

**Urban Security Regimes and Border Militarization in Southern Mexico:  
Preliminary Findings from Tapachula, Chiapas**

In the past fifteen years, the U.S. homeland security apparatus has spurred a number of multilateral agreements and initiatives with Mexico and the “Northern Triangle” of Central America (i.e. Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador). Under the aegis of wars against drugs, terrorism, and unauthorized migration, notable agreements like the Mérida Initiative (2008), the Central America Regional Security Initiative (2010), the Plan for Prosperity (2014) and the U.S. Strategy for Engagement in Central America (2014) have helped facilitate a southbound transfer of billions of dollars’ worth of US military equipment, intelligence systems, and personnel training<sup>1</sup>, arguably transforming strategic and purportedly vulnerable geographies (e.g. border regions and dense urban districts) into sites of increasing (re)militarization. Using a critical interdisciplinary framework based in human geography, urban studies, and ethnic studies, this presentation reports back on recent trends in and around the border city of Tapachula, whose proximity to the Chiapas-Guatemala border and growing interest to U.S. and Mexican national security makes it a formative site for interrogating the intersections of urban and border security paradigms.

**Research Backdrop**

In the summer of 2014, US refugee policy once again made national headlines as images and narratives surfaced of thousands of unaccompanied Central American children crossing the Rio Grande<sup>2</sup>. Having completed an epic journey across Mexican

territory with minimal resources at incredible risk to livelihood, these young migrants—  
largely from ‘violence-riddled’<sup>3</sup>  
*barrios* and *colonias* of the rapidly urbanizing Northern Triangle of Central America—  
reignited debates about the parameters of global North beneficence and the  
permeability of U.S. national imagined community. In spite of an official rhetorical aim  
to deal with the ‘root causes’<sup>4</sup> of the ‘humanitarian crisis’<sup>5</sup>, the Obama Administration’s  
response was to bolster the homeland security apparatus, incentivizing collaborative  
projects with its southern counterparts to stem refugee flows with billions of dollars’  
worth of security aid. By the end of the year, the three Northern Triangle countries had  
established their *Plan for Prosperity*<sup>6</sup>; U.S. Congress approved a complementary ‘U.S.  
Strategy for Engagement in Central America’<sup>7</sup>; and the Peña Nieto Administration  
initiated its Southern Border Program in Mexico<sup>8</sup>.

It was during the height of the crisis that my research project first began  
unfolding, having spent much of that summer in my maternal family’s hometown of San  
Pedro Sula, Honduras—the then reputed “murder capital” of the world<sup>9</sup> and largest  
sender city for refugee minors crossing the US-Mexico border<sup>10</sup>. Having witnessed the  
oftentimes subtle, everyday securitization of post-9/11 New York City (or what  
geographer Stephen Graham has referred to as the ‘new military urbanism’<sup>11</sup>), as well as  
the many back-and-forth parallels in urban security developments between San Pedro  
and New York during the Bush and Obama Administrations<sup>12</sup>, my interest in tracing the  
relevant transnational flows led me to the border town of Tapachula, the most populous  
urban district in Mexico’s 714-mile southern border zone<sup>13</sup>. A mid-sized, cosmopolitan

city with a long history as Mexico's gateway to the country's interior, particularly for US-bound Central Americans<sup>14</sup>, Tapachula is unquestionably at the crossroads of numerous capital and labor flows, ever more a strategic entry-and-exit point for transnational circulations that have fallen within the domain of an expansive, imperial US surveillance structure. As regional security initiatives and greater receptivity to U.S. aid continue to intensify the unprecedented influx of U.S. military equipment and personnel in the Chiapas-Guatemala borderlands, critical scholars have increasingly turned to the region to deepen their understanding of what some have called the 'security-industrial complex'<sup>15</sup>.

A critical, interdisciplinary multi-methods investigation, this ongoing research project has thus far consisted of archival research (a review of hundreds of government, policy, and historical documents) as well as participant observation and interviews<sup>a</sup> conducted in Chiapas and Guatemala during month-long stints in the summers of 2015 and 2016. During my stay in Tapachula, my project was greatly improved by the suggestions of migration researchers at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) and advocates at the Fray Matías Center for Human Rights. The project was also made possible by the Tinker Foundation's Field Research Grants program.

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<sup>a</sup> Participant observation was conducted at NGO offices (particularly the office of the Fray Matías Center for Human Rights, where migrant support group meetings were held), migrant shelters, Miguel Hidalgo Park, the Suchiate River border crossing between Ciudad Hidalgo and Tecún Umán (Guatemala), and numerous other locations in the region. Interviews with conducted with civil society actors, researchers, and journalists familiar with migration and militarization trends.

Some of the questions I sought to answer included: What is the impact of U.S.-backed securitization in the southern border zone, particularly as it relates to the right to mobility and refugee livelihood? How did the influx of U.S. military equipment and personnel transform everyday urban life in Tapachula? What distinguishes this latest iteration of militarization from prior security strategies of socio-spatial control? And to what extent has U.S. homeland security doctrine reproduced historic cycles of violence and war, enacting and perpetuating new and old forms of border imperialism? In endeavoring to answer these questions through the use of multiple sources—including field research conducted prior to the 2017 transfer of electoral power in the U.S. executive and congressional offices—I include below some preliminary observations, patterns, and trends that can be drawn about U.S. security policy in Mexico's southern border. While beyond the scope of this paper, these can, in turn, be used to inform future sites of research and resistance.

### **Preliminary Findings**

#### ***1) Externalization of the Border***

A central theme that runs through many of the policy reports and US security documents examining the southern Mexican border relates to the 'pushing out,' or 'externalization'<sup>16</sup> of the border. The logic that recurs in security and defense documents is that a 'second line of defense' is needed to defend the homeland from unwanted threats—a notion echoed in Harsha Walia's discussion of the displacing logics of 'border imperialism'<sup>17</sup>. Long considered Mexico's "forgotten" border<sup>18</sup>, even the

United States' "third" border<sup>19</sup>, the political border separating Mexico from Guatemala and Belize has often been distinguished as the "other"<sup>20</sup> to its northern counterpart. Mapped in the geopolitical imaginary as a site of unchecked circulations of capital and migrants, and a vulnerable entry point for transnational criminal organizations and the violent drug trade, this dangerously "porous" and barely discernible borderline has inspired considerable derision and criticism by US and Mexican security establishment over the years. Indeed, declassified documents obtained by the National Security Agency's Mexico Project suggest that U.S. and Mexican national security officials have kept an eye to the Mexico-Central America border for decades, particularly during moments of rupture such as during the protracted Guatemalan civil war or the years immediately following the Zapatista insurgency<sup>21</sup>. While there has been a consistent, if overshadowed, discourse around the militarization of the Mexico-Central America for years, what may distinguish this latest iteration of border securitization is the unprecedented extent of U.S. involvement and collaboration.

Although geographical barriers and decreased population density severely limit the possibilities for border walls like those witnessed in the north<sup>22</sup>, Chiapas is hardly new to the sort of low-intensity counterinsurgency security officials have ascribed to the US-Mexico border<sup>23</sup> or 'insurgent' cities<sup>24</sup>. Mexican security forces have turned to an alternatively spatialized militarization strategy based on the use of three 'belts of control'—a strategy that takes advantage of the narrowing routes along the Tehuantepec Isthmus to entrap migrants at one of numerous military-style checkpoints and roadblocks<sup>25</sup>. In recent years, U.S. support has also enabled Mexican security forces

to integrate new practices such as the use of mobile checkpoints (*volantas*) and the construction of modern facilities like the multi-agency “super-checkpoint” along the Pacific highway just minutes north of Tapachula—what the Mexican government calls *Centros de Atención Integral al Tránsito Fronterizo*, or CAITFs<sup>26</sup>. Since the launch of Peña Nieto’s Southern Border Program, there has been an even stronger crackdown on the once lightly policed *Bestia* trains that migrants took the northern border—a development that many observers and advocates have compared to a ‘hunting’ of migrants.<sup>27</sup> Since 2014, Mexico has greatly escalated the number of detentions and deportations of Central Americans<sup>28</sup> while forcing the ever-constant tide of refugees to take riskier paths.<sup>29</sup> While it’s unclear how much of these developments is directly attributable to the Mérida Initiative—for which U.S. Congress has to date appropriated \$2.5 billion since 2008<sup>30</sup>--there’s no question that the southbound flow of state-of-the-art military equipment will continue to shape the geographies of the Mexico-Guatemala border, and largely outside the scrutiny of the international community.

Of course, the evolving role of Mexico’s southern border as a geopolitical hotspot for the US homeland security matrix is unsurprising to residents of the denser, more trafficked regions where military personnel in armored jeeps and watchtowers have become irrefutable features of the landscape. In fact, many of the migrants and human rights advocates I spoke to alluded to the protection of U.S. interests when questioned about the impacts of increased security and human rights violations—an indication, perhaps, of just how transparent the security efforts to deter migrants from entering ‘Fortress America’<sup>31</sup> are. One campaign director at the Tapachula-based Fray

Matías Center for Human Rights even rehearses a line once made at a 2012 security conference by Alan Bersin, the Obama Administration's Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Assistant, suggesting that "The Guatemalan border with Chiapas, Mexico, is now our Southern border."<sup>32</sup> Indeed, numerous reports and statements by State Department<sup>33</sup> and DHS<sup>34</sup> and security officials, as well as by scholars writing for security think tanks like the RAND Corporation<sup>35</sup>, point to the need of reinforcing border security in southern Mexico as a necessary component of contemporary counternarcotics operations as well as day-to-day practices towards preserving the safety of far-off US Americans. To give one example, the current director of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, Jack Riley<sup>36</sup>, notes that for the sake of preserving post-9/11 border security, "it is beneficial to push the border out" so as to "prevent threats from reaching our [US] borders."<sup>37</sup> In describing ICE's Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program (BITMAP), another official even describes the collaborative ICE and Defense Department initiative to collect biometric data abroad as part of an "important mission of extending our borders away from the U.S."<sup>38</sup> As efforts to intensify to deliberately increase the number of obstacles refugees must overcome to attain even the right to petition asylum in the U.S., there will undoubtedly be more discussion of the vacillating nature of border imperialism in the years to come<sup>39</sup>.

## **2) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Military Urbanism**

One of the most notable changes relates the increased security presence along the road networks and transportation systems that connect Tapachula, an historic transit hub, to larger regional metropolises. As noted by researchers at the Washington Office on Latin America, an amalgam of security forces—many of which are known to have received U.S. training—have played a role in managing military-style checkpoints, roadblocks, watchtowers, and customs facilities in the city's perimeter<sup>40</sup>. Up until 2005, when Hurricane Stan ravaged much of the region, Tapachula was the first stop on the infamous cargo trains (the "Beast") that numerous Central Americans would ride atop to reach the U.S.-Mexico border. While that train station lies abandoned today, and the Southern Border Program has recently cracked down on the Beast<sup>41</sup>, Tapachula nevertheless continues to draw in numerous US-bound migrants—a fact evidenced by a visible cluster of housing, restaurant, and medical services catering to Central American and 'extracontinental'<sup>42</sup> refugees near the city's downtown.

To consider the associations between immigration, urban infrastructure, and security at the same time leads to a second theme one can draw from this project's critical assortment of methods (participant observation, interviews, and archival research with government documents), which relates to the *post-9/11 militarization of everyday urban life*, or what British geographer Stephen Graham has referred to as the 'new military urbanism'<sup>43</sup> Graham notes that while urban development has long been imbricated with militarism, nation-state sovereignty and colonial conquest, what has distinguished this 'new' form of military urbanism is an interrelated set of changes in



geopolitics, technology, and national security doctrine that has made surveillance, tracking, and targeting normalized features of the quotidian urban landscape. At a time when most humans now reside in urban areas, interminable wars against drugs, crime, and terror have also led to centering ‘security’ as a primal and unavoidable concern both in popular discourse and routine civic engagements. Additionally, as the purported threats to national security continue to become more evasive and networked across geographies and state lines, the ongoing conflation of immigration and criminality, narco-trafficking and terrorism, continues to reinforce an image of the racialized Other (in this case, the African, Asian, Caribbean, Afro-Latino or stateless refugee migrant) as an enemy to be tracked and targeted in the interior of cities.

Whether it be an actual or metaphorical war staged in an urban environment, the general shift in U.S. national security policy towards ‘asymmetric’ or ‘low-intensity’<sup>44</sup> warfare connects to a number of trends relevant to Mexico’s southern border, including: the growing importance of non-state, enemy actors (such as transnational drug cartels); the blurring of police-military functions; and the growing emphasis on technologies of surveillance<sup>b</sup>; and the increased vulnerability of city infrastructures in a globalizing age. Although the specifics of what U.S. funds and technologies are making

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<sup>b</sup> Recently, as part of its effort to combat urban crime, Tapachula launched an intelligence- and surveillance-based policing program known as C4 (Command, Control Communication, Computation and Intelligence)—a clear importation of militarist ‘command and control’ models from the Pentagon.

Sources: Organización Editorial Mexicana. Nov 24 2014. “Modernizan equipo del C4 de Chiapas.” <http://www.oem.com.mx/laprensa/notas/n3616868.htm>; Hernández González, Rodolfo. Jun 10 2014. “Comité de Consulta Verifica Funcionamiento del ‘C4’” *El Orbe*. <http://elorbe.com/seccion-politica/local/2014/06/10/comite-de-c...>

their way into the region are often difficult to trace, there is no question that Tapachula, the largest urban agglomeration in Mexico's southern border zone, continues to be impacted by the recent consortium of security policies and its re-direction of transnational and domestic (including migrant and capital) flows. As the unofficial capital of the Soconusco—the coffee-rich, coastal section of Chiapas that has long served as a corridor connecting the Guatemalan and Mexican capitals<sup>45</sup>—one could argue a mutually reinforcing dynamic between the city's 'strategic' geography under eyes of capital and the State<sup>46</sup>, its significance as a transit hub, and its reputation as a migrant and refugee sanctuary. Undeniably, the co-constitutive relationships that linked migration to trade were also responsible for molding the built environment's key transportation infrastructures, including railroads, bridges, the Pan-American highway, an international airport, and numerous land ports of entry—the same strategic sites that have been turned to for securitization today.

In addition to a varied security presence along roads and railways, a number of notable landmarks in Tapachula's metro area also suggest sites where security personnel and equipment can be found, including:

- a 'Twentieth-First Century' detention facility, the largest detention facility in Latin America<sup>47</sup>;
- small military bases and installations, including the 36<sup>th</sup> Military Zone near the heart of the city;
- an international airport;
- a maritime port (Port Chiapas, also known by Port Madero) and an 'advanced' naval station;

- numerous official and unofficial ports of entry, including the most heavily trafficked port of entry in the southern border zone—the Rodolfo Robles bridge connecting the twin border towns of Ciudad Hidalgo (Mexico) and Tecún Umán (Guatemala);
- the headquarters of an elite special units force, the GOTTPA (“Operations Group Against Trans-Border Traffic, Human Trafficking and Gangs”), that has been trained by DHS and the FBI<sup>48</sup>

One declassified document from 2012 has also revealed that a branch of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE)—the department of Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)—has a Liaison Office in Tapachula, reportedly to “to build capacity in the identification of aliens from countries of national security concern who are released from the Tapachula detention facility.”<sup>49</sup>

Moreover, in addition to the sites listed above, US Southern Command has also invested several millions of dollars in the creation of an Interagency Task Force in nearby Tecún Umán for the purposes of drug interdiction.<sup>50</sup>

### ***3) Coordinated Intelligence and Biometric Tracking***

In accordance with the first and second themes, a third and perhaps more prominent theme one could extract from US-backed urban and border securitization in southern Mexico is the importance of *intelligence gathering and analysis* and *biometric tracking*—what could, in other words, be understood as biopolitical informational control—in the interception unwanted circulations of drugs and racialized migrants<sup>51</sup>.

Throughout the southern border region, US security officials have provided equipment, training, and technical assistance with the purported aim of building governments' 'institutional capacity' towards tracking and dismantling transnational drug cartels<sup>52</sup>. One can even trace the wide-scale adoption of militarist, 'command and control' models of intelligence-based policing at urban and border zones (e.g. C4 in Tapachula as well as COMPSTAT systems elsewhere in Central America) to the prodding of the U.S. homeland security apparatus<sup>53</sup>. This occurs in spite of the objections of numerous civil society actors, including those I spoke with in Tapachula, who point to the fact that increased securitization has only negligibly impacted drug trafficking trends<sup>54</sup>; in the meantime, human rights violations in the form of extortion, robbery, corruption, as well as outright violence against migrants and marginalized communities have only increased. In cases of detentions and deportations from Tapachula's "21<sup>st</sup> Century" facility, some migrants have even died in custody<sup>55</sup> or sent to their deaths.<sup>56</sup>

*Surveillance Equipment:* Drug enforcement funds from the State Department's INL account have been used towards the construction of modern surveillance facilities at strategic sites aimed at maximizing intelligence of cross-border flows, including the construction of observation towers and at least two Navy facilities in the southern border<sup>57</sup>. This is in addition to the provision of radios, vehicles, sensors, airboats, DNA testing and forensics equipment, as well as data-gathering software and devices.

*Training and Professionalization:* An emphasis on the training, professionalization, and modernization of local security institutions and practices is also evident: personnel from Customs and Border Protection (CBP), ICE, FBI, DEA, and local police departments have all played a role in the training of local security forces, in Mexico as well as the Northern Triangle states, with the purported aim of modernizing institutional capacity and intelligence systems. As an example of this, the FBI and Department of Homeland Security have trained recently established border security forces like the Tapachula-based GOTTPA (the Operations Group Against Trans-Border Traffic, Human Trafficking and Gangs) and the GOFs (Southern Border Operations Groups) in investigative techniques, using US-donated equipment to identify drugs and fraudulent documents, as well as enter information into a nationwide organized-crime database<sup>58</sup>.

Numerous journalists and human rights organizations (including those interviewed in this research project) have also recently criticized U.S. training for bolstering a security matrix notorious for frequent human rights violations, including the extortion, robbery, and torture of migrants<sup>59</sup>. Central American special forces units trained by US Border Patrol, Texas Rangers, and other specialized security units were also reported to have illegally blocked the passage of unaccompanied children and refugees at border zones<sup>60</sup>.

*Interagency Task Forces:* The homeland security apparatus has also in recent years pushed the development of numerous interagency tasks forces, numerous forward operating bases, and modernized, 'interoperable' data systems, using the guise of

'collaboration' with 'partner nations' to disguise an effective (re)militarization of the southern Mexico and the Northern Triangle<sup>61</sup>. Across the Suchiate River, in the Guatemalan border town of Tecún Umán, the US Defense Department's Southern Command has invested considerable resources in building an interagency task force whose prime objective is the interdiction of drugs across the Mexico border and similar task forces have been planned for Guatemala's Honduran (IATF Chortí) such Salvadoran (IATF Xinca) borders<sup>62</sup>.

*Biometric Programs:* While specifics are still difficult to come by, the details that *are* available from numerous security sources corroborate the notion of a U.S. security apparatus increasingly obsessed with biometric technology as the panacea for border traffic woes in the age of increased capital mobility<sup>63</sup>. This is evidenced, for instance, by the rapid deployment of collaborative biometric initiatives like ICE's Biometric Identification Transnational Migration Alert Program (BITMAP) in Mexico<sup>64</sup>, or the FBI's Central America Fingerprint Exchange (CAFE) and the ATF's Electronic Trace Submission (eTrace) System (to trace firearms) in Northern Triangle states<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Isaacson, Adam, Maureen Meyer, and Gabriela Morales. 2014. *Mexico's Other Border: Security, Migration, and the Humanitarian Crisis at the Line with Central America*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin América; Main, Alexander. "The U.S. Re-militarization of Central America and Mexico." NACLA Sep 3 2015. <https://nacla.org/article/us-re-militarization-central-america-and-mexico>; Franzblau, Jesse. Feb 27 2015. "Why is the US Still Spending Billions to Fund México's Corrupt Drug War?" *The Nation*. <https://www.thenation.com/article/us-connection-mexicos-drug-war-...>

<sup>2</sup> US Customs and Border Protection. Oct 27 2015. "Southwest Border Unaccompanied Alien Children." <http://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/southwest-border-unaccompanied-children>

<sup>3</sup> Gomez, Alan. Mar 7 2016. "It's not just violence Central Americans headed to the U.S. are fleeing." *USA Today*. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2016/03/07/central-america-immigration-violence-economics-honduras-el-salvador/80458278/>

<sup>4</sup> US Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs. Dec 7 2015. "Stronger Neighbors – Stronger Borders: Addressing the Root Causes of the Migration Surge from Central America." Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup> Isaacson, Adam, Maureen Meyer, and Gabriela Morales. 2014. *Mexico's Other Border: Security, Migration, and the Humanitarian Crisis at the Line with Central America*. Washington, D.C.: Washington Office on Latin America.

<sup>6</sup> "Plan of the Alliance for Prosperity in the Northern Triangle: A Road Map." Regional Plan Prepared by El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Sep 2014. Available on the Inter-American Development Bank's website: <http://idbdocs.iadb.org/wsdocs/getdocument.aspx?docnum=39224238>

<sup>7</sup> "Examining FY 2017 Funding Priorities in the Western Hemisphere." Hearing before the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives. 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. 2<sup>nd</sup> Session. Apr 27 2016. Washington, DC: US Government Publishing Office.

<sup>8</sup> Animal Político Board. Jul 8 2014. "Peña Nieto pone en marcha el Programa Frontera Sur." *Animal Político*. <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/07/en-esto-consiste-el-programa-que-protectera-a-migrantes-que-ingresan-a-mexico/>

<sup>9</sup> Romo, Rafael and Nick Thompson. Mar 28 2013. "Inside San Pedro Sula, the 'murder capital' of the world." *CNN World*. <http://www.cnn.com/2013/03/27/world/americas/honduras-murder-capital/>; Relph, Jeremy. Oct 30 2014. "Dispatch from Honduras: What It's Like to Live in the Murder Capital of the World." *Business Insider*. <http://www.businessinsider.com/murder-capital-san-pedro-sula-2014-10>

<sup>10</sup> Park, Haeyon. Oct 21 2014. "Q. and A.: Children at the Border" *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2014/07/15/us/questions-about-the-border-kids.html? r=0>

<sup>11</sup> Graham, Stephen. 2010. *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*. London, New York: Verso; Graham, Stephen. 2004. *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing

<sup>12</sup> Pine, Adrienne. 2008. *Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Pine, Adrienne and David Vivar. 2011. "Tegucigolpe: donde se cruzan los caminos, se unen fronteras y divergen las percepciones." *Colombia Internacional* 73. enero a junio 2011: 25-47.

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<sup>13</sup> Isacson et al, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Arriola, Aura Marina. 1995. *Tapachula, "la perla del Soconusco", ciudad estratégica para la redefinición de las fronteras*. Guatemala, GT: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales.

<sup>15</sup> Borderlands Autonomist Collective. "Resisting the Security-Industrial Complex: Operation Streamline and the Militarization of the Arizona-Mexico Borderlands." *Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis*, Eds. Jenna M. Loyd, Matt Michelson and Andrew Burrige. University of Georgia Press: Athens, GA (2012): 190-208.

<sup>16</sup> Podkul, Jennifer and Ian Kysel. "Interdiction, Border Externalization, and the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants." Submitted as written testimony to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Oct 22 2015; Frelick, Bill, Ian M. Kysel, and Jennifer Podkul. 2016. "The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* Vol 4 No 4: 190-220. Also see examples in: Alridge, Chris. Jun 2013. "Mobile Biometric Device (MBD) Technology: Summary of Selected First Responder Experiences in Pilot Projects." Sandia National Laboratories, Sandia Corporation, Lockheed Martin Corpo. Albuquerque, NM; Riley, K. Jack. "Border Control." Chapter 37 of the *McGraw-Hill Homeland Security Handbook*. Available on RAND's website: <http://www.rand.org/pubs/reprints/RP1216.html>; US CBP. 2009. *Secure Borders, Safe Travel, Legal Trade: US Customers and Border Protection Fiscal Year 2009-2014 Strategic Plan*. CBP Publication No. 0401-0809. Prepared by Office of Policy and Planning. US CBP, Washington, DC.

<sup>17</sup> Walia, Harsha. 2013. *Undoing Border Imperialism*. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

<sup>18</sup> Johnson, Jennifer. 2008. "The Forgotten Border: Migration & Human Rights at Mexico's Southern Border." Washington, D.C.: Latin America Working Group Education Fund.

<sup>19</sup> Grayson, George. 2005. "Mexico's Southern Flank: The 'Third' U.S. Border." *Orbis* Winter 2006 53-69.

<sup>20</sup> Isacson et al, 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Doyle, Kate. 2004. "Rebellion in Chiapas and the Mexican Military." National Security Archive. URL: <http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB109/>. Accessed Nov 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Isacson et al, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Dunn, Timothy. 1996. *The Militarization of the U.S.-Mexico Border, 1978-1992*. University of Texas Press.

<sup>24</sup> Dept of the Army. Oct 19 1992. Field Manual No. 7-98. "Operations in A Low-Intensity Conflict." Washington, DC.

<sup>25</sup> Ribando Seelke, Clare and Kristin Finklea. May 7 2015. "U.S.-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service*.

<sup>26</sup> Secretaría de Gobernación (SEGOB). 2015. *Coordinación Para la Atención Integral de la Migración en la Frontera Sur: Informe de Actividades Julio 2014 – Julio 2015*; Isacson et al, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Ureste, Manu. Dec 15 2014. "Especial: De Tonalá a Tapachula, 224 kilómetros de retenes y corrupción." *Animal Político*. <http://www.animalpolitico.com/2014/12/especial-de-tonala-tapachula-224-kilometros-de-retenes-y-corrupcion/>



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<sup>28</sup> Isacson et al, 2015; Lakhani, Nina. Feb 4 2015. "Mexico deports record numbers of women and children in US-driven effort." *The Guardian*. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/04/mexico-deports-record-numbers-women-children-central-america>

<sup>29</sup> Lakhani, Nina. Sep 15 2016. "Central American migrants desperate to reach US risk new dangers at sea." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/sep/15/migr...>

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> National Research Council. 2009. *Beyond "fortress America": national security controls on science and technology in a globalized world*. Committee on Science, Security and Prosperity. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

<sup>32</sup> "The Guatemalan border with Chiapas, Mexico, is now our Southern border," Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for International Affairs Alan Bersin, in remarks at the Border Issues Conference hosted by U.S. Mexico Chamber of Commerce event, September 19, 2012, celebrating the level of cooperation achieved between DHS and INM. See also Miller, Todd. "Mexico: U.S. Border Patrols' Newest Hire." *Al Jazeera America*, 4 Oct. 2014, <http://alj.am/1vw7pVE>.

<sup>33</sup> Ambassador Thomas A. Shannon, U.S. Department of State, Testimony to Senate Appropriations Committee, 10 Jul. 2014, <http://www.appropriations.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/Shannon%20Testimony%207%2010%2014.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Dept of Homeland Security. Feb 27 2012. "Readout of Secretary Napolitano's Visit to Mexico and Guatemala."

<sup>35</sup> Riley, K. Jack. "Border Control." RAND Corp.

<sup>36</sup> RAND Press Release. Jan 11 2010. "Jack Riley Appointed Vice President and Director of RAND National Security Research Division." RAND website. <http://www.rand.org/news/press/2010/01/11/jack-riley-nsrd.html>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Alridge, Chris. Jun 2013. "Mobile Biometric Device (MBD) Technology: Summary of Selected First Responder Experiences in Pilot Projects." Sandia National Laboratories, Sandia Corporation, Lockheed Martin Corpo. Albuquerque, NM. <https://info.publicintelligence.net/Sandia-MobileBiometrics.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> In *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013), Harsha Walia writes: "Border securitization operates not at a fixed site but rather through structures and technologies of power across geographies..."

As noted by Marxist philosopher Étienne Balibar [with respect to Fortress Europe], "Borders are vacillating . . . they are no longer at the border," and surveillance measures, including military aircrafts, are employed offshore to deter migrants from leaving Africa. Border imperialism therefore excludes migrants through the diffusion of the state's jurisdiction *beyond* its actual territorial borders."

<sup>40</sup> Isacson et al, 2014; Isacson et al, 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Tuckman, Jo. Oct 13 2015. "Mexico's migration crackdown escalates dangers for Central Americans." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/13/mexico-central-ame...>

<sup>42</sup> Lakhani, Nina. Sep 6 2016. "Passage through Mexico: the global migration to the US." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/sep/06/mexi...>

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;Fox, Conrad. Nov 14 2016. "Tapachula: primer refugio mexicano para nuevos migrantes 'extracontinentales.' *En El Camino*. <http://enelcamino.periodistasdeapie.org.mx/ruta/tapachula-prime...>

<sup>43</sup> Graham, Stephen. 2010. *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*. London, New York: Verso; Graham, Stephen. 2004. *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

<sup>44</sup> Lind, William. 2004. "Understanding Fourth Generation War." *Military Review*. Sep-Oct 2004 pp. 12-6; US Marine Corps. 1998. MCWP 3-35.3 *Military Operations in Urbanized Terrain (MOUT)*. Washington, DC: Marine Corps. Warfighting Publication; Dept of Army and the Air Force. Dec 5 1990. Field Manual 100-20. "Military Operations in Low Intensity Conflict." Washington DC; Dept of the Army. Oct 19 1992. Field Manual No. 7-98. "Operations in a Low-Intensity Conflict." Washington, DC.

<sup>45</sup> De Vos, Jan. 2010. *Vienen desde lejos los torrentes: una historia de Chiapas*. Chiapas, Mexico: Consejo Estatal para las Culturas y las Artes de Chiapas.

<sup>46</sup> Indeed, the title of the one of the few book-length biographies of the city—Aura Marina Arriola's (1995) "Tapachula, 'la perla del Soconusco', ciudad estratégica para la redefinición de las fronteras" (*Tapachula, the "pearl of the Soconusco," strategic city for the redefinition of borders*)—even highlights its 'strategic' borderline positioning and potential challenge to political boundaries. See: Arriola, Aura Marina. 1995. Tapachula, "la perla del Soconusco", ciudad estratégica para la redefinición de las fronteras. Guatemala, GT: Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales.

<sup>47</sup> Isacson et al, 2014

<sup>48</sup> Isacson et al, 2015

<sup>49</sup> U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. 2012. "Meeting with Secretary Alejandro Poire Mexico's Secretariat of Governance (SEGOB)."

<sup>50</sup> Oak, Gillian S. 2015. *Building the Guatemalan Interagency Task Force Tecún Umán: Lessons Identified*. Santa Monica: RAND Corp.

<sup>51</sup> More sources on the biopolitical border include: Sparke, Matthew. 2006. "A Neoliberal Nexus: Economy, Security, and the Biopolitics of Citizenship on the Border." *Political Geography* 25: 151-180; Parrini, Rodrigo. 2015. "Biopolíticas del Abandono: Migración y Dispositivos Médicos en la Frontera Sur de México." *Nómadas* 111-127; Mbembe, Achille. 2003. "Necropolitics." Translated by Libby Meintjes. *Public Culture* 15(1): 11-40.

<sup>52</sup> Examples include: Ribando Seelke, Clare and Kristen Finklea. 2016. "US-Mexican Security Cooperation: The Mérida Initiative and Beyond." *Congressional Research Service*; Meyer, Peter and Clare Ribando Seelke. 2015. "Central America Regional Security Initiative: Background and Policy Issues for Congress." *Congressional Research Service*; Dept of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. 2016. *Congressional Budget Justification: Fiscal Year 2016*.

<sup>53</sup> Meyer, Peter and Clare Ribando Seelke, 2015.

<sup>54</sup> For example: Podkul, Jennifer and Ian Kysel. 2015. "Interdiction, Border Externalization, and the Protection of the Human Rights of Migrants." Submitted as written testimony to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. Oct 22 2015.

<sup>55</sup> Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes. May 20 2016. "Comunicado: Tercera muerte en el centro de detención de Tapachula." <http://www.sjmmexico.org.mx/comunicado-tercera-muerte-en-el-centro-de-detencion-de-tapachula/>

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<sup>56</sup> Human Rights Watch. Mar 2016. *Closed Doors: Mexico's Failure to Protect Central American Refugee and Migrant Children*; Brodzinsky, Sibylla. Oct 12 2015. "The migrants who fled violence for the US only to be sent back to their deaths." *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/12/deportation-migrant...>

<sup>57</sup> Isacson et al, 2015; Meyer and Seelke, 2015.

<sup>58</sup> Isacson et al, 2015.

<sup>59</sup> Isacson, Adam and Sarah Kinoshian. Apr 15 2016. "Which Central American Military and Police Units Get the Most U.S. Aid?" *Washington Office on Latin America*. <https://www.wola.org/analysis/which-central-american-military...>

<sup>60</sup> Carcamo, Cindy. "Elite Honduran Unit Works to Stop flow of Children to the U.S." *Los Angeles Times*, 9 Jul. 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-ff-honduras-border-20140709-story.html#page=1>; Carcamo, Cindy. "Wrenches Thrown into Careful Plans to flee Honduras," *Los Angeles Times*, 12 Oct. 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/mexico-americas/la-fg-ff-honduras-journey-narrative-20141012-1-story.html#page=1>. ; Frelick, Bill, Ian M. Kysel, and Jennifer Podkul. 2016. "The Impact of Externalization of Migration Controls on the Rights of Asylum Seekers and Other Migrants." *Journal on Migration and Human Security* Vol 4 No 4: 190-220.

<sup>61</sup> Munsing, Evan and Christopher Lamb. 2011. "Joint Interagency Task-Force South: The Best Known, Least Understood Interagency Success." *Institute for National Strategic Studies*. Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press; see also Main, Alexander. 2015; "Guatemala Creará Fuerza Militar con Apoyo de EEUU para Combatir Narcotráfico," Univision, March 31, 2012. As of November 14, 2014: <http://feeds.univision.com/feeds/article/2012-03-31/guatemala-creara-fuerza-militar-con>

<sup>62</sup> Oak, Gillian S. 2015. *Building the Guatemalan Interagency Task Force Tecún Umán: Lessons Identified*. Santa Monica: RAND Corp.

<sup>63</sup> Payan, Tony. 2006. *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars: Drugs, Immigration, and Homeland Security*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

<sup>64</sup> U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. 2012. "Meeting with Secretary Alejandro Poire Mexico's Secretariat of Governance (SEGOB)."

<sup>65</sup> Meyer and Seelke, 2015.