



Tony Smith (CBE)



Border Management Today

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Managing the worlds' borders has never been easy, and it is not getting any easier. The massive growth in globalisation continues unabated, and despite economic recession it is expected to expand rapidly.

Air traffic alone is expected to increase from 3 billion to 4 billion by 2018. Global maritime cargo movements will more than double by 2030. Yet most border agencies and authorities across the globe are seeing no commensurate increase in their budgets and workforce. Indeed many are feeling the brunt of cuts in public services across the board.

Meanwhile the threats remain very real. Countries have had to adapt their primary inspection lines to manage a greater range of threats than ever before. The Border Force Officers of tomorrow will need to be immigration officers, customs officers, police officers and security agents all rolled into one. Behind that there needs to be a sophisticated process of intelligence gathering, analysis and strategic and tactical deployment mechanisms to ensure that scarce resources are deployed to the right areas at the right time.

Then there is the perennial question of technology. The control agencies need to stay ahead of the criminals and the terrorists, or the game will be lost. They cannot do this alone. Government Departments and Agencies need the help of the airlines, the airports, the port operators, the shipping companies and the international organisations that support them. For example, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has made huge steps forward by setting the global standard for machine readable travel documents (MRTDs) so that data can easily be captured by

carriers and sent to governments quickly for risk assessment. They are also leading the way on the development of biometric identifiers embedded in RFID chips to eliminate identity abuse and document fraud. The European Border Agency (Frontex) is working with the EU to establish global standards for automated border controls (e gates). All these measures will help to facilitate the genuine flow of traffic across borders and increase our chances of identifying those that would cause harm.

At the same time, business integrators and technology suppliers need to keep up. Faster and better scanners and readers will be required to tackle new and emerging threats. Data analytics will become increasingly relevant in risk assessing the movement of people and goods. Advanced passenger and freight processing should become the norm, based on the provision of accurate and timely data. And biometrics will become increasingly relevant.

Finally, border control leaders from across the globe need to come together much more closely behind a spirit of collaboration. The political picture remains fragmented, with no real umbrella organisation driving the global borders agenda. Rather, we have groups of countries (such as the Five Countries, the EU, or APEC) setting their own direction with very little cross cutting collaboration on the full range of border threats facing other countries. Organisations such as the IOM, UNHCR, the WCO, Interpol and Borderpol do what they can; but the governance structure is patchy and far from comprehensive.

That is why the Smart Borders conference is so important. One country's inbound is another's outbound; one country's imports are another's exports. Only informed discussion and genuine collaboration across all these sectors will enable continued safe, secure and simple travel at the borders of tomorrow.

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Tony Smith was Head of Ports & Borders in CIC Canada 2000-2003, Head of UK ports in UKIS Home Office 2005-2007, and Director General of the UK Border Force 2012 – 2013. He was awarded the order of Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the New Years' Honours List 2013 for his services to the safety and security of the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Tony will be chairing the Smart Borders Conference later this year. To find out more information please visit www.smartborders.wbresearch.com

