.<sup>8</sup> The high-tech towers comprising the project were equipped with “communications package[s]” containing radar, cameras, infrared lasers, and lasers.<sup>9</sup>

*SBI*net was not *entirely* innovative. It was actually the third iteration of such a high-tech tower system, following on the heels of other unsuccessful attempts to widely install similar towers in 1997 and 2003.<sup>10</sup> Despite three failed attempts to install a virtual fence, DHS is once again in talks to try developing a system of towers along the border. For this *SBI*net alternative project, the government has earmarked around \$750

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<sup>5</sup> Andrew O'Reilly, *US Military Adds Blimps to Patrol Border*, Fox News Latino (Aug. 15, 2012) available at <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2012/08/15/us-military-adds-blimps-to-patrol-border/>

<sup>6</sup> CBP Press Release, *CBP Launches Evaluation of DOD Equipment in Rio Grande Valley*, (Aug. 23, 2012) available at [http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news\\_releases/national/08092012\\_4.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news_releases/national/08092012_4.xml)

<sup>7</sup> Dept. of Homeland Security, *Report on the Assessment of the Secure Border Initiative-Network (SBI)net Program*, (2010) available at [http://www.globalexchange.org/sites/default/files/DHS\\_Report.pdf](http://www.globalexchange.org/sites/default/files/DHS_Report.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Ted Robbins, *U.S. Grows an Industrial Complex Along the Border*, NPR (Sept. 13, 2012), <http://www.npr.org/2012/09/12/160758471/u-s-grows-an-industrial-complex-along-the-border?sc=emaf>.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

million.<sup>11</sup> The “Integrated Fixed Towers” looks to combine already existing physical infrastructure with other existing sensor technologies (such as unattended ground sensors) to create a virtual fence monitoring system.<sup>12</sup>

These types of Remote Video Surveillance Systems are not confined to the Southwest border. CBP has been ramping up efforts to acquire this and other technologies along the Northern Border as well. For its Northern Border Project, CBP is acquiring various technologies (though generally of an “off-the-shelf” nature) to help improve its air, land and maritime coverage.<sup>13</sup>

CBP has experienced a similar level of success with its use of unmanned aircraft systems like those used in Afghanistan and Iraq, more commonly known as drones. DHS has commissioned its own drones, rather than recycling Defense Department drones. Between 2006 and 2011, CBP drone operations and maintenance costs totaled \$53.3 million. With each drone costing about \$18 million, Congress spent more than \$240 million to establish the unmanned aircraft program for CBP.<sup>14</sup>

Despite investing considerable resources to acquire this technology, CBP had no plan for effectively operating the unmanned drone flights and lacked both the on-the-ground equipment needed to orchestrate flights as well as the technological and personnel capacity to arrange for maintenance or repairs.<sup>15</sup> This resulted in extreme underutilization of the technology at the cost of diverting funds from other areas, even as CBP acquired three new drones in its fleet.<sup>16</sup> A criticism of CBP’s drone project has been that it is a “very expensive” way of acquiring information that could be obtained through plenty of other ways, including the manned aircrafts already in CBP’s fleet.<sup>17</sup>

A May 2012 report from the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) recommended that CBP cease acquiring additional drones until it had developed a more comprehensive

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<sup>11</sup> Anahi Aradas, *US-Mexico Border: Efforts to Build a Virtual Wall*, BBC News (Aug. 29 2012) available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-19409682>

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Technology Innovation and Acquisition: Northern Border Division Fact Sheet, (May 15, 2012), available at [http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/newsroom/fact\\_sheets/border/secure\\_border/northern\\_border\\_fs.ctt/northern\\_border\\_fs.pdf](http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/newsroom/fact_sheets/border/secure_border/northern_border_fs.ctt/northern_border_fs.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Amber Corrin, *Border Patrol Drone Program Plagued With Problems*, Federal Computer Week (Jun. 12, 2012) available at <http://fcw.com/articles/2012/06/12/border-patrol-unmanned-drone-planning-failure.aspx>.

<sup>15</sup> Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, *CBP’s Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems in the Nation’s Border Security* (May 2012), report available at [http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG\\_12-85\\_May12.pdf](http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG_12-85_May12.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Katie Drummond, *DHS Doesn’t Want Its New Spy Drones*, WIRED.COM (Nov. 1, 2011) [http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/11/dhs-unwanted-drones/?utm\\_source=Contextly&utm\\_medium=RelatedLinks&utm\\_campaign=Previous](http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2011/11/dhs-unwanted-drones/?utm_source=Contextly&utm_medium=RelatedLinks&utm_campaign=Previous).

<sup>17</sup> Rob Margetta, *Eyes on the Border, at a High Cost*, Congressional Quarterly, 2094 (Oct. 22, 2012).

management plan for using them appropriately.<sup>18</sup> CBP continues to explore alternatives to the more expensive predator drones, such as hand-launch mini-drones.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond the virtual fence and drone projects, CBP has pursued other innovative ways to use technology in furthering its mission. In conjunction with the University of Arizona, for example, CBP recently developed a “lie-detecting virtual border official.” The Automated Virtual Agent for Truth Assessments in Real-Time (AVATAR) is more informally known as Elvis.<sup>20</sup>

## INFRASTRUCTURE

CBP has developed a huge infrastructure to strengthen the United States’ borders. In April 2011, CBP reported having 142 Border Patrol Stations, 34 Permanent Checkpoints, 93 Tactical Checkpoints and 2 Remote Forward Operating Bases (with plans to have 58 permanent checkpoints and 17 forward operating bases along the borders).<sup>21</sup> In addition to its directly owned facilities, valued at about \$3.3 billion, CBP also leases over 300 facilities for its internal business partners at a yearly cost of about \$500 million.<sup>22</sup> In February 2012, it was also recorded that CBP had a fleet of 16,875 vehicles and 269 aircraft at its disposal.<sup>23</sup> As of June 2012 CBP also boasted more than 300 watercrafts.<sup>24</sup>

A mainstay of infrastructure at the border has been the fence along the U.S.-Mexico border, a result of the 2006 Secure Fence Act.<sup>25</sup> As of August 2012, the government had erected approximately 650 miles of fencing at a cost of about \$3 billion. The price tag includes such gaffes as accidentally building six-feet into Mexican territory at points, requiring demolition and reconstruction costing millions of dollars.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Department of Homeland Security Office of the Inspector General, *CBP’s Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems in the Nation’s Border Security* (May 2012), report available at [http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG\\_12-85\\_May12.pdf](http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG_12-85_May12.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Rob Margetta, *Eyes on the Border, at a High Cost*, Congressional Quarterly, 2094 (Oct. 22, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> Tim Hune, *Meet Elvis: The Virtual Border Official who Knows if You’re Lying*, CNN.COM (Aug. 15, 2012) <http://www.cnn.com/2012/08/15/travel/computer-border-official-avatar/index.html>.

<sup>21</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection Office of Facilities Management and Engineering, *American Council of Engineering Companies: CBP Program Briefing*, ACEC.ORG (Apr. 1, 2011) available at [http://www.acec.org/advocacy/committees/pdf/annconv2011\\_CBP-DHS.pdf](http://www.acec.org/advocacy/committees/pdf/annconv2011_CBP-DHS.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Snapshot: A Summary of CBP Facts and Figures*, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) (February 2012)

<sup>24</sup> *Bucella Testimony* (June 15, 2012) available at <http://www.dhs.gov/news/2012/06/15/written-testimony-us-customs-border-protection-house-homeland-security-subcommittee>.

<sup>25</sup> Dave Shiflett, *Mexican Border Fence Cost \$3 Billion, Does Nothing*, BLOOMBERG (Sept. 15, 2010) <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-15/idiotic-mexico-border-fence-cost-3-billion-does-nothing-dave-shiflett.html>

<sup>26</sup> See Christopher Sherman, *Boundary Agency Faces Worried Border Residents*, Associated Press, Aug. 29, 2012, available at <http://www.statesman.com/news/texas/boundary-agency-faces-worried-border-residents-2445235.html>; Dave Shiflett, *Mexican Border Fence Cost \$3 Billion, Does Nothing: Television*, Bloomberg (Sept. 15, 2010) <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-15/idiotic-mexico-border-fence-cost-3-billion-does-nothing-dave-shiflett.html>

The direct expenses of the border fence range from acquiring the land on which to build and the material costs of construction to the post-construction lifetime maintenance costs, which have been estimated to be as high as \$49 billion.<sup>27</sup> Holes are frequently punched through the fence, and must be repaired. Efforts to tunnel under the fence have increased in recent years and so has the cost of filling in and blocking off such tunnels.<sup>28</sup> Despite of the cost and apparent shortcomings of a physical barrier, the Obama administration is constructing fourteen additional miles of fence in South Texas, while Arizona is trying to raise its own funds to build an additional two-hundred miles of border fence.<sup>29</sup>

Expensive in its own right, the fence (along with associated infrastructure) has also spurred a host of indirect costs that are most often borne by the local communities and States through which it runs. In 2009, DHS acknowledged the negative impact that CBP's activities were having on the borderland ecosystems and earmarked \$50 million to restore lands affected by CBP.<sup>30</sup> In June 2012, however, the House ordered DHS to stop making the environmental damage repair payments, characterizing them as "extortion" that undermined CBP's work.<sup>31</sup>

In many areas, the fence's physical presence greatly disturbs the natural habitat of the local wildlife and cuts off traditional migratory routes with devastating effects.<sup>32</sup> But the fence has also diverted the paths of people travelling across the border. This leads to the use of national wildlife refuges and parks as alternative routes that requires CBP to then traipse through federal lands in the course of its duty and altogether creates an even deeper cumulative effect on the parks and refuges.<sup>33</sup>

The fence's construction also interferes with natural drainage patterns and has caused increased flooding of lands and individuals' farms. While DHS was aware of the flooding

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<sup>27</sup> Julia Preston, *Some Cheer Border Fence as Others Ponder the Cost*, NYTIMES ONLINE (Oct. 19, 2011) [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/us/politics/border-fence-raises-cost-questions.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/20/us/politics/border-fence-raises-cost-questions.html?_r=0)

<sup>28</sup> See generally DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, *CBP's Strategy to Address Illicit Cross-Border Tunnels* (Sept. 2012) [http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG\\_12-132\\_Sep12.pdf](http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2012/OIG_12-132_Sep12.pdf).

<sup>29</sup> Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, *The American Prospect* (Sept. 18 2012) available at <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> See HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, *House Approves Bishop Amendment to End DHS Extortion Payments, Redirect Funds to Border Protection* (Jun. 7, 2012) <http://naturalresources.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=298745>; Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, *The American Prospect* (Sept. 18 2012) available at <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>

<sup>32</sup> Dave Shiflett, *Mexican Border Fence Cost \$3 Billion, Does Nothing: Television*, BLOOMBERG (Sept. 15, 2010) <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-15/idiotic-mexico-border-fence-cost-3-billion-does-nothing-dave-shiflett.html>

<sup>33</sup> See ASSOCIATED PRESS, *\$50M To Offset Impact Of Border Fence*, CBS News (Feb. 11, 2009) [http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-201\\_162-4726526.html](http://www.cbsnews.com/2100-201_162-4726526.html); Dave Shiflett, *Mexican Border Fence Cost \$3 Billion, Does Nothing: Television*, BLOOMBERG (Sept. 15, 2010) <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-09-15/idiotic-mexico-border-fence-cost-3-billion-does-nothing-dave-shiflett.html>

risk when authorizing construction, they were not obliged to take such warnings into consideration because, in 2009, Congress granted DHS authority to exempt CBP from a number of environmental laws that would otherwise govern such installations.<sup>34</sup>

A new bill currently making its way through Congress will further expand CBP exemptions with certain continuing devastating effects on the ecosystems along the border. In addition to empowering CBP to disregard the Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, and National Environmental Policy Act (amongst others) when it deems necessary, the bill would also allow for the “construction of military installations, roads, airstrips, and communications towers” within 100-miles of the borders, including “600-million acres of federally-protected land [that] includes more than 10 national parks.” The bill also authorizes the construction of CBP surveillance towers (such as the Integrative Fixed Towers) on these lands.<sup>35</sup>

Recently, communities in the Rio Grande River Valley have voiced their concerns over flooding in connection with the construction of three new fencing segments in the Rio Grande flood plain. Residents in the flood plain would prefer to see officials address border security not with increased fencing, but rather with additional personnel.<sup>36</sup> However, with steadily swelling ranks of CBP officials and reports of agents not having enough to occupy their time, it is unclear that adding more ranks would be a proper fix either.

## PERSONNEL

Since 2008, the Border Patrol doubled in size to nearly 22,000<sup>37</sup> and as of February 2012, CBP had 21,063 Officers; 21,137 Border Patrol Agents; 2,312 Agriculture Specialists; 1,576 canine enforcement teams; 334 equestrian patrols; and 1,229 Air and Marine agents.<sup>38</sup> A “personnel heavy” agency, the Border Patrol is the second largest police force in America, second only to the New York Police Department.<sup>39</sup> While CBP is

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<sup>34</sup> Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, The American Prospect (Sept. 18, 2012), <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>.

<sup>35</sup> See Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, The American Prospect (Sept. 18, 2012) available at <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>; Adventure Ethics, *House Bill Would Lift Environmental Laws, Allow Wilderness Roads*, (Jul. 6, 2012) available at <http://www.outsideonline.com/blog/outdoor-adventure/politics/house-bill-would-lift-environmental-laws-allow-road-building-in-wilderness.html>. (National Security and Federal Lands Protection Act Section 1401, a part of the omnibus legislation, H.R. 1505, currently known as the *Conservation and Economic Growth Act*, H.R. 2578).

<sup>36</sup> Christopher Sherman, *Boundary Agency Faces Worried Border Residents*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, Aug. 29, 2012, available at <http://www.statesman.com/news/texas/boundary-agency-faces-worried-border-residents-2445235.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Frank Clifford, *The Border Effect*, The American Prospect (Sept. 18, 2012) available at <http://prospect.org/article/border-effect>

<sup>38</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Snapshot: A Summary of CBP Facts and Figures*, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) (February 2012)

<sup>39</sup> See Ken Dilanian, *Border Patrol Faces Spate of Misconduct Cases*, The Seattle Times (Sept. 9, 2010), [http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2012855713\\_borderpatrol10.html](http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2012855713_borderpatrol10.html); Senate Report 112-169, *Department of*

a massive and “diverse organization of law enforcement professionals, trade specialists, intelligence analysts, agricultural scientist, and other employees,”<sup>40</sup> it is far from alone on the U.S. borders.

Multiple federal agencies deploy officers to the various border regions. In addition to CBP, for example, the agency responsible for immigration enforcement in the U.S. interior, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), also deploys agents to the border. DOJ also sends officers to the borders through the FBI, Immigration Courts, its Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force Program (OCDETF); the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; and the Drug Enforcement Agency. The Departments of Agriculture and Interior also maintain federal agents on the border for a variety of missions, as does the Department of Defense.

Through DOD, President Bush first sent the National Guard to the Border in 2006. While the number of National Guard troops at the border climbed to about 1,200 by February 2006, this has dropped to about 300 since December 2011.<sup>41</sup> In June 2012 however, the Maryland National Guard deployed two more crews to Texas to provide aerial surveillance assistance to CBP.<sup>42</sup>

The presence of federal agents and CBP presence in particular on the borders may now be at a saturation point. A September 2012 report by the Immigration Policy Center of the American Immigration Council provides insight as to some of the problems that arise when there are more Border Patrol agents on the ground than work to go around.<sup>43</sup> Still the Presidential FY 2013 budget request seeks increased funding to pay for 21,186 CBP Officers and 21,370 U.S. Border Patrol Agents in the coming year, a modest but noteworthy increase.<sup>44</sup> Faced with budgetary requests to accommodate additional CBP personnel, both the House and the Senate have sounded warnings to CBP as to the over-investment in personnel at the expense of infrastructure and technological development.

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*Homeland Security Appropriations Bill*, 2013 (112<sup>th</sup> Congress, 2011-2012) [http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&dbname=cp112&sid=cp112BFcYZ&refer=&r\\_n=sr169.112&item=&&&sel=TOC\\_89324&](http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/cpquery/?&dbname=cp112&sid=cp112BFcYZ&refer=&r_n=sr169.112&item=&&&sel=TOC_89324&).

<sup>40</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection, *Snapshot: A Summary of CBP Facts and Figures*, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) (February 2012) (based on FY 2011).

<sup>41</sup> Matthew Hay Brown, *MD National Guard Headed to U.S.-Mexican Border*, [THEBALTIMORESUN.COM](http://www.thebaltimoresun.com) (Apr. 19, 2012) available at [http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-04-19/news/bs-md-national-guard-border-20120418\\_1\\_illegal-immigrants-camp-frettedr-border-security](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2012-04-19/news/bs-md-national-guard-border-20120418_1_illegal-immigrants-camp-frettedr-border-security).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> See generally Lisa Graybill, IMMIGRATION POLICY CENTER, *Border Patrol Agents as Interpreters Along the Northern Border: Unwise Policy, Illegal Practice* (September 2012) available at <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/special-reports/border-patrol-agents-interpreters-along-northern-border-unwise-policy-illegal-practi> (arguing that with not enough work, border patrol agents end up collaborating with local law enforcement, resulting in an overall decrease in trust and cooperation between law enforcement and communities).

<sup>44</sup> CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE, *Department of Homeland Security: FY2013 Appropriations*, R42644, p.40 (Oct. 1, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

U.S. Border Security functions as an interplay of technology, infrastructure, and personnel. Where one area outpaces the other, the imbalances give rise to inefficiency and misuse—or lack of use—of available resources. More resources have been directed toward securing our borders in the past few years than ever before even while illegal border crossings have dropped sharply.<sup>45</sup> Rather than continuing to pour new resources of questionable value to further buttress border security, CBP should work toward finding a balance of its already available technology, infrastructure, and personnel to achieve optimal performance for its stated mission.

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<sup>45</sup> Homeland Security Newswire, “Sharp Drop in Illegal Crossers Notwithstanding, ‘Border Industrial Complex’ Keeps Growing” (Sept. 18, 2012), <http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20120917-sharp-drop-in-illegal-crossers-notwithstanding-border-industrial-complex-keeps-growing>.