North American Center
for Transborder Studies
ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

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TRANSBORDER STUDIES AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

**Transportation and Security
in North America**

Issue No. 6
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CONTENTS

"As ASU continues to redefine the modern research university, the North American Center for Transborder Studies exemplifies the importance of solution-focused global partnerships. The Center recognizes that our future is linked to the collective fate of our region, and therefore, seeks to harness knowledge in new ways to improve the development of complex policies. Through this regional collaboration, we will be able to advance practices and policies that influence quality of life throughout North America."

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NORTH AMERICAN CROSSROADS
Quarterly Report of the
North American Center for Transborder Studies

Issue No. 6:

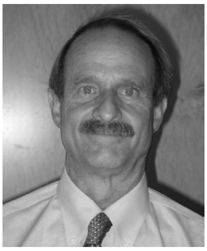
Transportation and Security in North America

"Transportation is a key topic for the North American region. Cross-border cooperation in infrastructure development and streamlined processes has been the topic of a vast number of conferences and reports for quite some time. But actual cooperation pales in comparison to the dramatic strides achieved in economic and business links between both countries.

If we want these trade and investment achievements to continue, we need to urgently reduce transportation and logistics transaction costs while addressing security imperatives. Our export-dependent economies can't rely on many other factors to build competitiveness in an increasingly demanding global environment.

This spells the need for more joint trilateral research and discussion on supply chains, infrastructure priorities, bottlenecks, stock and quality lags, funding, security concerns, regulations to harmonize, cross-border coordination, stakeholders to work with, costs and benefits implied, and other key topics. This timely NACTS publication aims at contributing to that discussion."

--Raul Rodriguez,
NACTS Board of Advisors, Chair



Rick Van Schoik
Director

"Security trumps trade" – the post 9-11 mantra – is obviously wrong. The global competitiveness of the US economy (and the Mexican and Canadian economies as well) depends on our ability to move goods and people across our borders quickly and efficiently as well as securely.

It is in our interest that economic development in Mexico accelerate. A struggling Mexico with a weakened political system would not only be a poor economic partner, but would pose a terrible security risk for the United States. Efficient border processes encourage trade, economic development and job creation. Border processes which create excessive cost and delay not only inhibit trade and thus can actually diminish security.

The issue, of course, is the appropriate balance between security and efficiency at ports of entry into the United States.

This issue of the NACTS Quarterly Report examines this issue from several directions, regional and sectoral.

On the US-Mexican border, David Randolph looks at infrastructure planning and funding, while Prem Gandhi examines how the quest for greater border security affects business in the Northern New York region on the US-Canada border. Stephen Blank takes a sectoral approach, looking at the how border security issues affect the auto sector in North America.

-Rick Van Schoik
Director, NACTS

BORDER DELAY AND EFFICIENCY IN THE NORTH AMERICAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Stephen Blank
Senior Research Analyst, NACTS
Stephen Blank has worked in support of North American issues and tri-national collaboration for many years and was instrumental in creating the Building North America project. He served as Founding Director of NACTS and is current Senior Research Analyst for the Center.

The auto industry is one of North America's most deeply integrated industries. Three-way trade in motor vehicles and parts accounts for about 20% of total trade among NAFTA partners. The complex cross-border supply chains on which the industry rests make it particularly vulnerable to disturbances that affect the on-time delivery of components necessary to produce an automobile.

Increased border security demands post 9-11 affected border crossings profoundly. From the first moment after the attack, auto plants were in the line of fire. US Customs Service Commissioner Bonner observes, "On 9/12, I realized we had to find ways to secure our border, but to do so without … shutting down our economy in the process. On September 12 and 13 … at the land border crossings with Canada, wait times skyrocketed from an average of 10-20 minutes—to over 10 to 12 hours. Automobile plants waiting for just-in-time parts were beginning to shut down production by September 14."

The cost of security related border delays might deter potential exporters or investors and just-in-time manufacturing firms operating on a continental scale might be reluctant to invest in Canada or Mexico if they perceive a significant risk of delay in their supply chains. The cost of compliance can also be daunting.

For another perspective, take the case of US 93, a two-lane highway that traverses the crest of Hoover Dam. It is a key link in the only major north-south highway between the Sierras and the Rocky Mountains. Since 9-11, however, truck traffic over the dam has been rerouted 23 miles away, costing consumers some $30 million annually.

But cost delay is not the only issue. What is at risk is the erosion of the entire system of cross border supply chains on which so much North American competitiveness rests.

Fully a third of US trade with its North American partners. Deep integration in sectors like autos means that US workers and consumers depend profoundly on this system. Some 9000 trucks cross the Ambassador Bridge each day, many on 15 minute JIT schedules at auto plants on both sides of the border. Delay at the border, it is estimated, costs each auto assembly plant about $1 million per hour in lost production. Close the borders for a few hours and US firms shut down as far away as South Carolina.

The Smart Border agreements with Canada and Mexico sought to improve border management in the post-9-11 era. But the pyramiding of requirements which inhibit quick border processing and require much inter-agency and inter-governmental coordination has created tumult in some instances and continues to threaten "a potential train wreck."

But heightened border security requirements are not only a response to the events of 9-11 but also to increasing flows of illegal immigrants. And if current trends continue – both in traditionally unsettled cities such Nuevo Laredo and now even in places like Monterrey – drugs and drug wars will force even more security concerns.

Understand, too, that border security is not the only source of cost and delay faced in maintaining efficient flows across these borders. Regulatory conflicts and decaying infrastructure also raise the cost of business. Environmental pressures are going to play an important part here as well.

The Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America (SPP) seemed to be a significant step to improve this situation. Certainly the creation of a trilateral Regulatory Cooperation Framework and a trilateral Automotive Partnership Council would be useful bases for cooperation. But it is not clear how far SPP implementation has progressed, and the danger remains of stalling integration if border and transport harmonization is further delayed.

The deterioration of physical infrastructure is as serious a problem as border security: "America's long and successful ride to prosperity is threatened by a transportation infrastructure incapable of meeting future requirements. The interdependent network of roads, bridges, and terminals is growing increasingly antiquated, congested and disconnected, and, therefore, incapable of providing the productivity and prosperity support upon which the nation has depended for the last century an a half."

Border infrastructure, even before 9/11, had fallen behind the increase in volume of goods crossing North American borders: "While trade has nearly tripled across both borders since the Canadian-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and NAFTA were implemented, border customs facilities and crossing infrastructure have not kept pace with this increased demand. Even if 9/11 had not occurred, trade would be choked at the border."
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The burden of all of these factors – the search for greater border security, the existence of costly rules of origin, expensive regulations and different standards, and failure to maintain vital transportation infrastructure – threaten to undermine the competitive potential derived from achieving further integration in the North American auto industry. The danger is that companies will increase buffer stocks, and force just-in-time supply chain managers to re-examine their sourcing options. Auto specialist Isabel Studer notes: “NAFTA offered an opportunity that has yet to be fully exploited. This situation begs the question of what strategies the North American governments and manufacturers will pursue to ensure the industry’s competitiveness, investments and jobs in the future.”

[1] An earlier version of this article appeared in Embassy Magazine, November 1st, 2006

[2] U.S.-North American Trade & Freight Transportation Highlights; Transborder Freight Data (June 2005) “NAFTA and Autos,” See Jeffrey J. Schott, Peterson Institute, Testimony at the Oversight Hearing on Trade Policy and the US Automobile Industry, Senate Democratic Policy Committee, February 17, 2006

[3] Remarks by Robert C. Bonner Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance Washington, D.C., 09/12/2005

[4] Pierre Martin, “The Mounting Cost of Securing the “Undefended” Border (Policy Options, July-August 2006)

[5] See Stephen Flynn, “The False Conundrum: Continental Integration Versus Homeland Security,” in Peter Andreas and Thomas J. Biersteker, eds, The Rebordering of North America: Integration and Exclusion in a New Security Context” (Routledge, New York & London, 2003)

[6] Security and Prosperity Partnership of North America, Report to Leaders, June 2005 “We will also establish an Automotive Partnership Council of North America that will support the ongoing competitiveness of the automotive and auto parts sector. The Council will help identify the full spectrum of issues that impact the industry, ranging from regulation, innovation, transportation infrastructure, and border facilitation.”

[7] “Investing in America’s Future; The Need for an Enlightened Transportation Policy,” Intermodal Transportation Institute, University of Denver (September 2004)

[8] Report of an Independent Task Force (May 2005) Building a North American Community, supported by the Council on Foreign Relations with the Canadian Council of Chief Executives and the Consejo Mexicano de Asuntos Internacionales, p 9

[9] Isabel Studer, “The North American auto industry: Mapping the New North American Reality,” www.irpp.org/wp/archive/NA_integ/papers.htm

Planning and Funding Infrastructure on the US-Mexico Border

David E. Randolph

David E. Randolph has more than three decades of experience working in Latin America, and he has been deeply involved in U.S.-Mexico border issues for the past nine years. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Latin American History from Arizona State University. He began his professional career as an Army Special Forces officer, seeing combat in Vietnam. He joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1975 and spent more than a quarter century working on Latin America, either at embassies in the region or at the State Department in Washington. His last assignment was Coordinator for U.S.-Mexico Border Affairs, where he oversaw the full range of border issues. Following his retirement and return to Arizona, the Governor's Office recruited him for a new position as Border Coordination Officer for the Arizona-Mexico Commission and appointed him to the CANAMEX Task Force.

For the thousands who sit in their cars for hours to enter the United States from Mexico, and for businessmen who absorb the high costs of trucks waiting in long lines, the need to improve America's border crossing and transportation infrastructure is a stark reality. With trade continuing to grow and with the population of the border region projected to double in the next 30 years, the volume of cross-border traffic can only increase. Congestion already causes major economic losses—estimated at billions of dollars a year in the San Diego area alone—and lowers the quality of life in border regions. Today's bottlenecks will grow worse unless major changes are made to increase capacity and throughput.

Technology can offer some relief. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has introduced its Automated Commercial Environment that takes advantage of the computer age, e.g., by accepting electronic manifests. It has installed non-intrusive hardware such as the Vehicular and Cargo Inspection System that uses gamma rays to inspect trucks and rail cars. It couples these technologies with background checks, such as the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism and the Free and Secure Trade program, so that it can expedite the movement of low-risk crossers. For passenger vehicles, CPB is promoting the Secure Electronic Network for Travelers' Rapid Inspection system, which similarly links technology and background checks.

Technology can help, but it is not a panacea; there is no substitute for more infrastructure. This means expanding existing border stations and building new ones. Many new ports of entry (POEs) were constructed during the 1990s, which proved extremely valuable in coping with the post-NAFTA growth in border traffic. Since 2000, the focus has been on revamping existing facilities and replacing small border stations. Recently new POEs have been approved in Arizona and Texas, and major projects are under study, such as the expansion of San Ysidro and the new East Otay Mesa crossing in San Diego. These efforts are not nearly sufficient, however. With demand destined to double in the next three decades, there must be a concerted effort to double capacity as well.

The first step is long-term planning at the binational level. The U.S. and Mexican governments should work with border states to anticipate needs. While planning will naturally focus on the principal arteries, it must include the regional and local border crossings that make their own unique contributions. Existing planning mechanisms have made important strides, but they have not yielded the required level of stability and predictability. Specifically, they have not generated an agreed-upon list of priority projects and a corresponding timeline. What is needed is a binational planning process that integrates border stations with the related transportation systems.

With the merger of inspection agencies in 2003, CBP assumed the lead role in POE planning. It initiated the Facility Investment Planning Process and conducted Strategic Resource Assessments of its field offices (on both borders) to better understand needs and priorities. It took the lead in coordinating with other federal agencies, state and local authorities, and the Mexican government.

With regard to roads, the U.S.-Mexico Joint Working Committee on Transportation Planning (JWC) was created in 1995 and focuses on the facilitation of efficient, safe and economical cross-border movement. The JWC is chaired by Federal Highway Administration and its Mexican counterpart, and prepares reports such bottleneck studies and needs assessments. The JWC currently is preparing a "master plan" of the California-Baja California border region. Ideally, this study could be emulated to produce regional master plans for the entire border, each of which is fully integrated with CBP's plans for POEs. Washington and Mexico City could then collate these regional plans and produce—for the first time—an agreed-upon list of border infrastructure projects and timelines.

The development of such a plan is crucial to securing funding. Currently, border station projects are developed yearly. Until the President's budget proposal is released in February, there is no certainly about what projects will be requested that year…notwithstanding binational planning efforts. Moreover, the General Services Administration (GSA) cannot commence work until Congress approves the budget, which is often well into the fiscal year. This undermines the planning process, as Mexico—which must build its corresponding POE—and the effected state—which must build the connecting roads—do not know with certainly when—or even if—GSA will construct a new POE.

A multi-year authorization bill for border stations would address this problem. It would place POEs on the same plane as highways, which have long had multi-year authorizations. By linking long-range planning with multi-year funding, the United States could rationally prepare for future demand and make commitments to Mexico and border states. This concept is not revolutionary; the modernization in the 1990's was made possible by $353 million provided via the 1988 Southwest Border Capital Improvement Program. Given the magnitude of needs on both the southern and northern border, a bill authorizing something on the order of $3 billion over five years is needed. About half of this amount could be covered by the existing GSA Federal Buildings Fund. (The FBF acts as a revolving account where agencies such as CBP pay rent to GSA to replenish the fund.) The remainder would be new money.

Federal resources are limited, and alternative source of financing projects should be pursued. Certain projects lend themselves to Public-Private Partnerships, where some costs can be borne by private entities. San Diego is advancing this concept for the new East Otay Mesa crossing.

The three NAFTA governments have recognized the need to expand border crossing infrastructure and have incorporated this into their Security and Prosperity Partnership. The proposals outlined above to develop long-range binational planning for border stations and transportation infrastructure, and to provide long-range funding via a multi-year authorization bill are consistent with the goals of the SPP. The implementation of these proposals could help relieve the current congestion and ensure that the demands of the coming decades are met.

BORDER SECURITY AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT: IMPLICATIONS FOR NORTHERN NEW YORK

Prem Gandhi

Prem P. Gandhi is State University of New York Distinguished Professor emeritus and a former dean of the School of Business and Economics at Plattsburgh State University. His teaching and research interest have centered around international business and economics issues focusing mostly of U.S.-Canadian economic integration. Dr. Gandhi has published widely on the subject of Canadian investments in the U.S. In addition, he has given faculty seminars and executive development program in the U.S., Canada, India, Mexico, Japan, and in South America. His current research is on the Extra Cost of Security on U.S.-Canadian Supply Chain Management, which is partially funded by the Canadian Embassy.

Heightened security concerns and protection of U.S. borders since 9-11 has shown once again that an international border is not just a dividing line between two autonomous political entities, no matter how friendly they are, but an economic barrier that carry a cost over and above the cost of managing the customs and immigration facilities. This cost increases the cost of conducting business across the U.S.-Canadian border, a cost that had been decreasing since the signing of the Canadian-United States Free trade Agreement in 1989. This concern has important implication for Northern New York (the North Country) as this region is highly dependent upon Canadian investment, trade and tourists.

The North Country is one of the most selected site for Canadian investment. Most of these companies started small and were the dreams of some Canadian entrepreneurs who found the location attractive for its location near the economic heart of Canada stretching from Quebec City to Toronto and beyond. By moving 65 -100 miles south of the Canadian heartland, these companies enjoyed the benefits of Canadian life and culture along with a huge market south of the border in the U.S. This flow of Canadian investment is long standing for at least 40 years since we have been familiar with the phenomenon in Plattsburgh.

The number of Canadian companies located in the region indicates as to how much the region is integrated with businesses in Canada. Of the roughly $2 billion worth of goods that cross the U.S.-Canadian border daily, nine percent of Canada's imports, or $300 million cross at the Lacolle-Champlain and Massena-Cornwall border crossing. This makes Northern New York border one of the five most active border crossings out of 147 such crossings between the two countries. More importantly, this region has developed a networked supply chain and manage an integrated production system with their counterparts in Canada. What the border security and the extra time taken to clear customs and immigration can be seen by any visitor to the Lacolle-Champlain border where it is not uncommon to find a mile-long queue of trucks and cars parked to enter the U.S. from Canada.

Let us put this in perspective. Plattsburgh in northern New York is 65 miles away from Montreal. A Canadian trucker making a delivery to Plattsburgh and driving at 65 miles an hour should take an hour to complete the delivery under a seamless border. Without a seamless border, the trucker has to clear customs and immigration. Assuming that it takes 20 minutes (the border effect), the delivery time is now an hour and 20 minutes. If there is congestion, the time taken to cross the border is further increased and so is the cost of delivery. Any additional time taken due to extra security measures also adds to that cost further. In addition, this cost does not cover any other cost of delivery such as the added cost of gasoline, overtime for the trucker, idling and the cost of pollution, etc.. The wait time at the border is a dead weight for which the shipper has to account in the shipping cost estimate. Thus, it is not the actual distance between two points that is relevant, but the actual time taken that is equivalent to the cost of extra security at the Northern New York border.

In response to the uncertainty at the border, companies in the North Country have developed strategies including refusal of last minute shipments, requests for changes and other accommodations that were part of the business operations in the past. This has resulted in higher freight rates by as much as 10-15 percent relative to the domestic rates. Additionally, carriers and truckers in the area usually charge a cross-border premium for shipments. They have invested additional resources in installing devices to make it easier for customs inspection. Other companies are trying to achieve "secure company" status or CT-PAT certification making the entire company "secured" rather than just the department involved in international trade. Companies now have to be extra careful to see who their clients and suppliers are. This may require their carrying additional inventories for "just-in-case" situations. As a result, the entire supply chain management of the company is affected. In short, U.S concern about border security is putting under stress the entire economic integration process of Canada and the U.S., which could have serious implications for the flow of trade and investment not just in Northern New York but in North America.

Moving Beyond Border Controls

Stephen Flynn
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We live in paradoxical times. On the one hand, our prosperity depends on an open global and continental system that facilitates the movement of legitimate people and goods. On the other a growing array of public policy challenges, most prominently the flow of illegal migrants, are generating mounting public demand for more draconian border controls. But the pursuit of border-centric solutions to what are essentially transnational problems is proving both illusive and counter-productive. 21st Century Americans need to be weaned off the notion that our borders can represent a meaningful line of defense.

Coming to grips with the inherent limits of border enforcement has been the byproduct of my two-decade career in the U.S. Coast Guard. Historically the U.S. Navy has been preoccupied with projecting power and waging wars overseas. This has meant that the Coast Guard's small and aging fleet of 250 cutters and 200 aircraft has had the improbable mission of policing 95,000 miles of shoreline and 3.4 million square miles of Exclusive Economic Zones. With a force level roughly the size of the New York City Police Department, odds have never been good that the Coast Guard would be in the right place at the right time to stop smugglers or othesr intent on doing harm. In a two-year research project that I undertook at the Council on Foreign Relations from 1999 to 2001, I found that the odds of interdiction were not much better along the lengthy Canada-U.S. border, and Mexico-U.S. border. Indeed, what I learned most from that experience is that while borders are a great place to go for a description of the challenges and contradictions of globalization; they are always the worst place to go for prescription.

The fact is that the problems that have made borders such a hot-button issue in Washington do not fall out of the sky or rise out of the ground along America's frontiers. Trade and transportation, energy, water, air quality, and migration challenges have their origins in the continental and global environment. No matter how well-meaning, efforts to manage these challenges along our borders invariably end up resulting in unintended consequences which make matters worse. Indeed, the lesson of stepped-up border enforcement along the U.S.-Mexican border is that those efforts provided incentives for expanding informal market arrangements and criminal conspiracies. This is because the higher the cross-border barriers to commerce and labor movements, the greater the demand for licit and illicit intermediaries to provide the "service" of working around or overcoming the stiffer controls. In addition, unilateral measures pursued on one side of the border created political impediments for enforcement cooperation on the other. The result is that the border region becomes more chaotic which makes it ideal for exploitation by criminals and potentially for terrorists as well.

Ironically, in the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001, Washington has drawn the opposite lesson about the utility of border enforcement. Politicians and border agencies have ignored independent policy analysis that has shown that rising crime and corruption within Mexican border cities could be correlated with the increasingly rigorous U.S. efforts throughout the 1990s to harden and police the border. Instead the risk of terrorism has been leveraged to justify the construction of new fences, the deployment of high-tech surveillance technologies, and a surge in hiring new law enforcement agents supported by National Guard units along the border.

At the heart of the problem is the mistaken presumption that there is an automatic tradeoff between advancing greater degrees of openness within the North American continent to support the movement of legitimate people and goods on the one hand, and addressing U.S. security concerns on the other. It turns out that just the opposite is the case. Since rigorous border controls make the border environment more chaotic and therefore more difficult to secure, it follows that efforts to improve the efficiency of cross-border flows can make them easier to police.

For example, the longstanding neglect of the border in terms of limited infrastructure investment and tepid efforts at customs and immigration modernization and harmonization made no sense in purely economic terms. But the resultant inefficiencies that carry substantial commercial costs also create opportunities that thugs and terrorists can exploit. Thus, there is a national security rationale to redress those inefficiencies. The agendas for both promoting security and greater continental commerce can be and must be mutual reinforcing.

The outline for transformed border management is clear. The goal must be to limit the size of the haystack at the border that needs to be examined for illicit needles. This requires improving the visibility and accountability of our continental and international transportation networks by: (1) developing the ability to validate in advance the overwhelming majority of the people and goods that cross the border as law abiding and low risk; (2) in near real time, enhancing the means to track the integrity and the movements of conveyances that carry those people and goods from their point of origin to their final destinations; and (3) enhancing the means of law enforcement agents to more surgically target and intercept inbound high risk people and goods, ideally far away from the border. This agenda necessitates the deployment of new technologies and protocols within supply chains and transportation flows. It also requires a far greater level of cross-border information sharing and cooperation among U.S., Canadian, and Mexican authorities as well as the private sector entities that benefit from continental trade and travel.

Simultaneously, there must be a serious effort to address the underlying economic issues that are fueling the flow of migrants and illicit activities within the hemisphere. For too long, Washington has sidestepped this agenda, instead serving up simplistic border-centric solutions to challenges that have far more complicated roots. U.S. domestic politics not withstanding, the transformed post-9/11 threat environment calls for a renewed focus on how best to accommodate the evolution of commercial and social patterns of interaction throughout North America that have made continental relationships more dynamic, organic, and integrated. As such, stepped-up efforts to harden the border must be acknowledged as a flawed, even counterproductive, approach to advancing important security and public policy interests.

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