

Popular Geopolitics and North American Borders in Global Context: Identifying the »Borders that Count« in Post 9 / 11 America

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RESÜMEE

Der Beitrag untersucht den öffentlichen Diskurs über die Grenzen der USA, wie er im Rahmen der neuen geopolitischen Ordnung nach dem 11. Septmeber 2001 geführt wurde. Es wird argumentiert, dass die Bestimmung der US-amerikanischen Grenze nur mit Hilfe eines weitergefassten Blickes auf nordamerikanische Sicherheitsfragen und die Auseinandersetzung um die Rolle der USA in einer globalisierten Welt plausibel analysiert werden kann. Es kann gezeigt werden, dass die neuen Diskurse alte Grenzen und Sicherheitsargumente wieder verwenden und gleichzeitig die Art der Bedrohung und der daran geknüpften Legitimationsstrategien neu erfunden wird. Die US-amerikanischen *frontiers* wie auch die Grenzen ihrer Hegemonie werden im Zusammenhang mit sich verändernden Weltordnungen ständig neu konstruiert. Der Beitrag hebt dabei schwerpunktmäßig auf jene Periode seit dem Zusammenbruch der Sowjetunion ab, als der frühere Präsident George Bush Sr. zu Beginn der neunziger Jahre den Beginn einer »Neuen Weltordnung« erklärte. Es wird untersucht, in welcher Form internationale Grenzen in diesem Diskurs in ein hierarchisches Verhältnis zueinander gesetzt werden und vergleicht diese intersubjektiven Grenz-Bilder mit der politischen Karte des 21. Jahrhunderts. Hervorgehoben wird, dass der relative Bedeutungsverlust oder -zuwachs jeder der betroffenen Grenzen – sowohl nach Süden als auch nach Norden – auf die zugrundeliegende Vorstellung von einer geopolitischen »Neuen Weltordnung« vereist, die zwar eine Besonderheit der US-amerikanischen Diskussion ist, gleichzeitig aber eine nachhaltige Wirkung auf die Grenzbildungsprozesse auf dem nordamerikanischen Kontinent insgesamt hat. Volkstümliche Imaginationen der Grenze und diskursiv behauptete Gefahren, die an den Rändern »Amerikas« lauerten, sind höchst wirksame Instrumente bei der Unterstützung von Hegemonie- und Eindämmungsstrategien. Gleichzeitig haben sich Grenzen im Verlauf des 19., 20. und 21. Jahrhunderts immer in Abhängigkeit zu ihrer wahrgenommenen strategischen Bedeutung verschoben und verändert. Der

Beitrag geht davon aus, dass es einen weiteren nordamerikanischen und globalen Kontext der US-amerikanischen Grenzen nach dem 11. September 2001 gibt, den es zu verstehen gilt, um der Besonderheit heutiger Grenzregionen und dem Transnationalismus des 21. Jahrhunderts Rechnung zu tragen.

Introduction

It has been a conceptually fertile few years for critical geopolitics in North America, because of the open-ended discourse concerning terrorism and security under the George W. Bush administration. There is a rich data base of rhetoric to draw from, a virtual gold mine of narratives in support of a geopolitical framework in which the world is seen as a field for play of U. S. interventionist policies in the process or reworking conventional East-West relations and superpower status. The colorful rhetoric and the rationalized narratives seem only to thinly disguise the U. S. project of global hegemony through economic and military coercion.¹ This indeed has been popularized geopolitics at its best: a geopolitics rife with what Blacksell has called »dogmatism and prescription«,² while demonstrating, through concrete examples, the direct linkage between the geopolitics of domination and the construction of boundaries. It represents a modern day »Geopolitik« discourse, »crude and self-serving«, as it imagines what amounts to a natural division of global power.³ Indeed, this is as Flint suggests, a period where the act of juggling political need and ideological values in support of national and identity narratives has informed much official and popularized commentary concerning the Iraq invasion, and also highlighted the importance of rhetorical borders, if not real borders.⁴ Agnew would even go so far as to suggest that the contemporary era U. S. visions of a unipolar world has its roots in the mantle of modern European hegemony to which the U. S. has become heir in the 20th century, and supports a perspective on U. S. hegemony which is omnipresent in the geopolitics of the late 20th and early 21st century.⁵ As such, it stands to reason that popularized geopolitical accounts support the current structure in which global economic domination follows from super-power status.

But this is no »natural« succession or logical outcome of globalization. Rather it has been carefully constructed. An important part of the construction involves the definition of where and how the edges of U. S. hegemony are to be defined or redefined – beginning with the frontiers of the sovereign state, to the margins of U. S. geopolitical influence in continental North America and even the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, U. S. foreign policy in the Caribbean and in the Arctic makes clear its status and ensures hegemony

1 J. Agnew, *Geopolitics Re-visioning World Politics*, New York 2003; J. Agnew, *Hegemony: The New Shape of Global Power*, Philadelphia 2005.

2 M. Blacksell, *Political Geography*, London 2006, p. 147.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 146.

4 C. Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics: Tensions, Conflicts and Resolutions*, London 2006.

5 J. Agnew, *Geopolitics* (note 1).

within the post-Cold War order in North America and the Western Hemisphere, and that Cold War narratives such as the Cuban threat had to be reasserted and rewritten for the New World Order context.⁶ The same is true of approaches towards border policy and security within North America. For example, a rough count of political borders and borderlands in North America suggests that there are now approximately a dozen international boundaries (land and maritime) which border North America, some of which (like that with Russia) were instrumental spatializing threat and security boundary under the previous Bipolar World Border. Yet in the first decade of the 21st century, U. S. geopolitical discourse identifies only two states – Mexico and Canada – which are clearly separated by increasingly well-defined and symbolically demarcated boundaries, in addition to two shadowy and emerging frontiers situated to the north and south of these respective countries which have proved resilient to the direct machinations of U. S. homeland security management. These spectral boundaries cannot be ignored, however, when the bigger picture of North American security boundaries is probed.

By spectral boundaries I mean less the well-defined border regions being reconsidered and recycled in US policy circles and within the popular imagination in context of southern Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean region, under the rubric of the »Third Border«, as well as that of the circumpolar region, the latter under the auspices of a »continental security perimeter«. ⁷ The discourses associated with the conceptual delimitation of these new security frontiers suggest that these are both new borderlines defined in new places and in unprecedented ways, at the same time that they are reconstructed and recycled historical claims about security concerns and a »far enemy« for North American democracies.⁸

6 H. N. Nicol, *The Geopolitical Discourse of Helms-Burton*, in: H. N. Nicol (ed), *Canada, the US and Cuba: Helms-Burton and Its Aftermath*, Kingston 1999, pp. 93–111; L. Heininen/H. N. Nicol, *The Importance of Northern Dimension Foreign Policies in the Geopolitics of the Circumpolar North*, in: *Geopolitics*, 12 (2007) 1, pp. 1133–1165.

7 T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars: Drugs Immigration and Homeland Security*, New York 2006; D. Villafuerte Solís, *The Southern Border of Mexico in the Age of Globalization*, in: E. Brunet-Jailly (ed), *Borderlands: Comparing Border Security in North America and Europe*, Ottawa 2007, pp. 311–350; L. Heininen/H. N. Nicol, *The Importance of Northern Dimension Foreign Policies* (note 6).

8 See, for example, H. N. Nicol, *The Geopolitical Discourse* (note 6); L. Heininen/H. N. Nicol, *The Importance of Northern Dimension Foreign Policies* (note 6).

9 The D.E.W. Line grew out of a detailed study made by a group of the nation's scientists in 1952 – the Summer Study Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The study focused on »the vulnerability of the U.S. and Canada to air attack, and their recommendation was that a Distant Early Warning line be built across our Arctic border as rapidly as possible [...]« (for a popularized account see: L. T. Harris on <http://www.lswilson.ca/dewhist-a.htm>).



Figure 1: Approximate location of the in the Distant Early Warning (D.E.W.) Line of the Cold War Era in North America (for more details see Figure 3).⁹

The historical U.S. Cold War focus upon the »Caribbean Lake«, the »domino effect« of policy concerns with U.S. Central America in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, which went to the heart of the US interventions in Central America and structured its relationship to Cuba,¹⁰ has been replaced in U.S. policy circles by a vaguer north-south agenda which targets global terror, undocumented migration and narcotics stemming from Mexico's southern border and the broader Caribbean region.¹¹ In this sense, the new border discourses recycle old boundaries and arguments about security, but reinvent the nature of the threat and the legitimating discourses.¹²

To the south, for instance, new security concerns under the auspices of Homeland Security suggest the need for a security perimeter in North America, focused upon a comprehensive southern border with Central America and the Caribbean, while a more subtle discourse attempts to link the northern frontiers of the continent to a similar and broader security zone in the north.

10 See *Cuba and the Caribbean: Regional Issues and Trends in the Post-Cold War Era*, edited by Joseph S. Tulchin, Andres Serbin and Rafael Hernandez. Wilmington, Del. 1997.

11 T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7); D. Villafuerte Solís, *The Southern Border of Mexico* (note 7).

12 H. N. Nicol, *Neoliberalism and Caribbean Integration: The Role of the ACS in Restructuring Borderlines*, in: H. N. Nicol/I. Townsend-Gault (eds), *Holding the Line: Borders in a Global World*, Vancouver 2005, pp. 159–179; H. N. Nicol, *The Canada-U.S. Border After September 11th: The Politics of Risk Constructed*, in: *Journal of Borderland Studies*, 21 (2006) 1, pp. 47–68; T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

The historical context and recycling of these concerns is obvious, however, even as the new security contexts are identified. The circumpolar North is a case in point. Traditional security concerns, focusing on military security in the North American Arctic, are reminiscent of the Cold War. The Cold War period saw the construction of a »Defensive Early Warning« or »D.E.W. Line« during the Cold War (between 1957–1988), as part of the massive infrastructure program whereby the US government constructed roads, radar and military bases in the North American Arctic and sub-Arctic, in conjunction with the Canadian Government and military, designed to protect North America from invading Soviet missiles and planes. The D.E.W. Line (see Figure 1) placed the circumpolar North, principally the Canadian Arctic, in the position of the first line of defense between the superpowers.¹³ Since then, this border has diminished in importance as a front against the other Cold War superpower, namely the USSR, and the D.E.W. line has been dismantled, and a massive clean up of military waste and dismantling of former military bases has been underway for over two decades.

At the same time as the Arctic diminished in important, however, the Third Border emerged in the 1990s as an important security focus in terms of neoliberal trade paradigms and narcotics programs with which the U.S. hoped to engage its Caribbean neighbors.¹⁴ By the beginning of the 21st century, however, the circumpolar North was back in the picture, now perceived as part of a broader »security perimeter« of North America and a region vulnerable enough to require a new military »Northern Command« strategy.

Mindful of such changes, this paper focuses upon the new ranking which has emerged since the demise of the Soviet Union and the early 1990s, when former President George Bush Sr. declared the »New World Order«. It explores the new prioritization of international borders within North America, and compares these intersubjective boundaries with those of the twenty-first century political map. It argues that the geopolitical relative importance or lack of importance of each of these borders reveals an underlying »New World Order« geopolitics which, while specific to the U.S. security debate, has had a significant impact upon North American bordering practices in general. These geo-

13 The Distant Early Warning or D.E.W. (Figure 1) was a chain of 63 radar and communication systems which were linked over a 3,000 kilometers area stretching from the northwest coast of Alaska to the eastern shore of Baffin Island, including the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Labrador.

14 The Bush Administration offered as examples of its collaborative plans the following initiatives:

- 20 million in HIV/AIDS funding for the Fiscal Year 2002 which represents a tripling of U.S. HIV/AIDS prevention and education funding.
- Establish a teacher training »Center For Excellence« to boost teacher skills and performance thereby enhancing regional capacity to adapt to the globalized economy.
- Increase funding for Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation efforts to shield critical commercial and environmental infrastructure from natural disasters, such as hurricanes.
- Provide assistance to improve regional civil aviation oversight infrastructure and mechanisms, increasing safety of air traffic for greater regional trade, commerce, and tourism.
- Provide additional funding for critical areas of law enforcement cooperation, such as anti-money laundering, professional development of police and prosecutors, and anti-corruption training and assistance throughout the Caribbean.

See G. W. Bush, Fact Sheet Caribbean Third Border Initiative, April 2001, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/04/20010423-5.html>.

politics may well derive from Homeland Security and formal U.S. government policies, but they are also incorporated into the popular press and public opinion, as well as acted upon by neighboring countries, within and outside of North America. Not surprisingly, they also reinforce the U.S. position in a continental and perhaps hemispheric economic, political and security regime. Popular images of borders, and discourse dangers lurking at the margins of »America« are pivotal instruments in supporting the policies of hegemony and containment, while over the course of the 19th, 20th and 21st century borders have shifted and evolved in response to their perceived strategic importance, as signified by these changing geopolitical discourses. Such images do work, they reflect, scrutinize and most importantly authorize the allocation of time, money and resources to reinvigoration, reinvention and restructuring of existing borderlines to suit new times and discourses. Yet at the same time they are fundamentally tied to U.S. hegemony projects, and indeed constitute part and parcel of how the U.S. increasingly exerts its geopolitical codes on neighboring North American countries and allies.

In making this claim, this paper thus suggests that there is a broader North American and global context to U.S. »Post 9/11« borders that needs to be understood if we are to appreciate the nature of its contemporary borderlands and the nature of a new 21st century transnationalism. It explores the ranking or prioritization of international borders within the U.S., in terms of the construction of new rhetorical and physical boundaries which is clearly focused upon the realities of the 21st century and the Bush administration's »War on Terror«, but also reflects the realities of integrated continental economies.

New borders for new world orders

Kolossov and O'Loughlin have argued that the end of the 20th century saw a new relevance for the study of borders, and reinforced the fact that globalization itself contributes to the resiliency of national identities and territorialization.¹⁵ Yet, they suggest that it must also be understood that such resiliency occurs in the context of hegemonic structures which are global in nature. By extension, this means for North America that despite the signing of the British North America Act in 1867 (when Canada became established as a territorial state) and despite the establishment of the Mexican-American border in 1848, most of the dominant geopolitical discourses in support of adjustments to border perception and management in North America have focused upon establishing the territorial limits of the United States. Thus, much of the discourse and strategic importance of North American borders has been associated with U.S. geopolitical aspirations, and nation-building. Indeed, when the author of this paper recently conducted interviews with Department of Homeland Security officials, discussion focused on exactly this topic – how North American borders must suit American security imperatives.

15 V. Kolossov / J. O'Loughlin, *New borders for new world orders: Territorialities at the fin-de-siecle*, in: *Geojournal*, 44 (1998) 3, pp. 259–273.

Payan also makes this very clear in his analysis of the three phases of U. S. border construction with Mexico, which he aptly titles the three U. S.-Mexican border wars.¹⁶ During the nation-building, territorial and sovereignty aspects of border definition were very instrumental to America's neighbors in terms of emerging territorial and sovereignty discourses associated with continentalism (Canada, Mexico, and those South American and European powers which have territories proximate to U. S. soil in the Caribbean). On the other hand discussion of borders in North America have for the most part been dominated by a U. S.-centered discourse associated with hegemonic aspirations and the ideologies of »Manifest Destiny«. »Manifest Destiny« defines the historical foundation for an American hemispheric »neighborhood strategy« of the type identified by Slater, or Agnew, which has been accompanied by discursive and political processes supportive of U. S. hegemony and domination in the Western Hemisphere and beyond.¹⁷

But foreign policies, international relations and hegemonic structures are also the result of popularized geopolitical accounts – world pictures as Tuathail has called them which have the end result of reinforcing the status quo.¹⁸ This includes not only the way in which international relations are structured, but the basis of foreign policy itself. They also contain local fundamentalisms or beliefs which are unquestionable and universalized within specific administrative regimes and popularized discourses. Such truths are also, as Tuathail has reminded us in his subsequent work, performative, they legitimate action, and vice versa. Indeed they require it. Only if new border politics are rooted in substantive claims about threat levels to »homeland security« which originate in the territories beyond North American borders can become the site for hegemonic discourses about U. S.-American claims in North America (in ways which go beyond the delimitation and demarcation processes which have dominated the historical bordering process). In other words, a »homeland« must be invented which is substantially different from that occupied by Americans within the continental USA.

This has clearly been an ongoing project in the late 20th century. In recent decades globalized geopolitical discourses have intercepted and reworked U. S. domestic agendas, globalizing them and making them seem universalized and incontrovertible.¹⁹ This conflation of U. S. domestic and foreign policy agendas is one of the most tangible discourses of the second half of the 20th century, associated with the rise of »America« to superpower and indeed hyper-power status. All this suggests that there is a broader North American historical, global and popularized rationale for foreign policy agendas which requires compliance and cooperation from neighboring states.²⁰ »Post 9/11« bor-

16 T. Payan, *The Three U. S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

17 D. Slater, *Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial: Rethinking North South Relations*, Oxford 2004; J. Agnew, *Geopolitics* (note 1); J. Agnew, *Hegemony* (note 1).

18 T. W. Luke/G. Ó. Tuathail, *Global Flowmations, Local Fundamentalisms and Fast Politics: America in an Accelerating World Order*, in: A. Herod/G. Ó. Tuathail/S. M. Roberts, *An Unruly World?*, New York 1998., pp. 116–134.

19 T. W. Luke/G. Ó. Tuathail, *Global Flowmations* (note 18); D. Slater, *Geopolitics* (note 16); J. Agnew, *Hegemony* (note 1).

20 H. N. Nicol, *The Canada-U. S. Border* (note 12).

ders need to be understood in continental and indeed hemispheric context in order to appreciate the nature of its contemporary North American borderlands and the nature of a new 21st century transnationalism, particularly in the wake of trade relationships such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the new »smart border« or »shared border« type agreements now developing between Canada, the United States and Mexico.²¹ Indeed, borders have been very responsive and sensitive to these new geopolitical discourses, since they have been directly linked to cross-border processes like trade, management of immigration and securitization. In many cases these borders have been reconstructed to reflect political and public discourses which, already having their contours substantively in place along the Canadian and Mexican border, even before 9/11, their strategic importance was re-evaluated in post-9/11 geopolitical terms, like balancing the threats to U.S. homeland security with the potential disaster of hindered economic cross-border flows upon the continental economy.²² Such is the stuff of CNN and Fox News, or the »CISNEWS« circulated in newsletters circulated and published by the Center for Immigration Studies, in Washington D.C. The latter, for example, offers two strands of news – or two newsletters – one focused upon the problem of Mexican immigration, the other upon problems associated with the remaining immigration from and »porous borders« with the rest of the world. The widespread and uncritical acceptance of this perspective can also be illustrated by a comment made to the author by an American undergraduate geography student, who having completed a basic World Regional Geography course, much appreciated the fact that his academic engagement with geography had provided him with the ample opportunity to identify »all the other countries out there which pose a threat to us«. Quite clearly this is a new and increasingly wide-spread view which Americans have begun to adopt in relation to the world at large. The threat involves the conflation of existing borders to the contours of perceived 21st century terrorist threat, so that the political map becomes instead a roadmap of insecurity.

This constitutes quite a new level of anxiety and new spatializations concerning threat. Historically, the borders that »counted« in Cold War North America were those which essentially organized the continent into a bloc facing a common northern communist foe, or a southern communist foe in the case of socialist Central American countries. Prior to the Central American Wars of the 1970s and 1980s, when countries in Central America struggled with coups, socialism, repression and American resistance and intervention to oust perceived »communist regimes« in countries like Nicaragua, where, for example, like President Reagan's launched a covert war against the Sandinista government, the Mexican border was virtually invisible. Although there is clear documentation of the function of this border in terms of the regulation of Mexican labour under Cold War conditions, the Mexican border did not »rank« as an important strategic concern

21 D. Drache, *Borders Matter: Homeland Security and the Search for North America*, Halifax 2004.

22 V. Konrad/H. N. Nicol, *Boundaries and Corridors: Rethinking the Canada-United States Borderlands in the Post 9/11 Era* (=Canadian American Public Policy Series, No. 60) 2004.

under Cold War geopolitical order.²³ Threats from the east, north and west represented the spectrum of risks that faced North Americans, united in an ideological alliance against communism, which relied upon an extensive series of geopolitical codes to identify common enemies and allies, threat scenarios, borderlines of inclusion and exclusion, prescriptions for defensive and pre-emptive military action, and of course, the authorizing or legitimizing discourse linked with it.

In much the same way, the borders of North America have become the flashpoints for new security discourses, as current political concerns have abandoned the goal of fighting communism and move towards crime and terrorism. For many Americans, the Mexican border and the associated question of undocumented labor and terrorist infiltration remains the most substantive border issue, and is associated with a discourse which is highly concerned with immigration. Yet, as Payan has demonstrated, it is also a discourse increasingly interested in the development of militaristic policies and law enforcement along Mexico's border with the U.S. expressed in terms of traditional security, on the one hand, and the »War on Terror« on the other.²⁴ Clearly the Mexican border has now become the »First Border« in the North America security context, and is perceived as the most porous and dangerous of the early 21st century, and one which requires increasing levels of surveillance. The Management of this border is seen as a »crisis« or an »emergency« situation thus justifying increasing levels of surveillance. One of the strategies to make this plausible has been the development of a border discourse which sees conflation of cross-border drug trafficking with terrorism, so that both become justifiable, or unjustifiable, associated with »narco-terrorism«.²⁵ Indeed, in a discussion of the issue, the September 15th, 2006 issue of the Washington Times reiterated what might be taken as a benchmark for »normative« media discourse on the issue:

The House yesterday easily approved building 700 miles of fencing along the U.S.-Mexico border in an effort to get major border-security legislation on President Bush's desk before November's elections [...] Yesterday's border-fence bill was approved on a 283–138 vote. The vast majority of House Republicans were joined by 64 Democrats to support the measure. Six Republicans voted against it.

In addition to building double-layered fences along 700 miles of the southern border, the Secure Fence Act also changes Border Patrol policy to allow agents to forcibly disable fleeing vehicles along the border. The measure would also deploy cameras, ground sensors and unmanned aerial vehicles to monitor the border.²⁶

The Washington Post suggested, within the same article, that while there exists a critical mass of support for such measures, it is also clear that there is opposition to them, thus

23 As Payan indicates in his book when, why and how the Mexican border became important, see T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

24 T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

25 *Ibid.*

26 Charles Hunt, *House passes border fence*. By The Washington Times, September 15, 2006 <http://www.washtimes.com/national/20060914-112242-9193r.htm>.

highlighting the fact that while such thinking may be normative within government discussions, they are not uncontested. Following through on this idea, the same article observed, more summarily that:

Yesterday, House Democrats called the 700-mile fence a new »Berlin wall« and expressed concern that it would drive illegal crossers deep into the dangerous desert in search of an unimpeded crossing. Rep. Loretta Sanchez, California Democrat, added, »It does nothing to secure our northern border.«²⁷ (emphasis mine).

What is also interesting in this dialogue is the apparent recognition by some that the crisis may be a rhetorical device, devised for the goal of drawing attention to yet another »problem border« – that with Canada. This discourse conflates both borders and two historically different geopolitical discourses.²⁸ The latter has gained significant strategic importance since 9 / 11 – at least in terms of popularized accounts and newscasts and in terms of the flurry of new border management policies posed by Canadian and American governments. In this intersubjective, self-referencing universe, the Canadian border has become significant. Post-9 / 11 newspapers talk shows, television and the media, along with formal political debates (including Senate and House debates and commentary by those who ostensibly know better) have represented the Canada-U.S. borderlands as the »Northern Border« in the war against terror. Such representations conflict with those who understand the border as a gateway for continental integration and a North American economy.²⁹

Such popularized presentations of Canada's problematic existence in the North of the U.S. are not new, however. In terms of the theoretical and geopolitical context of the day, De Seversky identified the strategic importance of the North in his 1942 book, *Victory Through Air Power*, using a calculus called »the area of decision«.³⁰ This line placed what is now more generally perceived as the circumpolar or international North in the position of the first line of defense between the superpowers, but did not distinguish between Canadian and the U.S. security zones (Figure 2).³¹ Later, the D.E.W. Line followed the contours of de Seversky's concern which focused on air power and translated these into a series of infrastructural / informational boundary of the shown in Figure 3.

27 Ibid.

28 H.N. Nicol, Resiliency or Change? The Contemporary Canada-U.S. Border, in: *Geopolitics*, 10 (2005) 4, pp. 769–790; H. N. Nicol, The Canada-U.S. Border (note 22).

29 V. Konrad / H. N. Nicol, *Boundaries and Corridors* (note 22).

30 A. P. De Seversky, *Victory Through Air Power*, New York 1942.

31 N. Einarsson et al. (ed), *Arctic Human Development Report*, Akureyri 2004.

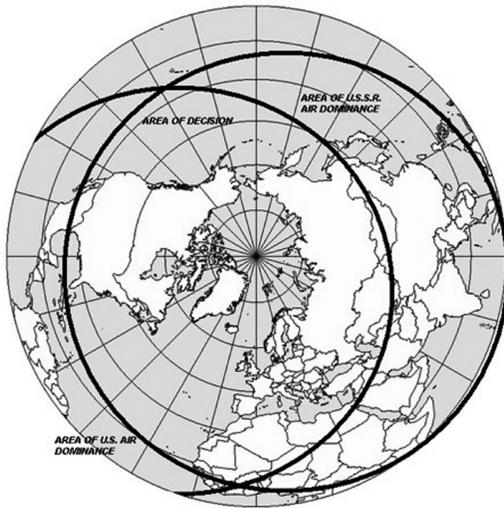


Figure 2:
 Sketch of North American Security Region Based upon de Seversky's «Critical Area of Decision for continental power in North America» model.³²

Such spatializations of security were accompanied by popularized discourses and documentaries which authorized the response to the threat. The film *Atomic Café*, released in the 1980s and in its abandonment of the documentary metanarrative style quite radical for its time, clearly demonstrated the complex web of authorizing discourses, codes and propaganda strategies in support of such a Cold War continental border discourse. While appearing ridiculous in retrospect, the discourse was clearly powerful and all-encompassing, popularized geopolitics at its apogé. It clearly demonstrated the power of film media in the dissemination of geopolitical codes, and the application of these codes to perceived geopolitical threats. In this universe, with its internal code of logic, there was an intimate link between development and finance capitalism, nuclear and defense research and the industrial economy, American youth organizations like the Boy and Girl Scouts, homeland security, diligence and modernization just as there was between dangerous liberalism, Hollywood celebrities, Stalinism, the Rosenbergs and the Red Star/Red State rising. The D.E.W. Line, in short, was a virtual boundary located in a dangerous frontier, which removed the risk of nuclear annihilation and communist invasion – pushing it north into Canada and the Arctic zone. Indeed, it is possible to argue that throughout the Cold War there were common and specifiable boundaries in Northern North America, which existed like fault lines, between nations. These were multiple lines which represented specific frontiers in a continental guard, oriented towards the north. The D.E.W. Line system clearly indicated partnership, but a partnership with hegemonic implications. If the hegemonic implications are not clear in Figure 1, or in Figure 2 which suggests a common hemispheric security interest, they are clear in Figure 3 which suggests »zones« in the Cold War stretching continental security over Canada and the U.S. In this rendition we see the apparent

32 Redrawn map based on A. P. De Seversky, *Victory* (note 30), p. 354.

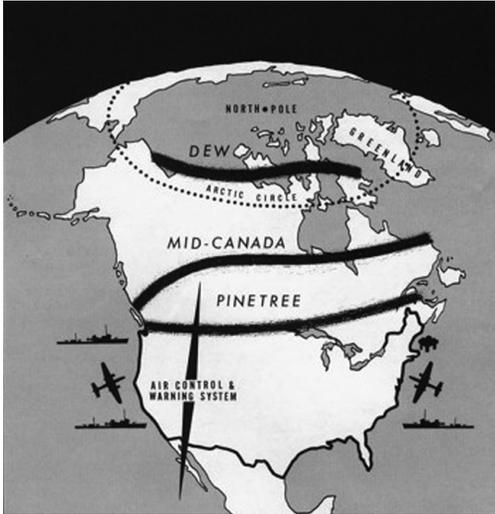


Figure 3: US Government Map of Existing Continental Zones of Security in Post World War II North America³³

conflation of North American Defense with the protection of Alaska and U.S. security (Alaska is undifferentiated from Canada's defense system), relying upon radar walls deployed throughout the Canadian and American North, and positioned along the U.S. boundary with Canada.

Taking these geopolitical discourses into account and comparing them with today's development it becomes clear that the specific context of the Cold War »security frontier« is appreciably different from the contours of the post-9/11 era, despite parallel talks about a continental perimeter. Globalized terrorism does not emanate directly from sources facing off over the polar caps, but assumes a more amorphous spatialization. Yet such new spatializations have been met by new prioritizations concerning the orientation of continental security and North America orders vaguely reminiscent of the D.E.W. Line. The contours of a strategic boundary took its legitimacy directly from Cold War geopolitical discourses and hierarchical series of boundary zones. Today the Cold War discourse in North American has been replaced by modified understandings of where strategic borders lie relative to the U.S.-Canada and U.S.-Mexico boundaries, adapted to these amorphous spatializations.

US-Canada border geopolitics post 9 / 11

Given the new continental discourses and policy frameworks which have emerged as discussion points in U.S. foreign policy formulations, the question remaining is how

33 This is a popular and classic map although there is no direct attributions except as a public domaine document produced by the US government. See http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/dew_line_1960.jpg. Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

firm borders within North America are to be situated within a more general continental security agenda. While during the Cold War the actual U. S.-Canada border was relatively unimportant compared to a series of techno-borders zones, in the war against terror, it remains a little less clear where the fault line lies. Political borders have become more paramount than techno-zones raising the question as to whether Canada is a country for scrutiny or partnership. At the basis for a vague but nonetheless present discourse on the idea of a generalized security perimeter in North America emerges the important issue of a ranked system of extra-territorial security zones or perimeters which targets the northern and southern frontiers or margins of NAFTA states and American neighboring states. The notion of a Canada-U. S. boundary the protection of the U. S. is not new. It clearly conditioned U. S. thinking about these borderlands in the aftermath of the Cold War and was applied to the »War on Terror«. The idea of the Canadian border being strategic to security has been and indeed is once again been reconstructed in popularized discourses since 9/11, particularly in terms of notions such as a continental perimeter.³⁴ The interpretation of these new geopolitical realities, which are linked to a new discourse about the »porous border« and the threat posed by globalized terrorism, narcoterrorism and »jihad« towards the continental U. S., has changed the assessment of risks for homeland security. Kolossov and O’Loughlin have argued that the most sensitive borders in the 21st century may well be between the highly industrialized and less developed countries.³⁵ But in the case of the U. S., the structural basis of the bordering process clearly reflects the current ideological contours of American hegemonic aspirations within North America and the Western Hemisphere, since the greatest risks appear to be associated with America’s borders with its closest neighbors and trade partners, and in some cases countries of comparable if not higher standards of living. There is a considerable literature to suggest that American attitudes have been shaped over time by the changing requirements for hegemony under conditions of globalization.³⁶ Conceptual changes are required if this is really the case – since the most globalized borders are often more rather than less economically developed. As a consequence the U. S. has adapted its geopolitical rhetoric and its foreign policy to accommodate border management practices among neighboring states, where there is a cumulative increase in economic integration and a corresponding U. S.-American need for control over political processes associated with border management in the context of the absence of absolute territorial control. This has ramifications for the bordering process within North America, particularly in light of the construction of what Payan has called the »Third Border War«, embedded in the »War on Terror« and new security paradigms in the U. S.³⁷ Payan is concerned with the new security border paradigm after 2001, along the Mexican border. The same kind of relationship is true of the Canada-U. S. relationship, where the nature of borderlands

34 H. N. Nicol, *Resiliency or Change?* (note 28); L. Heininen/H. N. Nicol, *The Importance of Northern Dimension Foreign Policies* (note 6).

35 V. Kolossov/J. O’Loughlin, *New borders* (note 15), p. 26.

36 D. Slater, *Geopolitics* (note 16); J. Agnew, *Geopolitics* (note 1); J. Agnew, *Hegemony* (note 1).

37 T. Payan, *The Three U. S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

has also been redefined and the »risk« of the border has been recalculated – especially in popularized geopolitical terms as well as formalized transnational policies.³⁸ For example, CNN reports that

Fear of terrorist plots against U. S. targets following recent arrests on the Canadian border prompted a Congressional panel Thursday to search for new ways to identify and seize potential terrorists along the historically open U. S.-Canada border.

»The December arrest of Ahmed Ressam as he attempted to enter the U. S. from Canada with hundreds of pounds of sophisticated bomb-making materials was a loud wake-up call,« said Rep. Lamar Smith (R-Texas).

Smith's immigration subcommittee heard terrorism experts from both the United States and Canada cite the Canadian public's historic lack of concern about terrorism and the growing realization refugees are taking advantage of Canada's lenient policies.

»Canada is sought out as a haven by terrorists,« said David Harris, former Chief of Strategic Planning for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

»Fifty international terrorist organizations are represented on our soil. Some of our laws are frankly terrorist-friendly,« Harris told the lawmakers.

The former Ottawa intelligence official also cited public apathy. »The fact that Canadians themselves have not been traditional targets of political violence has meant a failure of popular vigilance.«³⁹

In this text, the idea of a terrorist threat along the Canadian border preceded 9/11 and raised old fears about the structure of the continent and sources of vulnerability which had already been spatialized during the Cold War era. It reflects a broader misrepresentation of Canadian culture in America, and plays upon significant and popularized geopolitical representations of the country by the popular media. Examples in North American media include popularized geopolitical accounts of crossing the border to Canada which were part and parcel of the post World War II Hollywood era, where wilderness, singing Mounties and wicked French Canadian villains defined a classic Canadian culture focused on stereo-types of northerness and »law and order« – the »Mild West« as Daniel Francis has quipped.⁴⁰ More recently, the image is less stodgy: »foul-mouthed Phils«,⁴¹ and generally »backward« people live the north of their more sophisticated American neighbors. Prior to September 11, Canadians were presented as benign or even fumbling, when presented at all, in well-watched American prime time programs.⁴² These understandings tended to reinforce existing fault lines between Canadian and U. S. foreign policies, positions on international relations, or even trade embargos – such as the

38 V. Konrad/H. N. Nicol, *Boundaries and Corridors* (note 22).

39 T. Frieden, Panel considers terrorist threat on U.S.-Canada border, January 27, 2000, CNN Web posted at: 2: 43 a.m. EST (0743 GMT), see www.cnn.com/2000/US/01/27/us.canada.border, accessed October 21, 2007.

40 D. Francis, *The Mild West: The Myth of the RCMP*, in: D. Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory and Canadian History*, Vancouver 1997, pp. 29–51.

41 Phil is a character from the popular American show *South Park*, which has aired for several seasons on North American television and has been made into a movie also called *South Park*.

42 Such as *That Seventies Show*, *The Simpsons*, *Due South*, *Law and Order* and many others.



Figure 4

Source:
 V. Konrad/H. Nicol, *Boundaries and Corridors* (note 22)

fallout over Helms Burton.⁴³ Helms Burton is the existing American legislation which structures the ongoing US embargo of Cuba. Passed in the mid-1990s, the Helms Burton Act enforced the existing economic embargo and development new legislation which would affect those foreign nationals who own property in Cuba. It is ongoing. But this Canada-U.S. discourse also drew attention to the need to facilitate globalization across boundaries, particularly as continental economies grew around the restructuring of the automobile industry and greater American economic hegemony. This concept was also a way of filtering discussions of borders in economic terms, raising the potential for a spectrum of economic management policies for the transnational Canada-U.S. relationship.

Yet, as Figure 4, a map of the major border crossings and flows of goods and peoples between Canada and the US shows us, there was no »open« Canada-U.S. border per se. It was only a rhetorical construction, particularly if we visualize the pre-NAFTA borderlands between Canada and the United States as regional concentrations of cross-border interaction and activity along the boundary between the two countries. Here borderlands are not open, yet in terms of popular representations, in the popularized American press, they were portrayed as such. Since then, however, the border has been portrayed as a continuous line, the basis of a »Shared Border« and a »Smart Border« between Canada and the United States.

Indeed since 2001, the nature of the cross-border relationship prior to September 11 has given way to a new era in border control. A new and dialectical border discourse

43 H. N. Nicol, *The Geopolitical Discourse* (note 6). An anecdote serves as a case in point: At one policy meeting, this researcher was surprised to find that White House public relations personnel and even key policy-makers like Stuart Ezzinat made derogatory comments or jokes to the press concerning Canada's Prime Minister, and Government when the issues were discussed behind the scenes. There seemed to be an understanding that this ridicule was an appropriate response to the concerns of the Canadian government, a naturalized discourse as it were, in which Canadian political dialogue was perceived as, at best, suspect, at worst ridiculous. It was a normalized way of representing Canadian concerns, to legitimate White House policies, and to narrow the field of serious options to what was then the Clinton Administration's Cuban agenda.

emerged, one which incorporates two diametrically opposed issues – trade and security – and combines them. This new border dialectic is an important justification for the Smart Border Declaration, setting the stage for a new way of thinking about the structure and mechanics of bilateralism. The Shared Border Accord negotiated between Canada and the US and fortified by the Canada-US Partnership (CUSP) was set in place in 1999 – and then enhanced by the US INS-CIC Border Vision and Cross-Border Crime Forum, shortly before September 11.⁴⁴ In the months after September 11, however, a new set of arrangements was negotiated, in the form of the »Smart Border Accord« between Canada and the U.S. This was an agenda for the 21st century, outlining a vision which streamlined and harmonized border policies and management.

These titles, »smart border« and »shared border« have begun to replace the previous rubric of »the world's longest undefended border« in popularized discourse and governmental texts. In practice, however, these new border regimes are as much rhetorical as they reflect new management strategies. The latter would not work without the construction of a new iconography associated with the »shared border« discourse which diverts attention from its political and geographical asymmetry surrounding border management, and the fact of the continuing dominance of the U.S. security discourse. It is now common place to see the Canadian and American flag intertwined on logos on publications and reports to demarcate border cooperation surrounding recent »Shared« and »Smart« Border agreements between Canada and the US. Such language and imagery was extremely important in the immediate aftermath of September 11, to establish a sense of normalcy along the border and to ensure Canadian cooperation with the U.S. security regime. Yet despite such images and metaphors, there remains a serious disconnect between representation and reality in these images. As for example, in response to the problem of delays, border security has been intensified with a tripling of border guards along the Canada-U.S. border (where only a few hundred served before, over 1,000 border guards are now deployed), in conjunction with the development of new enabling technologies and dedicated infrastructure to facilitate pre-cleared traffic.⁴⁵

The result in the United States has been the development of what might be termed the imagery and rhetoric of a more militaristic border. Indeed, the U.S. Border Guard has adopted a more militant stance. For example, in promoting border security, Customs and Border Protection have identified themselves more closely with militaristic »action« pictures, recruiting posters and online representations. The same is true of actual borders and broader landscapes between Canada and the U.S. The iconography and infrastructure of the state are much more visible in the post 9 / 11 period, both in defining indi-

44 See Government of Canada, Building a Border for the 21st Century, CUSP Forum Report, December 2000, <http://www.canadianembassy.org/border/cuspreport-en.asp>. See also V. Konrad/H. N. Nicol, Boundaries and Corridors (note 22).

45 Yet the rationale for this increased deployment appears to have little to do with expedited shipping. U.S. Border Patrol Chief Gus de La Vina explained that »the additional agents will enable the force to maintain a more comprehensive enforcement posture in our efforts to sustain border security and combat terrorism«. See U.S. Border Agents Raised Past 1,000, in: *The Bar-Code Border*, 24 (2004) 2, January 1.

vidual posts and in defining the Customs and Border Control agency more generally, or to illustrate new »noteworthy practices« including »electronic signage« initiatives or camcorder broadcasts of cross-border choke points on both sides of the border. This image of the »shared border« is also countered by another popularized border representation in the post 9/11. era: the »chilly border« which is also the stuff of political cartoons and talk show discussions, as well as academic analysis.⁴⁶ Based upon the perception that Canada did not support the U. S. invasion of Iraq, the first few years of the 21st century have been marked by a »chill« in Canada-U. S. relations. The September 11th terrorist attacks have led to a rapid tightening of security at the Canada-U. S. border, with the prospect of new security arrangements including biometric identification and passport requirements placed upon all Canadian visitors flying to the USA after January 2007. These steps aim at dealing with the challenge posed by terrorist groups to North America as a whole. Again, CNN reported that: A U. S. policy expert currently working in security issues in Canada told the lawmakers publicity on the issue could have an unintended negative impact.

»In the media coverage broadcast around the world by CNN and others, we alerted the world to the openness of the U. S. border with Canada,« said Christopher Sands of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. »To those hostile elements around the world that had not discovered it yet, we advertised our vulnerability.«

As the year's first congressional hearing concluded, Smith said he continues to support a mandatory entry-exit system that would require every border passage to be recorded. »We need to have that on both borders, but it needs to be done in a way that will not impede trade or traffic,« he said.⁴⁷

Such discourses were opposed in Canada. Canadians warned that discussions such as these reflected U. S.-American discursive efforts to gain political control of border management. There was criticism that rather than focusing upon the requirement for the spatial reorganization of the post-NAFTA border, on both sides of the line in an open and participatory debate, the argument was being promoted that the NAFTA border is too open and too accessible. Indeed, there is a number of studies which catalogue the requirements and provisions of border security in both Canada and the United States, reflecting on the transparency and legitimacy of the new homeland security thrust. But as I have argued elsewhere, there is more to this discussion than open or closed borders.⁴⁸ There is a recurring argument that the Canadian border is risky, that Canadians are not up to the challenge of continental security, and that U. S.-style measures are now required at all scales from immigration law to border scrutiny, from electoral and democratic culture to the structure of judicial and social welfare systems. Such hegemony discourses have been effectively rebutted time and again by the Canadian state, rendering claims of Canada as

46 H. N. Nicol, The Canada-U. S. Border (note 12).

47 T. Frieden, Panel considers terrorist threat (note 39).

48 H. N. Nicol, Resiliency or Change? (note 28).

a terrorist haven or refuge for drug culture impotent. But they have done so at the risk of placing Canada »under erasure« from Washington's perspective, suggesting the only significant issue in relation to Canada is the bright red borderline which prevents U. S. interests from securing the continent and its resources.

Such themes are common in the news journals, newspapers and other forms of media, although there is little to substantiate these claims. Yet the Canada-U. S. border has become the site of calculation for a new North American geopolitical coding which provides an important referent point for the U. S. »War on Terror«. Indeed, it is precisely because of this war on a borderless and vague terrorist threat, that borders in North America have become the actual site of the war, holding large continental populations at check. Paradoxically it is the NAFTA which makes such checks particularly effective: A critical trade relationship has structured an essential flow of peoples, goods and services and thus renders the surveillance of such flows possible. This manifests itself in the increasing degree of policy convergence that is currently underway between Canada and the U. S., particularly in the area of military cooperation, passport requirements, border patrol and foreign policy reviews, as well as other border surveillance provisions. As such, there may be more convergence in the post-9 / 11 borderlands than divergence, NAFTA being the leveraging tool under the rubric of continentalism and regionalization.⁴⁹ Seen from this perspective, in terms of »realpolitik«, it becomes clear that the Canada-U. S. border ranks as one of the two most important borders of North America under the new security regime. The reasons for this are quite simple: Firstly the growing trade effects of the NAFTA have tripled the cross-border trade within the framework of the world's largest trade relationship, and secondly it is Canada, not the Middle East, Mexico, Venezuela, or even Russia, that provide the U. S. with the largest share of oil, natural gas and other forms of industrial energy. In the context of a global economy where trade outperforms production, this relative size and importance of this trade relationship determines for Canada the degree of compliance to U. S. hegemony and homeland security discourses.

The changing U. S.-Mexican borderlands

While northern boundaries with Canada have undergone quite but significant change, it is 9/11, Mexican immigration and concerns about terrorism which have literally replaced the Cold War D.E.W. Line as the major borderline of U. S. concern, if the thrust of concern of popularized geopolitics in the US are to be believed. Clearly the Mexican border is the »First Border« in North America in the early 21st century, as the U. S. government, decision-makers and popular press highlight its importance as a frontline against crime and chaos.⁵⁰

49 V. Konrad/H. N. Nicol, *Boundaries and Corridors* (note 22); H. Nicol, *A Clash of Perspective? Some Conclusions about the »Cuba Problem«*, in: M. Zebich-Knos/H. N. Nicol/S. Basdeo (eds), *Foreign Policy Toward Cuba*, New York 2006, pp. 261–268.

50 T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7).

Observers of the U.S.-Mexico border have argued, of course, that historically human security, economic development, education and underemployment are some of the most urgent needs of the region, and evident even to the casual observer. In 1998, for example, a report on the economic status of the Texas-Mexico border region suggested that »by all accounts, the main economic challenge faced by workers along the U. S. side of the border is educational improvement – a question of training for more high-skill, high-wage jobs. This must happen if the region is to begin climbing out of its position of relative poverty.«⁵¹ At the same time it noted that, on the Mexican side of the border that there was a more pressing need »to continue the phenomenal job growth in the northern border states since 1970 to extend the benefits of growth to more workers – a question of providing more jobs. If job growth slows without a similar slowing in population, social pressures caused by migration to northern Mexico from poorer parts of the nation could build to critical levels.«⁵²

Yet in 2006 there is little mention made concerning levels of economic development in the formal geopolitical assessments of the Mexican-American border region. Problems associated with poverty, lack of access to health and education, and more general underemployment and poor quality of life on the Mexican side have been replaced by a keen awareness of the relationship between border security and terrorism. Despite the apparent increase in immigration, and despite the increasingly important role of Mexico within the North American Free Trade Agreement, since 9/11, the risk scenario of the Mexican border has changed. Since then the border has always been understood in homelands security terms.

Payan has addressed this problem in his analysis of the current state of the U. S.-Mexican borderlands, making the claim that there is a democracy deficit which is little understood, and yet at the heart of the function of »security border« paradigms. He argues that onerous controls at the U. S.-Mexican border have increased since homeland security has declared a »War on Terrorism«, and has established a »homeland security« border management regime at the U. S.-Mexican border. This represents the final era of border management in an increasingly controlled program, and is directly related to the events of September 11, 2001. Significantly, Payan points out that

[I]magination could be and was engaged so that any danger, even remotely similar to a terrorist attack, became real and immanent. This had led to confusion in Washington, compounded in the border region, producing much economic deterioration, pain and personal suffering to both the decision-makers but, above all, to those who are affected by their decisions.⁵³

51 J. Sharp, *Bordering the Future: »The Border Report«*, July 1998, p. 1 see <http://www.window.state.tx.us/border/border.html>.

52 Ibid.

53 T. Payan, *The Three U.S.-Mexico Border Wars* (note 7), p. 88.

There is no doubt that it is a complex and at times chaotic region. There is no doubt that there are tremendous challenges to be faced and resolved in order to ensure human security within the region. But there is also no doubt that the problems of the border region have been conceptualized and generalized in broader economic, legalistic and security geopolitical paradigms which neglect the specific context of the borderlands themselves, the people and the processes which are encountered in daily living. Thus Washington's mobilization to produce a more secure border has also failed, for the same reasons that other efforts to manage and control transnational processes within the region have not met with success. The result has been a conflation of issues such as undocumented immigration and overstayed legal immigration, law enforcement and visa adjudication, open borders and closed border policies and intelligence failures.

Situating the third border in the post 9 / 11 era: The spectre of things to come

At the same time that Canadian-Mexican geopolitical discourses have seen considerable reconstruction and change, there is considerable confusion about the »Third Border«. Is it the Caribbean maritime border or the southern Mexican border with Central America? Prior to September 2001, the Caribbean was clearly ranked as the U.S.'s Third Border, with Bush announcing in April of that year that:

The Caribbean nations, our often overlooked »third border,« are important partners on trade, health and education issues and regional democracy. Illegal drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and financial crime, however, threaten both United States and regional security interests. In order to better focus the U.S.-Caribbean relationship and work with our partners on a number of capacity building tasks, the Bush Administration has developed a »Third Border Initiative.«⁵⁴

What is striking about this list of strategic initiatives is its focus on comprehensive security in the sense that it reflected the post-Cold War dialogue on sustainable development, human security and economic development which followed from the Brundtland Report's discussion of sustainable development and population, or »Our Common Future« as it became known, and the more recent Rio Pact or »Earth Summit« of the 1980s and 1990s, which set the protocols for current international environmental cooperation. It also supported some very interesting and recent developments in terms of the U.S. relationship with the Caribbean during the Post-Cold War period. Underneath this structure, however, is a clear concern with the relationship of Cuba to the Caribbean Association of Caribbean States, a region-wide organization which seeks to promote sustainable development and better economic integration among Caribbean nations.⁵⁵

54 See G. W. Bush, Fact Sheet (note 14) for the remainder of this text and further discussion of the initiative.

55 H. N. Nicol, Neoliberalism and Caribbean Integration, in: *Global Development Studies*, 2 (2002/2003) 102, pp. 43– 76; H. N. Nicol, (Re)imagining Cuba in a Global World: the Changing Geopolitical Discourse of Canada-

It is clear that just prior to September 2001, the U. S. had a rather ambiguous relationship with the Caribbean nations. While U. S. foreign policy had always been excessively focused on Cuba, the Third Border initiative in the early 21st century points to a relaxing of concern with the containment of the Caribbean region, or respectively the need for domination of the region which had previously been dubbed the »American Lake«. On the other hand, new rounds of negotiation had launched the Association of Caribbean States to the forefront of the regional initiative for free trade and sustainable development.⁵⁶ Slater suggests, of course, that the U. S. used neoliberalism and the promise of free trade artfully in the Latin American and Caribbean region, to consolidate hegemony while seemingly supporting democracy agendas, self-determination and national sovereignty.⁵⁷ Thus, the rise of neoliberalism in the Caribbean was and remains part of a more general agenda which has swept Latin American nations since the 1980s, where open regionalism became the mantra for sustainable development couched in neoliberal concepts. Neoliberalism in Latin America is an U. S.-American agenda which ultimately diminishes the independence and power of Latin American countries because U. S. hegemonic aspirations are inherently embedded within. As such, the border region increasingly strategic to the U. S., in this pre-September 11/Post Cold War period, was located in the south and west of Miami and the Florida panhandle.

Indeed, at the Third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April 2001, just six months prior to September 11, Bush announced what he called the Third Border Initiative which he conceded was a valuable framework for »structuring our engagement across the broad spectrum of matters that affect the prosperity and well being of the region and its peoples«. ⁵⁸ Bush stated that »the special significance of the Caribbean as an important partner of the United States and seeks to build on the long history of constructive engagement between the United States and the Caribbean.«⁵⁹. The latter were perhaps oddly or perhaps even strategically chosen words echoing the Canadian foreign policy decision to undertake constructive engagement with Cuba, despite U. S. objections in the Helms Burton Act.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the Bridgetown Partnership noted that now, the objective of »the Third Border Initiative« was to focus U. S. and Caribbean engagement »through targeted programs that comprise both new and ongoing activities designed to enhance cooperation in the diplomatic, security, economic, environmental, health and education

Cuba and United-States Cuba Relations After Helms Burton, in: S. Basdeo/H. N. Nicol (eds), *Canada, the United States and Cuba, an Evolving Relationship*, Coral Gables 2002, pp. 139–165; H. N. Nicol, *Neoliberalism* (note 11).

56 H. N. Nicol, *The Caribbean in Context of Sustainable Development*, in: *Social and Economic Studies* December 2000; H. N. Nicol, *Neoliberalism* (note 55); H. Nicol, *(Re)imagining Cuba* (note 55).

57 D. Slater, *Geopolitics* (note 17).

58 U.S. State Department, *Joint Statement by the United States of America, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Dominican Republic on the Third Border Initiative*, Press Statement January 13, 2004, see <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2004/28136.htm>.

59 *Ibid.*

60 H. N. Nicol, *The Caribbean in Context* (note 56); H. N. Nicol, *Neoliberalism* (note 55); H. N. Nicol, *(Re)imagining Cuba* (note 55).

arenas without prejudice to additional areas of collaboration that may be agreed upon in the future«. ⁶¹ In this sense, the Third Border Initiative provided the opportunity to focus funding and assistance »on those areas where we see the greatest increased need. We are aware that there are other activities, projects and cooperation programs in the Caribbean region, including those administered through multilateral institutions that, while outside the specific Third Border Initiative framework, also contribute to accomplishing its goals«. ⁶² This refocus was also clearly articulated in 2005 when E. Anthony Wayne, Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, observed in his speech to Caribbean Central American Action's 29th Annual Miami Conference that, »working together, we can promote open markets and prosperity in the ›Third Border‹ of the Caribbean and Central America and in our wider hemisphere and beyond.« ⁶³

Nonetheless, since the late 1990s, the concept of a Third Border has seen considerable change, even reconstruction. Villafuerte Solís observes, for example, that since September 11 2001 the calculus of U.S., and potentially North American, security concerns has repositioned the location of the »third border«, that is to say it has reorganized the prioritization or ranking of borders as strategic security borders from its Caribbean focus (just prior to and just after 9/11), to a regional Central American/ South Mexican borderlands focus. ⁶⁴ Villafuerte Solís observes that if, in the late 1990s, the U.S. administration and popular press located the Third Border in the Caribbean, by 2005 that borderline has been expanded Guatemala and Chiapas and now covers an area which extended to Southern Mexico and its boundary with Central American countries. He notes that in attempting to ratify the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the US government expressed its hope of progressing further with the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) project. This was shown, Villafuerte Solís suggests, by its haste to reach agreements with Central American countries and its strong efforts to have CAFTA ratified by Congress. For example, while negotiating NAFTA took almost three years, CAFTA was concluded within one year. Villafuerte Solís goes on to suggest that with CAFTA's ratification, the FTAA project, now on hold, would be have been reinforced, and US influence extended from Canada to Nicaragua. But with the negotiation of a NAFTA and CAFTA, and with subsequent bilateral agreements, it could extend beyond Central America, and could include, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia. Thus this negotiation process began a cycle in which the northern border of Mexico has been stretched to the south. It also meant, however, that the southern Mexican border, with its unresolved economic and socio-political problems, has become integrated within North American and U.S security space. As such, Villafuerte Solís argues, the interests of the US administration in having CAFTA ratified quickly were twofold. The first was to increase control over key space for US national security and the second to advance the FTAA project

61 U.S. State Department, Joint Statement (note 58).

62 G. W. Bush, Fact Sheet (note 14).

63 A. Wayne, A Prosperous Third Border, Speech to Caribbean Central American Action's 29th Annual Miami Conference, Miami December 7, 2005, see <http://www.state.gov/e/eeb/rls/rm/2005/57923.htm>.

64 D. Villafuerte Solís, The Southern Border of Mexico (note 7).

for reasons which includes, among other priorities, energy integration with southern Mexico.⁶⁵

Conclusions

It is significant that the U. S. has various other borders with other nation-states – including Russia and Cuba – yet these have achieved little scrutiny in the post-9/11 period. There is, instead, a focus upon the edges of the continental U. S. and the exertion of geopolitical control over its flows. Yet the ranking of borders in the post-9/11 era is still surprisingly centered upon regulating the flow of humans and goods which cross under the auspices of the NAFTA, and in co-ordinating the conflicting pressures of security and trade increasingly under the rubric of homeland security. As stated at the outset of this paper, this makes it clear that there is a broader North American and global context to U. S. »Post 9/11« borders that needs to be understood if we are to appreciate the nature of its contemporary borderlands and the nature of a new 21st century transnationalism. The ranking or prioritization of international borders of the U. S., in terms of the construction of new rhetorical and physical boundaries, is clearly focused upon the realities of the 21st century and the Bush administration's »War on Terror«, but also reflects the context of integrated continental economies, perhaps more than ever. If, as Flint suggests, the geopolitics of international relations amounts to a juggling act of material and ideological values, then this can most impressively be observed in the case new border management practices and discourses of the North American borders.⁶⁶

65 Ibid.

66 C. Flint, Introduction (note 4).