THE MILITARIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO BORDER REGION

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Abstract: The U.S.-Mexico border is a site of extensive militarization in both countries, although the direct intervention of the military and military-like police agencies is greater in Mexico than in the United States. The widespread, sloppy use of militarization concerning this region requires initial careful definitional comments. Then, militarization on the Mexican side of the border is examined, in particular the extreme intervention of the military since the 2006 Calderón presidency. The human rights consequences of this intervention are reviewed, as well as the involvement of the United States in Plan Mérida. U.S. militarization of the border is also considered, especially intensive surveillance and intelligence analysis in the framework of national security. The article closes by asking whether militarization serves social control, and if so, how coherent and cohesive it is. The key argument is that militarization is not an omniscient, omnipotent control strategy, but rather a repetitive and somewhat clumsy template used by U.S. political elites (and relatedly, Mexican elites) to address dynamic and disruptive challenges in Latin America and related regions of the United States.

Key words: Border. Migration. Drugs. U.S. and Mexican military. Social control.

A MILITARIZAÇÃO DA REGIÃO FRONTEIRIÇA ENTRE OS EUA E O MÉXICO

Resumo: A fronteira dos EUA e México é um local de extensiva militarização nos dois países, com a direta intervenção militar e crescentes serviços militares de controles tanto no México como nos EUA. O desleixo generalizado sobre a militarização relacionado com essa região exige cuidadosos comentários. Assim, a militarização no lado mexicano da fronteira é examinada, em particular à partir da extrema intervenção militar iniciada em 2006 com a presidência de Calderón. As consequências sobre os direitos humanos dessa intervenção são revistas, assim como o envolvimento dos Estados Unidos no Plano Mérida. A militarização dos EUA na fronteira é também considerada, especialmente a intensiva patrulha e os serviços de inteligência são analisados no contexto da segurança nacional. O artigo aborda e questiona como que a militarização serve para o controle social e este é como é coerente e coersivo. O argumeto chave é que a militarização não é só um controle estratégico ominiscente e onipotente, mas sim repetitivo e às vezes um modelo desastrado usado pelas elites politicas dos EUA (e de forma conexa pelas elites mexicanas) direcionado aos dinâmicos e pertubadores desafios da América Latina e regiões próximas dos Estados Unidos.

Palavras-chave: Fronteira. Migrações. Drogas. Militares dos EUA e do México. Controle social.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Mexico border region is witnessing a high degree of militarization in both countries, though each in distinct ways. This militarization occurs even though Mexico and the United States have a peaceful relationship with no substantial diplomatic-level disputes. Rather, it responds to major transnational social processes, such as unauthorized migration, the illegalized drug[1] guns-money business, and coercive control of rapidly growing cities on the Mexican side of the boundary. It has responded to and resulted in extensive direct physical violence and death in Mexico, indirect structural violence and death in the United States and Mexico (such as banditry and deaths in unauthorized migration through deserts and mountains), substantial human rights violations, and substantial (if poorly understood) increases in authoritarianism in civil society in both countries.

What exactly is militarization is not clear and obvious. Thinking about basic definitions — without insisting on narrow or rigid ones — is particularly important for a region where the term "militarization" has entered the discourse, especially on the left, in a vague and all-encompassing way, for any sort of strong central government activity. In a manner that actually impedes understanding, militarization among U.S. activists is used for all aspects of intensive border law enforcement. For example, is a large U.S. Border Patrol, a uniformed but civilian police force, an example of militarization? There are precise analytical ways in which it indeed is, as we will discuss later, and others in which such a term is misleading.

At the narrowest, militarization only involves those entities that a nation formally designates as part of its armed forces. But why would we defer so much to the state? While involving formal military units only in small roles, we should not ignore (for example) the military-like tactics, technologies, and activities used by civilian law enforcement agencies on both sides of the border. Restricting our topic to the formal military derives from a model of Westphalian states that set equivalent militaries against each other. This is actually rare; more common are militaries engaged in internal repression of civil society or conflict with non-state actors, like guerrillas or criminal organizations. Michael Klare and Peter Kornbluh (1988)

[1] From this point on in the article, we will refer to illegalized drugs, such as marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and methamphetamine, just as "drugs," even though other major psychoactive and health-affecting drugs are legalized (tobacco, alcohol, prescription opiates, etc.).

offered the covering term "low-intensity conflict," taken from the military's own literature, and this was applied to the situation at the U.S.-Mexico border by Timothy Dunn (1996; 2001), elaborated shortly below. Not only is low-intensity conflict a variable phenomenon and term, but so is militarization as a component of it. Hence, we will use a network-like definition with various phenomena being more or less militaristic, delineated in the broadest sense by contrasting militarization elements with formal justice-process based forms of policing and other social control[2].

The main task of this article is to describe in one place the many components of militarization happening in this region. The deeper task, explaining the militarization process occurring so extensively here, needs also to be done; toward this we offer some initial ideas and observations, though not a complete account. Our basic argument, building on Dunn (1996), is that border militarization is an attempt to control social turbulence brought about by rapid, unequal transformations of the border region. This starts with the awareness that the U.S.-Mexico borderlands have become a central region in global capitalist development in many regards, from extensive manufacturing of consumer goods to vast drug trafficking enterprises. This has led to very rapid, poorly planned urbanization in both countries, but especially Mexico. It is not so much that poverty is somehow uniquely extreme here (it is not), but that the region is highly dynamic, chaotic, and conflictual. Among the major processes occurring in the region are political democratization in Mexico; urban land, labor, and migrant rights struggles; illegalized drugs, guns and munitions, and money trafficking; urban criminality more widely (such as kidnapping and protection rackets); and unauthorized migration, human trafficking and protection rackets, and banditry.

Illegalization of various capitalist flows particularly stimulates militarization. For example, a number of drugs are illegal in both countries (at least in quantity) but they are partially tolerated in Mexico, enabling them to be grown, manufactured, processed, and/or transshipped there; the enforcement in the United States is more substantial, though still involving interesting instances of enforcement neglect. The illegalization of these drugs results

[2] In this discussion, we draw heavily on Timothy Dunn's pioneering book (1996). Dunn was careful and thoughtful in his use of evidence (mainly restricting himself to actual military activities on the United States side) and his low intensity conflict analysis, in turn built on Klare and Kornbluh (1988). It is frustrating that Dunn's careful, socially critical work launched a very sloppy rhetorical career of the word "militarization" in activist discourse about this region.

in high sales prices and thus revenues and profits, especially for the step of bringing them from Mexico across the border to the United States, and deeper into the interior. It also requires ways of conducting business outside of the formal contract/judicial system (e.g., by threatening and killing people, bribing politicians and officials, etc.). The purchase and smuggling of munitions and weapons from the United States (legal and loosely controlled there) to Mexico (mostly illegal and highly controlled there) parallels the drug trade in reverse, and unaccountable criminal organization money moves around in all directions. Migration is also partially illegalized (the total supply/demand flow being dichotomized roughly half and half into legal and unauthorized migration), resulting in similar if less extreme patterns to the drugs-guns-money complex. Military and police-military entities are both involved in and posed against those effects. Illegalization effects are thus fundamental to the border militarization process.

We are not arguing that militarization is a unified, cohesive response to challenges related to governance and social control, nor that it is done out of some omniscient and omnipotent systems logic. Rather, it seems to be a favored "hammer" to be used for every "nail," coherent strategy or not. Mexico for its own reasons has rapidly militarized the border after Calderón's election in 2006, but the United States quickly reinforced that Mexican decision with military aid, reflecting the U.S. reliance on militarism for conservative social engineering around the world. Meanwhile, U.S.-side militarization has complex roots, including a spike in xenophobic fear of Mexican migration, the bureaucratic interests of U.S. civilian law enforcement agencies but not the military itself, which on the whole has resisted these roles (PAYAN, 2006), and the tendency to treat the U.S. borderlands as akin to an external periphery undeserving of criminal justice with due process and rights. Broadly following the low-intensity conflict concept, though without implying political resistance or even violent conflict in all cases (e.g., unauthorized migration), we argue that militarization in the border region is an attempt to control complex social dynamics in highly coercive and authoritarian ways, with reduced democratic participation and absence of legal due process.

MILITARIZATION ON THE MEXICAN SIDE OF THE BORDER

If the term militarization is sometimes overused by activists and analysts critical of U.S. government agencies and their actions along the northern side of the U.S.-Mexico border, the concept of militarization is perhaps underutilized in relation to numerous forms of coercive and violent phenomena occurring on the southern (Mexican) side of the border. In this regard, it is worthwhile to remember the key role of generals or grassroots leaders in the Mexican revolution and the functioning of the modern Mexican state (CAMP, 1992). The military and rebel leaders (Carranza, Villa, Zapata, Obregón, Calles), and their causes, became the founders, controllers or symbolic ideological justification for the revolutionary government that emerged in the 1920s (KNIGHT, 1986; HART, 1989). Eventually, General Lázaro Cárdenas, a revered popular leader, became president and the most important architect of the PRI (Partido Revolucionario Institucional), a corporatist, populist, authoritarian party that controlled power in Mexico nearly unchallenged until 2000 (RIDING, 1985). High-ranking military officers and the military as an institution enjoyed tremendous power, resources and privilege within the political formation critics called the PRI/government, the one party state that was Mexico for most of the twentieth-century (CASTAÑEDA, 2011).

The PRI, memorably described by writer Mario Vargas Llosa as the "perfect dictatorship," maintained power through a clever mix of patronage, cooptation and repression (RUBIN, 1987). The Mexican military, along with the federal police and extra-judicial goon squads and hitmen, supplied the muscle that sustained the arrangement (ASTORGA, 2005). The unofficial deal was for the military to refrain from the barracks-based coups that plagued the rest of Latin America in exchange for massive budget support, judicial autonomy (such as their own secretive courts), and the freedom to engage in corruption, especially involving drug trafficking and tariff-evading smuggling of bulk goods and appliances (BAILEY; TAYLOR, 2009). The federal police, particularly a shadowy secret unit known as the Dirección Federal de Seguridad, performed a similar function of political repression and social control but with even higher levels of impunity and malfeasance (AGUAYO, 2011).

There were exceptions to what we might call the "pax Mexicana." In the early 1950s General Miguel Henríquez ran an unsuccessful independent presidential campaign against the hand-picked PRI candidate Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (RIDING, 1985). In 1988, Cuauthémoc Cárdenas, son of Lázaro and a former supporter of Henríquez, broke with the PRI and became a left-wing populist presidential contender (EDMONDS-POLI; SHIRK, 2012). The vastly popular Cárdenas appeared to win the election but after a week- long computer "crash" Carlos Salinas was declared the winner (CASTAÑEDA, 2011, p. 89). Cárdenas, though enjoying the backing of the military, was unwilling to unite with them in what could have (essentially) been a coup and which likely would have had majority support nationally. Despite its excesses, such as the 1968 Tlatelolco student massacre and the 1970s Dirty War against peasant rebels in Guerrero and Oaxaca in the 1970s, the military continued to be viewed as one of the most prestigious institutions in Mexican society (RIDING, 1985).

Military involvement in drug trafficking increased during the mid-1970s and onward with the decline of dissident political threats (SHANNON, 1988). During Operation Condor, a U.S. backed military campaign against Mexican marijuana growers and traffickers, the army ran roughshod over the marijuana fields of Sinaloa, Durango, Chihuahua and elsewhere. Soldiers committed numerous acts of arbitrary violence and human rights abuses against the civilian population. The main outcome was not the elimination of drug trafficking but the ouster of Miguel Angel Félix Gallardo federation capos from the Sierra Madre and their relocation in Guadalajara, Jalisco (SHANNON, 1988). The military thus assumed greater control of the pot-growing heartland of Mexico. The involvement of generals in the pot shipped from the Sierra to the U.S.-Mexico border and thence to U.S. consumers became more pronounced, epitomized by the proven connection between Amado Carrillo Fuentes, leader of the Juárez Cartel and General Jesús Gutiérrez Rebollo, head of the Mexican anti-narcotics effort (BOWDEN, 2002). The violent, corrupt precedent of military anti-drug campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s set the stage for future efforts that produced similar results in recent years.

The 1994 Zapatista rebellion, though immensely popular among activists worldwide, was largely a symbolic political or media event with little war per se (CASTAÑEDA, 2011). After initial fighting the Mexican military surrounded the Zapatista indigenous area removing any further chance of rebellion. The military continues to be a pillar of Mexican national identity vis-

à-vis the North American neighbor to the north, though little real threat of external invasion exists on either the northern or southern Mexican borders (RIDING, 1985).

In 2006 PAN (Partido Acción Nacional) candidate Felipe Calderón barely won yet another hotly contested presidential election. His first policy move was to embrace the military and launch a "war" on the drug trafficking cartels that have grown to control half or more of Mexican national territory (RAVELO, 2012). Eventually Calderón sent approximately 45,000 soldiers to combat cartels on their own turf in Tamaulipas, Michoacán, Chihuahua, Durango and other states, especially along the border (GRILLO, 2011). The military actually took full control for some time in the major border cities of Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juárez (GRILLO, 2011). These efforts have been widely condemned by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and human rights organizations in Mexico. The performance of the military in the drug war has been disastrous (CAMPBELL, 2011). The military has been unable to stop or even significantly impact most of the cartels and it has been accused of thousands of human rights abuses, including the commission of murders (in some cases involving car loads of innocent victims at checkpoints), forced disappearances or kidnappings, widespread torture, and general brutality (TURATI, 2011). The military campaign against cartels has provoked violence not stopped it. It has also produced cartel fragmentation leading to the proliferation of dozens of armed paramilitary groups. Moreover, some sectors of the military are obviously involved in protecting drug trafficking but nothing has been done to curb this (BOWDEN, 2011).

The starkest example of how military intervention in drug-related violence has backfired occurred in Ciudad Juárez where a fight between the Juárez Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel for control of the Juárez drug plaza broke out in 2008 after the arrest of a police chief for smuggling marijuana into the U.S. Sinaloa hitmen — with the support of corrupt military officers and federal and local policemen — began murdering Juárez cartel members, including municipal cops allied with the cartel (CAMPBELL, 2011). Homicides in Juárez skyrocketed from roughly 300 in 2007 to 1600 in 2008. Powerful street gangs allied with the two contending cartels joined the fray and Juárez became the murder capital of the world (BOWDEN, 2011). Things got so bad that President Calderón sent troops to take over Juárez. Martial law, however, did not solve the problem. Homicides went from 1600 in 2008 to 2700 in 2009. Additionally, Juárez residents reported hundreds of human rights violations by the military to Gustavo de la Rosa Hickerson,

the human rights ombudsman for Chihuahua state. The human rights violations consisted of illegal detentions, extortion, torture, forced disappearance, and murder. In the wake of the failure of the military to restore order in Juárez the federal police were put in charge of the city. Their efforts produced even more human rights violations, an outbreak of extortions, kidnapping, carjacking and all manner of criminality, and the homicide rate rose to 3100 in 2010 then subsided to 2100 (approximately) in 2011. Various deployments and retractions of the military and the federal police were unsuccessful. Eventually the public and civilian authorities demanded that both the military and federal police presence be lessened and that the city should be run by local civilians rather than by military and police officers imposed from outside Juárez (CAMPBELL, 2011).

As evidenced by the Juárez case, the concept of militarization should also be used to discuss the tremendous, arbitrary power of federal, state and local police forces vis-à-vis civil society. Major drug trafficking plazas such as Tijuana, Juárez, Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo and other cities have been controlled for long periods by the military, federal police or local police forces run by retired generals or coronels, such as the infamous Juárez police chief Julián Leyzaola Pérez who has run the city with an iron fist as he did formerly Tijuana (CAMPBELL, 2011). In both cities he has been accused of personally committing torture and murder and allowing the widespread practice of extreme violence to crush any opposition to his rule or punish alleged drug traffickers and common criminals.

In addition to the violent policies and behavior of the Mexican military and police agencies in the border region and elsewhere in Mexico the concept of "militarization can be applied fruitfully to the paramilitary organizations/cartels that have terrorized vast swaths of Mexican territory. Cartel members have committed horrible atrocities throughout the country including huge massacres, decapitations and other forms or gory mutilations, and street battles in the heart of Mexican cities (CAMPBELL, 2012). The Zetas, a bloody multi-purpose crime organization, founded in part by military deserters has employed high-powered weaponry, military tactics and discipline, and advanced telecommunication equipment to dominate the trafficking of cocaine and other drugs, take over the trade in undocumented immigrants, commit huge massacres, traffic in all manner of legal and illegal goods, steal oil from PEMEX (Petróleos Mexicanos) pipelines, and conduct wars against rival cartels and Mexican authorities

(GRAYSON; LOGAN, 2012). Other cartels, such as the Gulf Cartel and the Familia Michoacana, have used military insignia and uniforms as well as grenades, missile launchers, improvised tanks, etc. (CAMPBELL, 2009). In essence, cartels and street gangs—through military-like force--are the de facto authorities in about half the population of Mexico, including large parts of major border cities (CAMPBELL, 2011).

Plan Mérida is a large-scale military assistance program from 2007 to 2012 from the United States to Mexico (mainly) and several Central American and Caribbean countries (SEELKE; FINKLEA, 2011). $1.643 billion has been allocated to Mexico through 2011 and $282 million more is requested in the budget process. Overall Mérida resources may be allocated by the Mexican government throughout the country, including the border region. The main body of these resources are direct subsidies for military purchases by Mexico from the U.S. (by far the largest Mérida expenditure is Mexican purchases of U.S. helicopters), military training in intelligence and tactical operations, and military salaries. Only small amounts (several million dollars) have been allocated to long-term, civilian oriented reforms, such as Mexican judicial processes.

In Fiscal Year 2011 (2010-2011), a border-specific strategy was adopted by the two countries, including "Pillar Three: Creating a Twenty First Century Border"[3] and "Pillar Four: Building Strong and Resilient Communities[4]." Pillar Three primarily directs U.S. military/intelligence agency expertise, information, and operating assets to assist the Mexican military on the Mexican side of the border. Notable activities include U.S. military and intelligence agency operatives working within Mexican military and civilian units on intelligence training and analysis, and use of U.S. drone airplanes in surveillance within Mexican territory (MAZZETTI; THOMPSON, 2011). Pillar Four aims more at U.S. foreign aid funded social

[3] "The proposed 21st century border is based on (1) enhancing public safety via increased information sharing, screenings, and prosecutions; (2) securing the cross-border flow of goods and people; (3) expediting legitimate commerce and travel through investments in personnel, technology, and infrastructure; (4) engaging border communities in cross-border trade; and (5) setting bilateral policies for collaborative border management" (SEELKE; FINKLEA, 2011, p. 25).

[4] "This pillar is a relatively new focus for U.S.-Mexican cooperation, the overall goal of which is to build strong and resilient communities that can withstand the pressures of crime and violence. It includes existing programs in support of school-based 'culture of lawfulness' courses, as well as new 'cultural [sic] of lawfulness' courses that are being taught to Federal Police and state police in five northern border states. Pillar Four also includes ongoing Mérida-funded programs in the area of demand reduction. Those programs are helping to create a network to connect Mexico's prevention and treatment centers, to develop curricula for drug counselors and volunteers at the centers, and to help certify Mexican drug counselors" (SEELKE; FINKLEA, 2011, p. 28).

engineering of violent border cities; by 2010, $1 million had been spent via US AID (Agency for International Development) on an urban mapping program and community development projects in Ciudad Juárez (SEELKE; FINKLEA, 2011, p. 29-30), and other border cities are also foci of planning[5]. Nevertheless, these sorts of low intensity conflict, grey zone (military-civilian) social engineering projects in Plan Mérida are small in comparison to the large-scale delivery of traditional military funds, training, and equipment.

Mexico has its own, long-standing tradition of violent and authoritarian social control (though carefully dispersed and calibrated until the Calderón government), so we cannot simply attribute Mexican militarization to orders from the United States. However, Plan Mérida clearly does provide U.S. assistance, encouragement, and skills to that Mexican project of militarization. The fact that the social engineering side — as questionable as it is — is a poorly funded afterthought to the main military program also shows that U.S. political leadership envisions military intervention first, and social control second.

MILITARIZATION ON THE U.S. SIDE OF THE BORDER

Military operations and warfare have a deep history on this border, including the Mexican American War (1845-1848) that set the modern border and several military interventions and involvement (e.g., supply of weapons) during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Federal police forces, sometimes with quasi-military characteristics have had a presence at the border since the early twentieth century. However, the U.S. military had minimal involvement with border enforcement from 1920 to the 1980s the deeper history is covered in Dunn, (1996), Hernández, (2010). Hence, we will focus on the period since 1982, and especially since 1989, when the U.S. began explicit programs of providing military support to civilian law enforcement in the region (DUNN, 1996; 2001).

The initial focus of militarization was drug law enforcement. Military surveillance and intelligence was provided to civilian law enforcement concerning trafficking activities, techniques, people, and organizations. Gradually, the drug focus diffused into immigration enforcement, given that there is a broad regional overlap between drug and human movement

[5] Not all of this is Plan Mérida direct money, but it is associated with it.

routes, and more importantly, unauthorized migration has been treated politically in the United States as a problem of equal threat and urgency to large-scale drug transportation (a striking social fact, since this equation is not obvious). U.S. military involvement in civilian law enforcement (with one exception, discussed later) is governed by the Posse Comitatus Act, which forbids direct military enforcement of civilian laws (e.g., arrest); however, military activities can come right up to the very edge of actual arrest, which is significant in the contemporary enforcement worlds of long distance surveillance, advanced technology, and so forth.

A key step took place in 1989 with the establishment of Joint Task Force-6 (JTF-6, now Joint Task Force-North, JTF-N) at Fort Bliss, Texas. JTF-N will be analyzed at greater length later, but its basic function is as a broker between military units with specific skills and interests and civilian law enforcement agencies with specific needs. An example is use of military units conducting Listening Post/Observation Post (forward reconnaissance) operations to supply information to the Border Patrol about drug transportation or undocumented border entry. There was a boom in military operations of that nature from 1989 to 1997. Much of the military leadership opposed this, seeing it as risky, resource-costly, and involving loss of status (PAYAN, 2006), but the militarization of the border was essentially a <u>political</u> program, designed to seem strong in the face of mass media reports of drug trafficking and consumption in the United States, and of mass unauthorized migration.

The military retreated from its 1989-1997 surge after an incident in Redford, Texas, a remote area of the border, where a U.S. citizen was shot and killed by a small military unit in a forward reconnaissance position. The military's own report on the situation identified several systematic problems, in particular that troops were not trained for or oriented toward operating in non-war, civilian settings (DUNN, 2001). The standard military ground forces (Army, Marines) have stayed out of direct law enforcement operations at the border since that date, but other elements of the military have maintained continuity (involvement in surveillance and intelligence) or have returned to the active operations since that date.

In 2001, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have provided a rationale for involving the military in border security. It has been difficult in politics to question the presence of the military in the region in this context. However, the 9/11 terrorists did not cross this border, and no other ones have either (LEIKEN; BROOKE, 2006). The actual border enforcement stance of the U.S.

government, its specific targets and tactics, including military involvement, has maintained great continuity from before 9/11 to the period after it, indicating clearly that counter-terrorism does not explain border militarization (HEYMAN; ACKLESON, 2009)[6]. At the discursive level, however, national security provides a powerful frame for the reinterpretation of civilian policy issues — above all, transnational drug trafficking organizations and the imagined threat of violence coming from Mexico, but also unauthorized migration — and then promote both militarization or intensive civilian policing on securitization of societal issues, see Heyman, (2008); Huysmans, (2006); Pallitto and Heyman (2008).

The National Guard in the United States has a distinct social and political role. It emerged as a means of military repression of social unrest, especially labor, and continues to be used in that capacity periodically. It has a dual command structure, in which state governors can order use of the Guard, with civilian law enforcement authority, while it also can operate as units of national military, without law enforcement powers. Ideologically, due to this history, it is often presented by politicians as suited to domestic control roles.

In early 2006, the New Mexico and Arizona governors assigned small numbers of National Guard troops to police-support duties near the Mexican border. This was responsive to a political context of intensified debate over unauthorized migration in the United States, with a particular panic about the Mexican border; migration numbers were high, but the region was quite safe in terms of violence and security. In June 2006, the National Guard border assignment was federalized, again responding to the political situation. Over the 2006-2008 period, up to 6,000 Guards were assigned to the border. While some operations involved logistical support for the Border Patrol (e.g., fence building, road construction, equipment repair), it appears from limited evidence that the main use of troops was frontal Listening Post/Observation Post Operations. Mainline military light armor units ("Strykers") also conducted training exercises near the border during 2006-2007.

[6] The National Guard was rapidly assigned to land border ports of entry after 9/11, where they assisted port inspectors with the added logistical tasks of intensified inspections. This is a relatively minor exception to the generalization in the text.

The National Guard was largely withdrawn from the border in mid-2008. The U.S. military command, under the personnel stress of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, has long wanted the Guard for its own uses, and has resisted border deployments. In 2010, the Guard was redeployed to the border, again for reasons widely interpreted as responding to politics (concern about violence in Mexico and opposition to unauthorized Mexican migration). Again, the Guard mainly was used in fixed positions to watch for border crossings — and then to call civilian authorities to make arrests — a tactic the government itself has determined is remarkably expensive and inefficient (BOOTH, 2011). In early 2012, the U.S. central government again proposed to reduce Guard deployment at the border to 300 troops, this time to operate surveillance drone airplanes (ASSOCIATED PRESS, 2011). However, active duty troops continue to be assigned to border roles, including an unspecified-role assignment of troops from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Arizona and New Mexico (VALDEZ, 2012).

This assignment was done by Joint Task Force North (JTF-N) at Fort Bliss. JTF-N arranges military support for U.S. civilian agencies on drug enforcement missions, both in the United States (where it can target U.S. civilians) and Mexico (WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA, 2011). For example, JTF-N provides tactical intelligence analysis (documents do not clarify if this civilian intelligence only or also includes military sources) to help the civilian agencies to process the information and develop more detailed and realistic operational plans. JTF-N sends groups of instructors who offer courses to federal, state and local law enforcement agencies all over the country, reportedly not teaching lethal or advanced tactical skills. JTF-N has regular meetings with the Mexican Army and Navy, and the Public Security Department (SSP), but does not do training in Mexico. Because their mission must have a "counter-drug nexus," JTF-N personnel are not looking for migrants, though if they detect any, they report the information to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The specific focus on the official U.S. military at the border understates the militarization of the border. Whether specific aspects of civilian law enforcement are de facto military in their character is often a matter of judgment; we offer two lines of analysis. One is those aspects of law enforcement in which interdiction, arrest, and punishment is direct, and there is no judicial process, actual or potential. This is increasingly the case at the border. Historically, people could be turned away from the United States when applying for admission at ports of entry, termed the

power of "expedited removal." In the last two decades, the Border Patrol has been given expedited removal within 100 miles of the boundary, the discretion to remove unauthorized persons from the country without any formal legal or administrative process at all, in some cases with a record of formal deportation. Formal deportation causes a bar to future legal immigration for ten years, and re-entry in the face of this bar is a felony crime. Arguably, this zero judicial process activity is closer to military action than civilian law enforcement.

The other line of analysis focuses on military-derived technologies and related operations. While elements like the 800 mile border wall, motion sensors, night vision devices, and so forth all have military origins or references, an important and illustrative domain is surveillance and intelligence collection. The United States operates, within the Department of Defense, the largest data gathering organizations in the world, the National Security Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency. They gather a vast range of information on persons, communications, and physical movements. Almost all of this is highly classified and unknown in the public sources to which we have access. In addition, civilian law enforcement centers — some of which are described below — assemble and analyze surveillance and intelligence data for the border. How much is shared between civilian and military is unknown, though the close proximity of many of these units at Fort Bliss, Texas, in El Paso, suggests that some relationships exist.

At Fort Bliss is the Army's 204th Military Intelligence Battalion, a component of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) that carries out aerial reconnaissance throughout the Americas, including "homeland security missions for the El Paso and New Mexico's southwest border patrol sectors." As of 2011, the 204th's border-zone flights are manned, not drones (WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA, 2011). However, drone airplanes (unmanned airplanes) are an important surveillance device used by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), the main civilian border law enforcement agency. Drones are used to take intensely detailed visual pictures (including in low light) and guide Patrol officers to interdict crossing people and drugs. Three Predator-B drones are at Libby Airfield in Sierra Vista, Arizona while Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, in east Texas, hosts two Predator-Bs and a Guardian, a maritime variant of the Predator-B (WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA, 2011). Drones from the U.S. overfly Mexican territory, and supply information to the Mexican military and some police agencies. In addition, CBP operates or has operated in the

past a number of military surveillance air devices, many with low level radar capacity, such as military AWACS aircraft (Airborne Warning and Control System – equipped Boeing 707s) and tethered Aerostat Balloons with cameras and radars to monitor air traffic, as well as Customs Bureau P-3 interceptors and helicopters to interdict unauthorized air entries (ANDREAS, 2000, p. 46, 52).

This data, plus other information gathered from computer and telephonic communication, ground enforcement operations, etc., feeds into a constellation of civilian intelligence analysis and diffusion centers, some of which have military involvement (not always publicly documented, however). Notably, the El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC) is a DEA-managed facility on the grounds of Fort Bliss that includes 21 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, including Defense Department agencies, who share intelligence with each other. EPIC's primary focus is drug interdiction, but is also gathers information about potential terrorist, organized crime, human trafficking or similar law-enforcement threats. Generally, it does not include investigate would-be migrants to the United States, though it does share information it gathers about such activity. A new Border Intelligence Fusion Section (BIFS) at EPIC serves as a clearinghouse of information, increasing intelligence-sharing with the Defense Department and the broader U.S. intelligence community "to create a common intelligence picture" (WASHINGTON OFFICE ON LATIN AMERICA, 2011). A number of other intelligence centers are described in the Washington Office on Latin America report, several with bilateral intelligence exchange relations with Mexico, though often tightly restricted. In summary, the U.S.-Mexico border is intensively monitored, and is the setting for numerous national security or quasi-security agencies. Their criteria for societal surveillance and operational recommendations and actions remain largely unknown.

CONCLUSIONS

There is little doubt that both the United States and Mexico use militarization as a means of social control an argument first made in Dunn (1996)[7]. Even without a lengthy review, it is clear that the use of illegalized drugs and the migration of unauthorized laborers and family

[7] We use social control as a characterization of power relations aimed at stabilizing existing social arrangements, without assuming the conservative social theory that social control is necessary or desirable.

members are complex, civilian social phenomena, and that militarization has been a primary response. However, wider questions about militarization remain. Is militarization a well-envisioned and well-organized, coherent control response, or is it more incomplete and fragmented? And does militarization respond to broader social and cultural changes in the borderlands — operating as a means of repression, control, and governance — above and beyond its overt agenda of drug and migration enforcement? The answers to the questions are by no means definite and certain, but we have some suggestions.

The U.S.-Mexico borderlands, especially the Mexican side, have grown in a rapid, dynamic, and in some ways poorly planned and conducted fashion. This region, once a minor area of petty smuggling and inexpensive tourism, has become since 1965 the focus of world-scale capitalist investment, manufacturing, and trade. Over a million workers labor in export-oriented manufacturing plants (*maquiladoras*), often for world-scale corporations. Intercontinental trade has surged, especially after the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The U.S.-Mexico part of that trade moves through land border ports of entry. Long distance migratory flows cross through the region, going from interior Mexico to the interior United States, as well as local migration from border Mexican states to border U.S. communities. As a result, there has been substantial population growth on both sides of the boundary, including informal settlements on the U.S. side called *colonias*, but above all, massive and rapid urbanization in Mexico, both planned and unplanned (ANDERSON; GERBER, 2008). Growing so rapidly, there have been few inherited patterns of domination, thus presenting complex terrains of contestation. Taken together, there are vast issues of governance and social order in the borderlands of both nations.

It thus makes superficial sense to assume that militarization and related intensive policing are coherent mechanisms of social control in this context. Certainly, some social control effects can be detected. The explosion of violence in border Mexico that followed Calderón's deployment of the military against drug cartels has provided a guise for coercive threats against and murders of social justice activists. Repression goes well beyond its ostensible, criminal targets. On the U.S. side, violent repression is rare, but military and police jobs, much desired in poor communities, shape the normal social and cultural fabric of local life (HEYMAN, 2002).

Perhaps less efficacious, military and police agencies energetically indulge in publicity and community activities, some directed toward children and adolescents.

At the same time, militarization may well reduce social control in other ways. This is most obvious in Mexico, where Calderón's policies have led to a cataclysm of violence and ungovernability, especially in the border region. Admittedly, the global capitalist economy has thrived amid the suffering, and social justice struggles have been set back. The overall project of control, however, can hardly be termed successful on the Mexican side. In the U.S., there actually has been increased regional resentment of the national center and widespread political dissent against it, subsequent to the imposition of heavy-handed police and military operations, such as the border wall e.g., compare Vila, (2000), research done in 1994 to Heyman, (2008), Maril, (2011), research 2006-2008. Admittedly, the pro-state cultural effects described in the preceding paragraph continue to have significant effects, but we cannot say that the social control project has successfully imposed hegemony on U.S. border society and politics.

The bigger problem with the social control account of militarization — and it is important to keep in mind that we think broadly it provides important insights — is that it is too comprehensive and uniform. Campbell (2011) has pointed out that the various processes that have come together to shape the contemporary Mexican-side border, especially the criminal violence there, are not simply unified but rather interact in complicated ways. In other words, the various tasks and projects of social control are not simple. Likewise, many aspects of the militarization are not readily connected to wider dilemmas of social control — such as labor stabilization and repression for this world-scale working class — without more compelling evidence and analysis than we have now. Rather, we propose that militarization, and related aspects of intensive policing, forms a template by which the United States approaches dynamic and conflictive social processes outside of its borders, especially in Latin America (MENJÍVAR; RODRÍGUEZ, 2005; SCHOULTZ, 1998). This reinforces tendencies toward repressive authoritarianism internal to Mexico. The use of this U.S. model is clear in Plan Mérida, as explained earlier. Arguably, it is also applied specifically at or near the border with Latin America, on issues conceptualized as coming from Latin America (true or false), such as migration and drugs, and with a population racially framed as Latin American. Transformational social change, we are suggesting, presents control demands that the two states are not fully

capable of understanding or addressing, and they tend to use a simple, militaristic response over and over. In our view, then, militarization is less cohesive and coherent than clumsy and repetitive, with terrible results in terms of violence and human rights. A famous saying is that to a man with a hammer, everything looks like a nail. Of course, this is just a hypothesis, and we have hardly proven it; that is the task for further investigation, critique, and action.

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