

US Homeland Security is testing border patrol robot dogs

Article

The news: The **Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** is trying out quadrupedal robots on the southern border as autonomous sentries and land drones. While the DHS has no timeline for full-term deployment of the robot dogs, it says initial trials were successful.

How we got here: The **Vision 60** robots are built by **Ghost Robotics**, weigh 70 pounds, and can travel 7.5 miles in three hours on a single battery charge. The DHS chose the robots for

their ability to navigate rocky terrain, [per](#) The Verge.

- “The southern border can be an inhospitable place for man and beast, and that is exactly why a machine may excel there,” said Brenda Long, a program manager for the DHS. The agency compares the use of robots at the border to using airborne drones to “supplement the work of human agents.”
- **The robots can navigate autonomously or be controlled remotely.** They can also take a number of payloads, including thermal and night-vision cameras.
- Most tests have been for sentry duty, where they can **patrol GPS waypoints and inspect trains at railyards.**
- The Ghost Robotics Vision 60 is a competitor of the more popular **Boston Dynamics Spot** robot, and Vision 60 units look very similar. Boston Dynamics was [purchased](#) by **Hyundai** last year and is now focused on developing “walking vehicles.”
- The global inspection robots market brought in **\$940 million in 2020** and is expected to reach nearly **\$14 billion by 2030**, per [Allied Market Research](#),

What's the catch? Politicians and civil rights leaders are against robotic sentries, especially when used to interact with citizens, which can be seen as dehumanizing. Moreover, there are over [160 internal reports](#) of abuses of asylum applicants at the border, and adding robots to the mix could exacerbate tensions.

- Quadrupedal robots are far from perfect. Previous attempts to incorporate them into military applications failed because they [ran out of battery](#) quickly, had **dodgy controls**, and **fell over** for no apparent reason.
- Deploying robot sentries for border patrol could help test their capabilities and limitations, but there will be resistance from various fronts until their usage can be seen as an advantage.

(Source: Ghost Robotics)

