



EBTC INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: 3 Firms Will Compete to Build New Border Network

SOURCE: Washington Post

Northrop Grumman Corp., Lockheed Martin Corp. and Raytheon Co. are putting together rival teams to compete for the Homeland Security Department's new contract to set up an integrated network of sensors and cameras along the U.S. northern and southern borders.

The Secure Border Initiative, announced by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff in November, is expected to be one of the department's largest contracts, with an estimated value of \$2 billion, according to market research firm Input Inc. of Reston.

The money would go toward technologies, such as advanced video cameras and heat sensors, that could be mounted on poles and fences or in movable unmanned vehicles. If an intrusion is detected, an alert would sound for Border Patrol units.

The new system will replace the proposed America's Shield Initiative, a less comprehensive program that would have updated cameras and sensors along U.S. borders with Canada and Mexico. It also is intended to build on an even older program, the controversial "remote video surveillance" initiative, that began in 1998. That surveillance system has been criticized in recent months.

Although \$429 million has been spent to install video surveillance cameras and sensors at U.S. borders, the cameras are not fully coordinated with the sensors, and it is not clear whether the system is increasing border control agents' productivity, according to a recent report from Richard L. Skinner, inspector general at the Homeland Security Department.

The project has been marred by delays, cost overruns and ineffective oversight, as well as numerous false alarms, Skinner found.

One of the challenges for the winning team on the new contract will be to integrate its cameras and devices with the existing systems. Department officials said at a Feb. 9 day-long industry briefing that they expect to issue a request for proposals for the project in March and to make an award in September.

Northrop Grumman of Los Angeles; Lockheed Martin of Bethesda; and Raytheon of Waltham, Mass., confirmed that they are each putting together a team to bid for the contract.

"This is one of the department's signature programs," said Bruce Walker, Northrop Grumman's homeland security director. "The team is energized."

At Lockheed, the company "will propose a solution that will enable our government to obtain operational control of our borders," spokesman Jeff Adams said.

Other companies also have expressed interest in playing a role in the program, including General Dynamics Corp. of Falls Church and Textron Inc. of Providence, R.I., according to Bloomberg News. General Dynamics spokesman Rob Doolittle said it was "premature" to discuss the company's intentions. Textron officials did not respond to a request for comment.