

BORDER, from page 1

Joanne Zuhl: *That's what you would see physically, but there's also a lot that you don't see.*

T.M.: The wall is one of many different aspects. Not only the wall, but a concentration of Border Patrol agents, which you'll see all over the place, in any community, any urban area and anywhere along the 2,000-mile border. There is also all kinds of technology. You'll see high-powered cameras on posts. There are lots of things you won't see, such as motion sensors that are implanted in the ground. There are 12,000 of those motion sensors along the U.S. Mexico border.

Yes, the Border Patrol has been concentrating agents and technology since the mid 1990s. But then there's a separate post-9/11 era.

It's the Homeland Security era. Border Patrol is now under the department of Homeland Security, which is under another agency called Customs and Border Protection. The kind of resources and the kind of technologies they have, and the amount of agents they have, is unprecedented. Never before in the history of the United States have we had so many agents, so much technology, so much money just poured into this border enforcement apparatus, that now we don't only see it in the southern border, we see it on the northern border as well.

Many people call it an occupation, the influx of agents and their surveillance powers. And not only surveillance powers at the actual border line but way into the interior, 15-25 miles, up to possibly 100 miles into the interior of the country. That's Border Patrol's jurisdiction, they can work within 100 miles of the international border. So where I live in Tucson, you see Border Patrol agents regularly. They can patrol. They can pull people over. They collaborate with local police. So within the 100 miles, you have layer upon layers of mini-borders, with surveillance technology and checkpoints. I just went through one today as I was driving. If there's anything that gives them reasonable suspicion within their three missions: national security, immigration enforcement and drug interdiction. If anything sets off a suspicion, they can pull you over and tear apart your car. In other words, your Fourth Amendment right are kind of mangled.

J.Z.: *You talk about their capacity being unprecedented. Do you have numbers to give people an idea of how many agents and how much money we're talking about here?*

T.M.: One of the most telling numbers is if you look at the fiscal 2012 federal budget, and the money dedicated to border and immigration enforcement by the U.S. federal government is \$18 billion. That is more than the money given to all other federal law enforcement agencies combined. It's more than the DEA, the FBI, the U.S. Marshalls. All those combined add up to \$14 billion. And it increases year after year after year. So it has become high priority for the federal

government to be putting tons of money into this. There's an Associated Press report that the U.S. government, since 9/11, has spent \$90 billion on the U.S.-Mexico border. And if you look at some of the reform bills, one that passed the Senate — which

probably won't ultimately pass — had \$46 billion designated for border security, which is an increase in agents and technology.

You're talking a significant uptick in resources. For example, Border Patrol in the early 1990s, in the whole country, there were fewer than 4,000 agents. And now it has increased to 21,000. And they're part of Customs and Border Protection, which is actually 60,000, and they have an air and marine division. Sixty thousand — it's the largest federal law enforcement agency in the country, and it's double the size of Ecuador's

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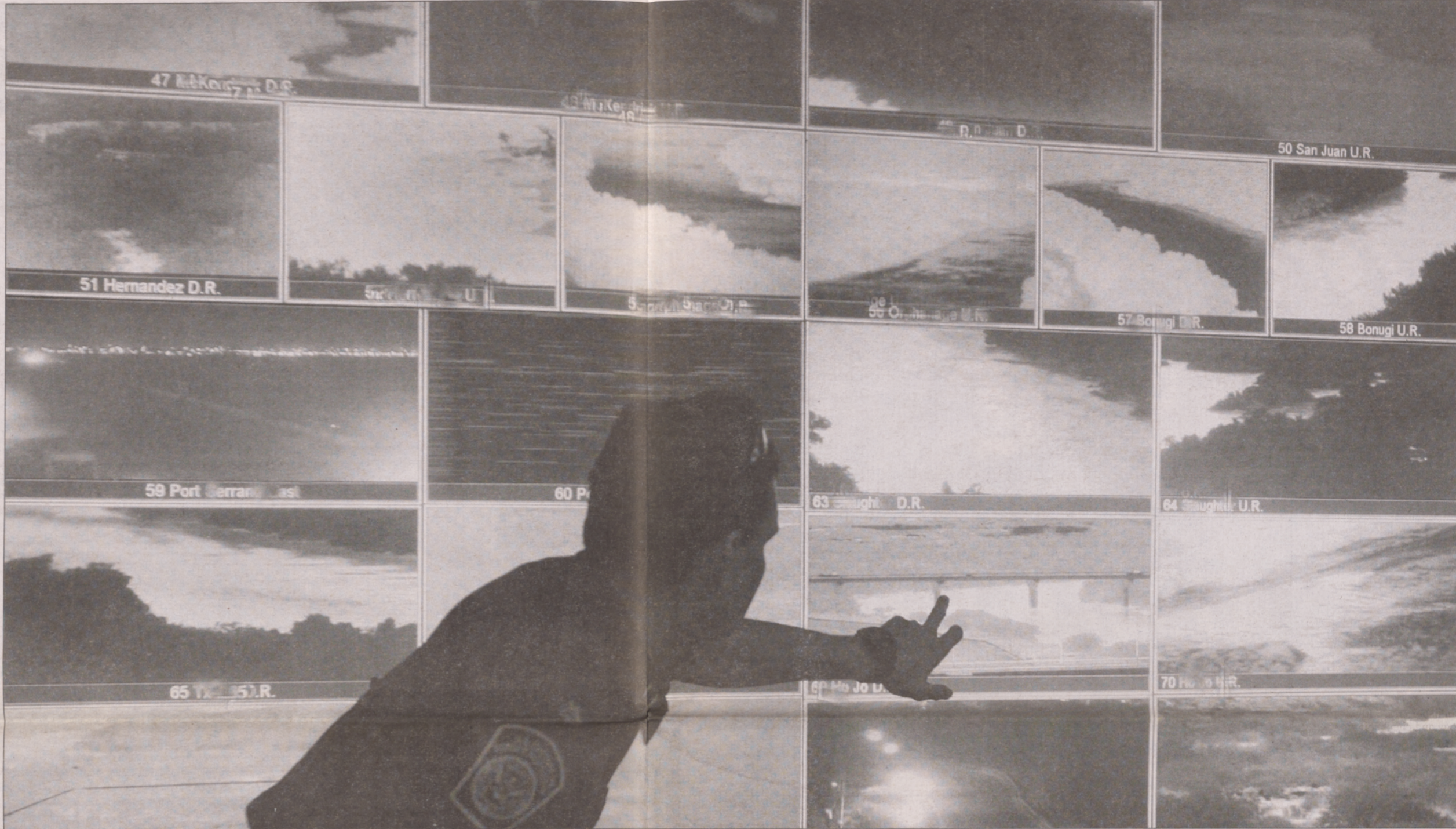


PHOTO BY REUTERS/RICK WILKING
U.S. Border Patrol agent Jesus Garcia looks at a wall of surveillance camera videos from cameras looking at the U.S.-Mexico border in Texas. The cameras capture daytime video and also have night vision and infrared capabilities. Some of the names at the bottom of the screens have been blurred by Reuters at the Border Patrol's request.

resources to put toward lobbying. If you have an immigration reform bill that passed in the Senate with \$46 billion — and that's on top of what they already did — I would imagine that there is influence in Washington.

J.Z.: *I would think also that the detention policies and incarceration practices are taking a cue from the industry.*

T.M.: In that case, too. With the private prison industry, there has been thorough documentation of their lobbying. It's been the deportation apparatus that has gone from 2,000 deportations in the early 1980s to almost 400,000 a year these days. So it's significantly increased, and one thing that's behind this for sure is the private prison industry.

Corrections Corporations of America, CCA, which has several facilities here in Arizona, they get paid approximately \$150 per bed per day. They're making money off the fact that undocumented people will be detained in their facilities. And there's a Congressional mandate of 34,000 beds for immigration detention that have to be filled for immigration detention at any given time.

It's a civil violation. They're not in detention for any criminal behavior. It's just so they make it to their deportation hearing. That this amount of people are in detention at any given time, it means a lot of money.

J.Z.: *Some people would say, why shouldn't we use the best equipment we have to protect our borders?*

T.M.: There are many ways to answer that one. I'm actually originally from Niagara Falls New York. Now, when I go to my hometown, it's a town that's been significantly affected by the 2008 recession, but it was in great decline before then. A lot of the tourism is in Niagara Falls, Canada. Niagara Falls New York banked on industry, which all the factories are shuttered now. What used to be a town where people had a secure job, now basic services are getting cut. And one of the things that gets cut constantly is housing. And I go to Niagara Falls and I see so many collapsing homes. There are whole neighborhoods that have been razed, where once were homes. So if you're going to think about security, and what security really is, isn't security really somebody's home, that they know they can come to at night? Where they can have a family and not have to worry. If you want to think of the cornerstone of security, I think it's the home. We live in a country where so many foreclosures have happened, and still happen to this day, and yet in my hometown of Niagara Falls, now, for the first time in my life, I'm seeing Border Patrol. Border Patrol in shiny vehicles. I see the high-powered cameras. I see them on their bikes, on their ATVs. They have a new control center on Grand Island where they have a huge video wall, and all this super expensive technology, while when you drive through the streets of Niagara Falls you could basically fall into the potholes. Health care is getting cut. Education is getting cut. The summer programs for children are getting cut. Everything is getting cut. So when this case is made that we need this security for our borders. Is that really true or would the money be much better invested in other things that we're cutting that give people real security.

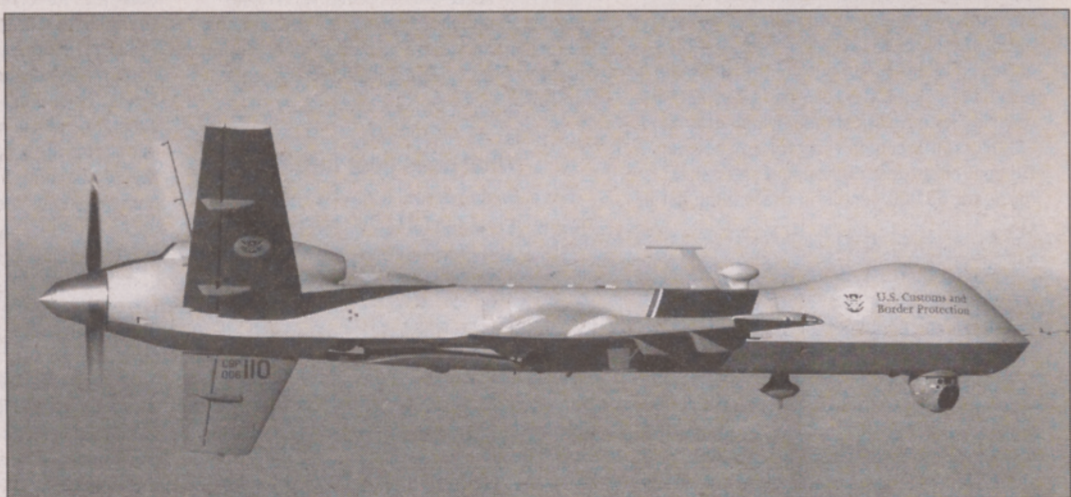


PHOTO COURTESY OF U.S. CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
One of many drones U.S. Customs and Border Protection is currently using to patrol the Canadian and Mexican borders.

army. It's gigantic.

J.Z.: *Is there an accountability concern here with these 60,000 — and growing — agents out there?*

T.M.: There's a significant accountability concern, especially in recent years there has been a number of shootings by Border Patrol agents who have shot both U.S. citizens and across the border into Mexico killing Mexican citizens. There's been a pretty fervent call for accountability, especially from independent Congressional oversight, instead of what seems to occur now which is the Department of Homeland Security doing its own investigations.

So there's also a call out now around allegations of abuses — from short-term detention and people not getting enough food, to people detained in a room where the air conditioning is hiked up. They call them freezers. So you're in a T-shirt and jeans for the desert, but all of a sudden you're in a room and it's freezing. You hear about that a

lot. The organization No More Deaths did a report called the Culture of Cruelty about these detentions, and they have more than 10,000 testimonies that went into this report. And there are all kinds of reports of abuse at checkpoints and roving patrols.

The Tohono O'Odham reservation near Tucson — their original land was bisected by the border. Their reservation has so many Border Patrol agents on it now that it seems like they're literally taken over the entire reservation. Accusations of abuse there are rampant, including home invasions: Border Patrol has the power to enter a home without a warrant within 25 miles of the border.

J.Z.: *Given the dichotomy here — that border security in the age of terrorism may be a valid concern, but there's also the fact that so many of the people crossing the border from Mexico are poor Latinos looking to find work and a better living in the United States — what is your assessment of the real threat along our borders?*

T.M.: On one hand, the priority mission

has become one of terrorism and stopping terrorists and weapons of mass destruction from crossing the border. But when you look for any sort of documentation of any so-called terrorist being detained crossing the border, there is none. There's possibly a few cases they could bring up but they're shaky at best.

J.Z.: *Well, to be fair, would you be the one to know if there were any?*

T.M.: There's a possibility that there has been and it has not been revealed to the public. However, there's also the side of it that if they were actually catching people with ties to a terrorist organization crossing the border — as with other cases when they catch someone or kill someone abroad — they would make a big deal of it. Maybe there are cases that, for whatever reason, that officials are not revealing to the public. So I'll give them that. But in the more than 10 years since the priority mission has shifted toward that — and it's a huge justification for all of this money being put into this influx of agents — it seems like there should be more cases or examples of why we need all of these resources on the border for this threat; a physical example. And there is none.

With all these new resources, the vast majority of people they're catching are undocumented people crossing the border looking for work — tens if not hundreds of thousands of these people every year. Border Patrol apprehensions in 2013 were around 400,000. And these are numbers that are lower than previous years. But it's mainly people coming from southern Mexico, and now they're showing an upsurge of people coming from Central America, a 55-percent increase if you look at Border Patrol arrests. That's the people

being caught by this national security border perimeter that we've formed in the South.

In the North, officials are calling for more resources along the Northern border.

The justification is that it is more likely that a terrorist will cross through the northern border than the southern border. But when I'm in Detroit, for example, not many people in the suburbs know the Border Patrol are there. But if you go into southwest Detroit, which is the Latino community, primarily Mexican, it seems like they're everywhere, and you see them actually patrolling the neighborhoods. You hear about cases of people getting arrested while they're waiting for a bus to go to work, or that agents are staking out the Spanish-language mass at a Catholic church. You hear it in western New York State, the same church situation, during the Spanish-language mass with Border Patrol outside, and they question people at checkpoints.

Again, as the rhetoric turns to terrorism, the same people on the southern border are being targeted on the northern border. And these aren't border crossers. In one place it's farmworkers who pick apples, and they have to go through Border Patrol checkpoints just to get to work.

J.Z.: *What is it if it's not terrorism? Is this as simple as a case of big business getting bigger? Our military industrial complex expanding?*

T.M.: It's a variation on the military industrial complex. Some analysts have called it the border security industrial complex. That's got to play into it to a degree. All the market projections for the border security market describe it as between a growing and a booming industry. Part of my research is going to trade shows around the country to talk to some of the

companies, and they're big ones such as Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Boeing, who are all involved in tailoring some of their technologies used in wars abroad for border security purposes. They're repurposing technology for border security.

J.Z.: *Finding a new market for old goods.*

T.M.: One vendor even told me quite explicitly, "We are bringing the battlefield to the border."

J.Z.: *You've suggested that the implications for this technology go well beyond the border, the border being a representative barrier between haves and have-nots, with a share of racism built into it. Do you see this trend going further into the civilian world, in terms of whom this surveillance is focused on?*

T.M.: I think you hit the nail on the head there. You have to look at this in terms of the haves and have nots. Any sort of surveillance technology, cameras and drones, is to look at people who might be a threat. And if the main threat is not the so-called terrorists as we've been told, they're really the have nots who are coming to this country. Or it could be another border and another place. It could be a gated community. It's the same sort of idea.

J.Z.: *Do you see our social policies around immigration and naturalization being driven by this industry?*

T.M.: There hasn't been a rigorous report about the lobbying money from these surveillance companies on border security in Washington, but there are all kinds of anecdotal evidence of different companies spending money for military purposes. They're in Washington for sure. They have a lobbying arm. The big ones have significant