

Perimeters and Frontiers: Evolving Border Governance on the Canada-US border

Don Alper

Professor of Political Science and
Director, Border Policy Research Institute
Western Washington University USA

Since 9/11 Canada-US border governance has been guided by several frameworks, beginning with the Smart Border Accord (2001) which built on previous agreements dating to the mid 1990s. The Beyond the Border (BtB) Action Plan, launched in 2011, is the most recent iteration of Canada-US border governance. The new agreement set out a wide range of specific and general policy objectives to be jointly pursued by Canada and the US over several years. The organizing principle underlying BtB is that borders are as much about the securitization of flows as defending physical lines. This view of the border emphasizes the need to create layers of security beyond the border frontiers; yet securitized borders at the frontiers remain. This paper assesses the evolving border governance framework as it relates to multiple levels of border policy, and particularly, the governance of frontier borders.