

Table 1. Security fences built, under construction, or proposed; placed whole or in part in disputed space, worldwide.

Security-fenced state	Bordering state or area	Estimated length of fence (miles)	Principal purpose of security fence ^a
Saudi Arabia	Yemen	900	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	Oman	560	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	UAE	280	Terrorism
UAE	Oman	255	Terrorism
Israel	West Bank	436	Terrorism
Kuwait	Iraq	120	Disputed sovereignty
Morocco	Western Sahara	275	Terrorism
Spain	Morocco	60	Illegal immigration
India	Pakistan	340	Terrorism
India	Bangladesh	2500	Terrorism
Iran	Pakistan	435	Illegal trafficking
Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	540	Terrorism
Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan	28	Terrorism
Turkey	Cyprus	112	Disputed sovereignty
South Korea	North Korea	150	Prevent invasion
UK	Northern Ireland	13	Disputed sovereignty

^aMany security fences were designed to serve multiple purposes, such as curbing terrorist attacks, illegal immigration, and drug trafficking.

questions of infringement upon another's claimed sovereignty are involved; while in the other, no such concern arises. Disputes arising from non-agreed upon borders often explain why security fences end up being constructed.

That issue of challenged sovereignty is anything but marginal.¹¹ Nick Megoran estimates that approximately 25% of the world's land borders are disputed and over 70% of international conflicts are directly linked to these unresolved border issues.¹² And since most of the internationally recognized boundaries are in Europe and North America and they make up no more than 5% of the total length of landed boundaries, for the rest of the world, and especially for Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, unsettled border issues loom as latent destabilizing agents to states' national integrity.¹³

And yet, by 1991, only 3% of the world's land borders had been equipped, according to Michel Foucher, with walls, electronic devices, or barbed wire fences.¹⁴ Given these border-related circumstances, the potential for massive construction of state security fences worldwide cannot be dismissed as insignificant.¹⁵ If terrorist activity becomes a more widespread phenomenon, the opportunity costs of not having a security fence in place may become, for the many states with troublesome borders, simply prohibitive.

India and Israel: similar challenges and responses

For India and Israel, those opportunity costs ultimately forced both to choose the security fence option. The similarity of circumstance each faced is noteworthy. For both, armed conflict with a neighboring state over issues of territorial sovereignty followed immediately upon independence. In both cases, the conflict had religious overtones, i.e. Hindu versus Muslim in India/Pakistan and Jew versus Muslim in Israel/Palestine. In both cases, temporary cease-fire lines were established and have remained in place for more than a half century; the Line of Control separating India from Pakistan in Kashmir and the Green Line separating Israel from territories then controlled by

Table 2. Security fences built, under construction, or proposed; placed in non-disputed space, worldwide.

Security-fenced state	Bordering state or area	Estimated length of fence (miles)	Principal purpose of security fence
Saudi Arabia	Kuwait	138	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	Qatar	37	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	Jordan	460	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	Iraq	560	Terrorism
Saudi Arabia	Red Sea	1140	Precaution
Saudi Arabia	Persian Gulf	500	Precaution
UAE	Saudi Arabia	285	Terrorism
Israel	Gaza	31	Terrorism
Egypt	Gaza	12	Terrorism
China	North Korea	880	Illegal immigration
Pakistan	Afghanistan	1500	Terrorism
India	Myanmar	1020	Terrorism
Myanmar	Bangladesh	40	Illegal trafficking
Iran	Afghanistan	435	Illegal trafficking
Uzbekistan	Afghanistan	130	Terrorism
Uzbekistan	Tajikistan	745	Terrorism
Turkmenistan	Kazakhstan	235	Terrorism
Turkmenistan	Uzbekistan	1006	Illegal immigration
Turkey	Syria	500	Kurdish insurgents
Greece	Turkey	6	Illegal immigration
Russia	Finland	n/a	Precaution
Russia	Norway	n/a	Precaution
Russia	China	n/a	Precaution
Russia	Mongolia	n/a	Precaution
Russia	North Korea	n/a	Precaution
Poland	Russia	n/a	Illegal immigration
Hungary	Russia	n/a	Illegal immigration
France	Chunnel to Britain	3	Illegal immigration
Botswana	Zimbabwe	310	Illegal immigration
Thailand	Malaysia	314	Terrorism
South Africa	Mozambique	305	Illegal immigration
South Africa	Zimbabwe	140	Illegal immigration
Brunei	Malaysia	12	Illegal immigration
USA	Mexico	480	Illegal immigration

Note: n/a, not available.

Jordan. In both cases, those temporary cease-fire lines are still regarded by the contending states as *de facto* lines only.¹⁶ On several occasions, both lines were tested by wars.¹⁷ In both cases, anti-terrorist security fences were built after other methods failed to stem terrorist attacks from Pakistan and the West Bank, respectively. India's was begun in the 1990s and completed in 2004, and Israel's, while still under construction, began in 2003.¹⁸

Believing for many years that their advantage vis-à-vis terrorist organizations rested with conventional warfare – use of infantry, tanks, air strikes, and even naval support – both India and Israel responded to a protracted series of terrorist intrusions with tough conventional force.¹⁹ However punishing their responses may have been on the terrorist organizations and particularly on the populations harboring the terrorist organizations, they proved ineffectual in halting or even reducing the incidence of terrorist activity.

Conversely, what superior conventional force seemed to provide both India and Israel was assurance that a terrorist attack, even on a massive scale, could not pose an existential threat.