

Forensics Team (Fall 2024) – Evidence (Foreign Affairs, Oct. 17, 2024)

Topic: US government should substantially expand its surveillance infrastructure along its southern border.

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Evidence from Foreign Affairs Article on Border Surveillance

MISC. EVIDENCE (PRO)

PRO (Technology): AI-Enhanced Border Monitoring

According to... *Foreign Affairs*, October 17, 2024

<https://foreignaffairs.com/united-states/immigration-mexico-border-crisis-andrea-flores>

Original: As a lawyer and anthropologist, I have been researching how new technologies are shaping migration. Over the last six years, my work has spanned borders from the U.S.-Mexico corridor to the fringes of Europe to East Africa and beyond. I have witnessed time and time again how technological border violence operates in an ecosystem replete with the criminalization of migration, anti-migrant sentiments, and over-reliance on the private sector in an increasingly lucrative border industrial complex. **At the U.S.-Mexico border, fixed AI-surveillance towers scan the Sonora desert for movement, joining an arsenal of border technologies such as ground sensors, license plate readers, and facial recognition applications used by Customs and Border Protection (CBP).** Now, in an election year, migration continues to be a defining issue for both the Biden administration as well as former President Trump, who promises to deport 15 to 20 million people, strengthen the wall, and its surveillance dragnet.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will enhance border monitoring capabilities because AI-powered surveillance towers, ground sensors, license plate readers, and facial recognition technologies are being deployed along the U.S.-Mexico border.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will be effective in detecting and tracking border crossings because it employs advanced AI and sensor technologies to provide comprehensive monitoring of the border area, potentially improving the ability to manage migration flows.

PRO (Security): Enhanced Asylum Screening

According to... *Foreign Affairs*, October 17, 2024

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Original: CBP One operates as a decompression mechanism, doling out daily appointments, enrolling people in removal proceedings once they enter the country, and adding them to the back of the immigration court backlog. **If use of the app led to a timely screening by an asylum officer, rather than a months-long wait in Mexico, it could help prioritize access to the U.S. land border to people with humanitarian protection claims and, over time, discourage the widespread perception among potential migrants that traveling to Mexico and waiting for an appointment will guarantee entry into the United States.** This can be done by increasing the availability of daily appointments and assigning asylum officers to assess the merits of asylum claims raised at ports of entry.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will improve asylum screening efficiency because technologies like the CBP One app could lead to timely screenings by asylum officers, prioritizing access for those with legitimate humanitarian claims.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will be effective in managing asylum seekers because it can streamline the screening process, potentially reducing wait times and discouraging unfounded asylum claims, leading to a more efficient and fair system for processing humanitarian cases.

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MISC. EVIDENCE (PRO)

CON (Security): Overwhelmed Border Systems

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Original: On the cusp of the 2024 presidential election, immigration and U.S. border security are among the top issues of concern for American voters. Former President Donald Trump and his opponent, Vice President Kamala Harris, are worlds apart on whether immigration is good or bad for the United States, but they do agree on one thing: the southern border has been in crisis, and the broken U.S. asylum system is to blame. ***In 2022, the number of unauthorized border crossings reached a peak of 2.2 million, overwhelming not only border communities from Texas to California but also major cities such as New York, which received tens of thousands of new migrants with only limited support from the federal government. Images of disorder in border towns and of families being held in horrific conditions, as well as the increased presence of new arrivals lacking housing or work permits in U.S. cities, escalated public concern about the visible disarray of the U.S. immigration system.*** Even though the numbers of unauthorized crossings at the southern border are down in 2024, the sense of crisis has persisted across the country.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will fail to address the root causes of migration because in 2022, unauthorized border crossings reached 2.2 million, overwhelming border communities and major cities, with limited federal support.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will be ineffective in managing the influx of migrants because it doesn't address the underlying issues causing mass migration, leading to overwhelmed communities and strained resources across the country, creating a persistent sense of crisis.

CON (Policy): Outdated Immigration System

According to... Foreign Affairs, October 17, 2024

<https://foreignaffairs.com/united-states/immigration-mexico-border-crisis-andrea-flores>

Original: ***The last time the U.S. Congress weighed in on the question of whom the country should welcome was in 1990, when it passed legislation to increase the number of people who could immigrate to the United States. In the 34 years since then, advances in technology, an evolving labor market, the aging of the U.S. population, climate change, and political and humanitarian crises in the Western Hemisphere have driven more people to leave their homes, despite the fact that there are few safe legal pathways for those with a humanitarian or other urgent need to come to the United States. Today, the United States is relying on an immigration system designed for a different country at a different time.*** In the absence of reforms that would have allowed the United States to adjust to the profound changes that have taken place since 1990 by making it easier to legally immigrate, migrants have increasingly resorted to using smuggling networks and claiming asylum at the U.S.-Mexican border in order to enter the country.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will struggle to address modern migration challenges because the current immigration system was designed 34 years ago and doesn't account for technological advances, labor market changes, demographic shifts, climate change, and humanitarian crises.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will be ineffective in managing current migration trends because it relies on an outdated framework that doesn't address the complex, modern factors driving migration to the United States, potentially leading to more illegal crossings and asylum claims.

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CON (Human Rights): Increased Migrant Deaths

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Original: ***While presented as solutions to a so-called "border crisis," border technologies as a deterrent simply do not work. In fact, they lead to an increasing loss of life. People desperate for safety—and exercising their internationally protected right to asylum—will not stop coming. They will instead use more circuitous routes, and scholars have already documented a threefold increase in deaths at the U.S.-Mexico frontier as the smart border expands.*** While investigating this technology and standing on the sands of the Sonora to visit Alvarado's memorial site in early spring of 2022, in a moment that is etched in my memory as one of the more surreal ones of my career, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it was rolling out robo-dogs to join its arsenal of border enforcement technologies along the US-Mexico corridor. In the not-so-distant future, will people like Alvarado be pursued by these robo-dogs?

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will lead to more migrant deaths because as the "smart border" expands, migrants are forced to take more dangerous routes, resulting in a threefold increase in deaths at the U.S.-Mexico frontier.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm thousands of migrants because it pushes them to take more perilous paths, significantly increasing the risk of death during border crossings, contradicting the humanitarian goals of immigration policy.

CON (Privacy): Invasive Surveillance Concerns

According to... *Foreign Affairs*, October 17, 2024

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Original: I have witnessed time and time again how technological border violence operates in an ecosystem replete with the criminalization of migration, anti-migrant sentiments, and over-reliance on the private sector in an increasingly lucrative border industrial complex. ***From vast biometric data collected without consent in refugee camps, to algorithms replacing visa officers and making discriminatory decisions, to AI lie detectors used at borders, the roll out of unregulated technologies is ever-growing.*** The biggest problem, however, is that the opaque and discretionary world of border enforcement and immigration decision-making is built on societal structures underpinned by intersecting systemic racism and historical discrimination against people migrating, allowing for high-risk technological experimentation to thrive at the border.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will raise significant privacy concerns because it involves collecting biometric data without consent, using potentially discriminatory algorithms for visa decisions, and employing AI lie detectors at borders.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will potentially violate the privacy rights of millions of individuals because it relies on invasive and unregulated technologies that collect and process sensitive personal data without adequate safeguards, potentially perpetuating systemic discrimination in the immigration process.