Forensics Team (Fall 2024) – Evidence (Harvard University, Fall 2022)

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

Evidence from Yale University Article on Border Surveillance

MISC. EVIDENCE (PRO)

PRO (Effectiveness): Drones Provide Added Value
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: The agency recently has added drone-mounted sensors—dubbed Vader, for Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar—that **automatically detect small moving objects on the ground**. The report criticized the agency for allegedly **restricting the use of Vader to around a single border station so that authorities could apprehend people detected by the sensor**. The agency said it doesn't restrict Vader use.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will help respond effectively to emergencies and criminal activities because drones can provide real-time aerial monitoring, assist law enforcement during critical situations, and help assess natural disaster damage.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will help protect thousands of people and communities because drones can quickly provide important information and support during emergencies and law enforcement actions, making these operations more effective.

PRO (Effectiveness): 2015 Report Criticisms are Inaccurate
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: Customs and Border Protection said the report inaccurately analyzes the cost and success of its drones, which have **"achieved or exceeded all relevant performance expectations."** A spokesman said the agency's drones aren't credited with many apprehensions because they typically monitor large stretches of the border to identify hot spots, rather than follow individual targets. **"For the big picture, it's doing great,"** he said.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will be effective because Customs and Border Protection reports that the drones have achieved or exceeded performance expectations, focusing on identifying hotspots over individual apprehensions.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will help secure large stretches of the border effectively because the drones excel at monitoring vast areas and identifying critical points, even if they are not directly involved in every apprehension.

PRO (Effectiveness): Patrolling Smuggling Routes
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: **Customs and Border Protection drones also patrol maritime routes used by drug smugglers**, aid local law enforcement at active crime scenes and assess damage after natural disasters. In 2011, for example, an agency drone mapped Mississippi River flooding. And in October, an agency drone fed aerial footage to local authorities in Minnesota as it handled the case of an active shooter.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will help fight smuggling activities because drones can monitor the routes used by smugglers and provide real-time information to law enforcement.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will help reduce smuggling operations and illegal activities by providing valuable support to law enforcement, improving their ability to monitor and intercept smuggling routes.

MISC. EVIDENCE (PRO): *CONTINUED…*

PRO (Effectiveness): Assisting Law Enforcement (Real-Time Data-Sharing!)
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: Customs and Border Protection drones also patrol maritime routes used by drug smugglers, *aid local law enforcement at active crime scenes* and assess damage after natural disasters. In 2011, for example, an agency drone mapped Mississippi River flooding. And *in October, an agency drone fed aerial footage to local authorities in Minnesota as it handled the case of an active shooter.*

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will help reduce criminal activities because drones can monitor maritime routes used by smugglers and provide real-time information to law enforcement.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will help reduce illegal activities by providing valuable support to law enforcement, making millions of people safer.

PRO (Disaster Relief): Providing Valuable Data During Disasters
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: Customs and Border Protection drones also patrol maritime routes used by drug smugglers, aid local law enforcement at active crime scenes and *assess damage after natural disasters*. *In 2011, for example, an agency drone mapped Mississippi River flooding.* And in October, an agency drone fed aerial footage to local authorities in Minnesota as it handled the case of an active shooter.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will be valuable for disaster relief because drones can provide crucial aerial support during emergencies, like mapping flood zones or providing real-time visuals during active crime situations.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will benefit communities by providing quick response capabilities during disasters, helping with damage assessments and aiding law enforcement during critical emergencies.

MISC. EVIDENCE (CON)

CON (Effectiveness): Drones are Costly and Ineffective
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: **Using drones to guard the U.S. border has been more costly and less effective than previously thought**, according to a government watchdog report. The report, released Tuesday by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Inspector General, said the U.S. Customs and Border Protection agency flew its fleet of 10 unmanned aircraft only **5,102 hours in fiscal year 2013, less than a quarter of the time the agency had projected**. As a result, **the report estimated that the agency spent $12,255 an hour to fly its drones, nearly five times what Customs and Border Protection has reported**. The document said **drones aided less than 2% of the agency's apprehensions of illegal border crossings that year**.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will be ineffective because the drones were flown far fewer hours than planned and contributed minimally to border apprehensions.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm millions of taxpayers because the funds spent on drones are not yielding sufficient results in terms of arrests or coverage, making it a wasteful investment.

CON (Effectiveness): Drone Downtime Undermines Effectiveness
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: The Inspector General report estimated the drone program cost **$62.5 million in fiscal 2013**, of Customs and Border Protection's total budget of $11.7 billion. The report said that, in addition to flying for less time than planned, **the drones patrolled fewer miles of the border and deployed a high-power sensor less often**. Customs and Border Protection said **bad weather and insufficient funds to pay for personnel and spare parts contributed to the shortfall in flight time**, according to the report.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will not be effective because drones often experience operational downtimes due to bad weather and budget limitations, reducing their overall coverage & impact.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm millions of taxpayers because the inconsistent operation of drones leads to inefficient use of resources, failing to deliver comprehensive border coverage.

CON (Effectiveness): Not Proven Effective in Immigration
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: Tom Barry, a policy analyst who has studied border drones for the liberal Center for International Policy, said such **expensive devices are part of the reason the agency's drone program isn't cost effective**. "I don't want to say drones have no place in border control," he said, **"but expensive, military-grade drones have not proven effective in catching immigrants or stopping drug flows.""**

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will not be cost-effective because military-grade drones have not demonstrated significant success in stopping illegal immigration or drug trafficking.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm millions of taxpayers because investing in costly drones has not resulted in effective outcomes, making it an inefficient use of public funds.

MISC. EVIDENCE (CON): *CONTINUED…*

CON (Effectiveness): Surveillance Restricted to Certain Areas
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: The agency recently has added drone-mounted sensors—dubbed Vader, for Vehicle and Dismount Exploitation Radar—that **automatically detect small moving objects on the ground**. The report criticized the agency for allegedly **restricting the use of Vader to around a single border station so that authorities could apprehend people detected by the sensor**. agency said it doesn't restrict Vader use.

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will have limited effectiveness because advanced drone-mounted sensors like Vader are restricted to specific areas rather than covering the entire border.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm border security because restricted use of key technology like Vader leaves large portions of the border unmonitored, reducing the overall effectiveness of surveillance.

CON (Cost): Cost of Drones is Unjustified
According to... Yale Global, January 7, 2015
https://archive-yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/drone-patrols-us-border-ineffective-report-finds

Original: **Military-grade drones are too costly and ineffective for US border patrol**, suggests a US inspector general report. "Customs and Border Protection has used drones since 2004 to aid investigations and patrol borders," reports Jack Nicas for the Wall Street Journal. **"The Inspector General report estimated the drone program cost $62.5 million in fiscal 2013**…." Some independent analysts and the Inspector General previously have criticized the cost-effectiveness of border-monitoring drones, while a recent bill proposed in the Senate called for drones to patrol borders at all times. The report suggests that flight and patrol hours were not maximized. The report recommends the department against additional purchase of drones at an average cost of $31.5 million each. **One analyst concludes that border surveillance does not require costly military-grade devices**. – YaleGlobal

It states... Increasing US border surveillance will be too expensive because the drone program's high costs are not justified by their limited use and effectiveness.

This means... Increasing US border surveillance will harm millions of taxpayers because the high costs of drones will be an inefficient use of public funds without providing significant improvements in border security.