

## МИР И БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ PEACE AND SECURITY

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*Research article / Научная статья*

### U.S. Migration Policy Radicalization (2017—2019): Case of Mexico and Central America

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**Abstract.** This article is an attempt to critically analyze the policy of the 45th President of the United States Donald Trump regarding the southern border of the USA with Mexico. The paper analyzes the approach of Washington under the administration of D. Trump to the problem of the joint border between USA and Mexico, as well as conducts a comprehensive assessment of the main programs underlying the most pressing changes in D. Trump's policy in this area. In particular, the paper focuses on the structure of migration flows between 2017 and 2019, as well as on the reasons behind those changes. The author looks at the root causes of the unprecedented increase in the flow of potential migrants and refugees, and correlates them with the ongoing political, economic and humanitarian crises in the Central American sub-region. An important focus is given to the increasing role of Mexico in the settlement of this issue, as well as to the potential impact of such cooperation between the authorities of the United States and Mexico on the situation in Central America and Latin America in general. The significance of this paper is determined by the objective necessity of academic evaluation of the Donald Trump's administration impact on the United States governmental and foreign policy course. The author argues that the approach of the 45th president of the United States regarding traditionally sensitive issues like US — Mexico border control and migration has been mostly based on coercive tactics with obvious disregard towards social basis and root-causes of the issue at hand. One of the most distinguished traits of this approach is the practice of “outsourcing” managing the problem of refugees from Central America to the border-country, which in this specific case is Mexico.

**Key words:** migration flows, border control, refugees, USA, Mexico, Central America, Donald Trump

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### Радикализация миграционной политики США в 2017—2019 гг. на примере Мексики и Центральной Америки

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**Аннотация.** В статье предпринята попытка критического анализа политики 45-го президента США Дональда Трампа по ужесточению мер миграционного контроля. Детально раскрывается вектор развития

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современных подходов Вашингтона к проблеме пограничного контроля США по южному и юго-западному направлению, а также проводится комплексную оценку основных программ, стоящих в основе наиболее актуальных изменений политики Дональда Трампа в данной сфере. В частности, особое внимание уделяется структуре миграционных потоков в 2017—2019 гг., а также причинам, стоящим за происходящими изменениями. Рассматриваются первопричины беспрецедентного роста масштабов потока потенциальных мигрантов и беженцев в контексте прогрессирующего политического, экономического и гуманитарного кризиса в Центральноамериканском субрегионе. Важное место отведено возрастающей роли Мексики в урегулировании данного вопроса, а также потенциальным последствиям подобного сотрудничества властей США и Мексики для ситуации в Центральной Америке и регионе Латинской Америки в целом. Актуальность статьи обусловлена объективной необходимостью научного осмысления и качественной оценки политики администрации Дональда Трампа. Автор приходит к выводу, что подход 45-го президента США по ключевым и наиболее деликатным вопросам, как, например, пограничный контроль на южной границе между США и Мексикой, а также миграционный вопрос, основан на усилении роли силовой составляющей при показательном игнорировании социальных первопричин возникающих проблем. В этом ключе одной из уникальных отличительных характеристик подхода Дональда Трампа является попытка перенести ответственность за решение проблемы беженцев из Центральной Америки на пограничное государство, которым в данном случае является Мексика.

**Ключевые слова:** миграционные потоки, пограничный контроль, беженцы, США, Мексика, Центральная Америка

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## Introduction

An important ideological core of both Donald Trump's election strategy and his subsequent policy in general was anti-globalism in its broad sense. During the liberal administration of Barack Obama, whose supporters had shared the position that globalization was an objective and natural process, a certain part of American society became dissatisfied with a number of its consequent manifestations. Perhaps the greatest emotional response of the majority of American population is the question of structural change in the labor market in favor of services and its general digitalization. On the one hand, due to the scientific and technological progress certain professions become outdated, therefore some Americans were forced to change their specialty and acquire new skills. The situation is aggravated by the fact that the remaining workplaces, where manual labor is still needed, are claimed by both legal and illegal migrants — another consequence of open borders. Given this public sentiment, President Trump's policy focused on two pillars — protectionism and stronger migration control, which seem to be as antagonistic as possible to globalization.

In his election race, President Donald Trump placed particular emphasis on combating illegal migration, which included reorganization of southern border control regime. The wide Mexican border has been for many years one of the most effective ways to smuggle illegal cargo and illegal migration into the United States, which led to the formation of the “source of all evils” image in the minds of both officials and common people [Collins 2013].

Taking advantage of the popular pre-election rhetoric of stricter migration controls against Mexico during the election, Donald Trump decided not to retreat from his promises by issuing a number of contradictory decrees in this area [Frolova 2017]. Moreover, the toughening anti-migration rhetoric has not just influenced illegal migrants — Trump's administration went an extra mile and turned to restricting many perfectly legal migration mechanisms, sabotaging its participation in a number of previously adopted international treaties like the 2016 New York Declaration<sup>1</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Resolution A/RES/71/1 adopted by the General Assembly on 19 September 2016. New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants // United Nations. URL: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1) (accessed: 30.03.2020).

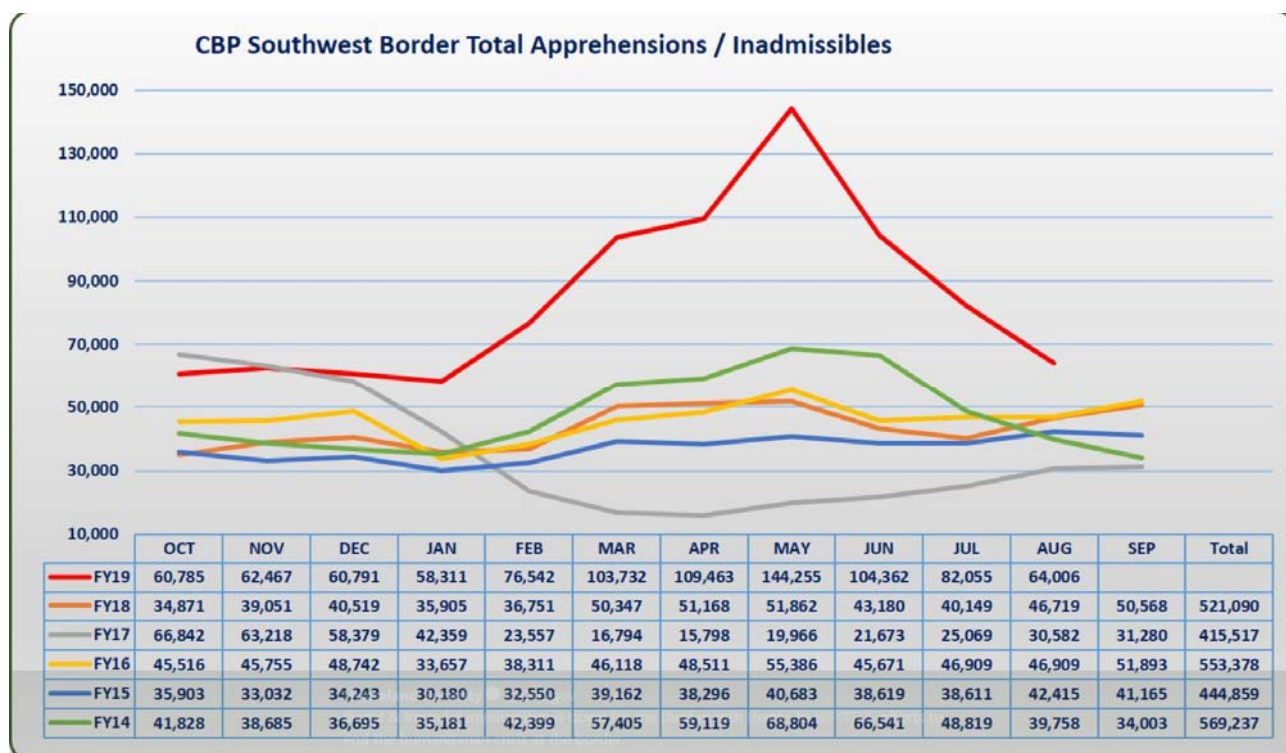


Fig. 1. Statistics on Apprehensions and Inadmissibles at the Southwest Border between Mexico and the US

Source: Department of Homeland Security // Twitter.

URL: <https://twitter.com/DHSgov/status/1171155989892145153> (accessed: 01.10.2019).

subsequent Global compact for migration<sup>2</sup> that was abandoned by US party before it was supposed to be signed. After this Trump’s administration has substituted these initiatives with new ones: Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements<sup>3</sup> and Immigration Plan of 2019<sup>4</sup>.

Despite extensive criticism of the first initiatives to tighten migration legislation, the presidential administration continued the course,

<sup>2</sup> Global compact for migration. 13 July 2018 // United Nations. URL: [https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713\\_agreed\\_outcome\\_global\\_compact\\_for\\_migration.pdf](https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/sites/default/files/180713_agreed_outcome_global_compact_for_migration.pdf) (accessed: 30.03.2020).

<sup>3</sup> Executive Order 13767: Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements // Federal registry. January 30, 2017. Vol. 82. No. 18. P. 8793—8797.

<sup>4</sup> Remarks by President Trump on Modernizing Our Immigration System for a Stronger America. May 16, 2019 // IAICC. URL: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKewjMxejsp8TuAhVG2SoKHQoQCpkQFjACegQIAXAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fiaicc.world%2Fpdf%2FModernization-of-U.S-Immigration-System.docx&usq=AOvVaw3k1zJhMAV6R2wNd2H2KU4m&cshid=1612032213186799> (accessed: 30.01.2020).

this time focusing on the US-Mexican border. On June 15, 2019 Donald Trump has pressured the Southern neighbor into signing a joint declaration on the fight against illegal migration<sup>5</sup>, mainly by utilizing one of the favorite Trumps methods — economic and fiscal policy pressure. The main innovation of the agreement was the principle of keeping all U.S. asylum seekers from south in Mexico, which has one of the highest levels of violent crime and per capita homicide. The new migration control regime at the border with Mexico came into effect almost immediately, and the U.S. Border Protection Agency has by September of 2019 rapidly provided data on decreasing detention rates at the border (Fig. 1). It is noteworthy that the Presidential Administration has been actively using these statistics to demonstrate the success of the chosen approach, as well as to justify further pressure on the Mexican government to tighten border controls.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. — Mexico Joint Declaration. June 8, 2019 // Archive.org. URL: <https://archive.org/details/6143935-U-S-Mexico-Joint-Declaration> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

It is important to mention that such a strategy of the 45th President of the United States in the area of migration control is a cause for extensive criticism not only from experts in the political decision-making process, but also from the scientific community. The problem of the efficacy and security of the Mexican-U.S. border has a broad scientific basis in the context of Western academia. However, it is important to note that the situation from 2017 to 2019 is not limited to the traditional issues of the effectiveness of the joint border between Mexico and the United States but is taking on a new dimension in the context of a profound ongoing crisis in Central America, which de facto creates a fundamentally new problem that requires a full-scale scientific reflection.

### Historiography

The issue under consideration can be considered relatively new, but there is already a number of western scientific works that consider both individual aspects of the tightening of U.S. migration policy by Donald Trump and complex studies in relation to the situation in Central America [Armendares, Moreno-Brid 2019; Martin 2019a; De Zarate, Shubic 2018; Kaczmarek 2018; Ganster, Lorey 2015]. It is important to outline the publications of Mexican researchers such as Juan Carlos Moreno-Brid, Professor at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, whose paper focuses on the impact of new migration policies on Mexico and its citizens. Among U.S. researchers it would be impossible not to mention Phillip L. Martin, an honorary professor at University of California — he concentrates on inefficiency of Trump's approaches towards mass migration threat from Central America and possible negative outcomes.

In Russian science this new dimension of the traditional southern US border issue has mainly been covered by N.M. Travkina from the Institute of United States and Canada of the Russian Academy of Science — she specifically studies Trump's policies and new changes to the migration legislation is among her top research priorities [Travkina 2018a; 2018b; 2018c]. From the perspective of Latin America this problem has been studied by A. Manuhin [2018; 2019],

N. Kudeyarova [2017; 2019] from Institute of Latin America of the Russian Academy of Science, and by Y. Krasnov from MGIMO University [Krasnov 2017].

It is noteworthy that authors both from Russia and from abroad come to the conclusion that attempts to tighten migration control based only on forceful methods, which Trump's administration has actively utilized over the years, are ultimately ineffective, as they do not solve the root-causes of the problem and only tackle the immediate consequence. At the same time, a distinctive feature of the agreement, implemented by Donald Trump, is his commitment to a coercive approach, at the head of which is a force-based solution to the problem, rather than searching for the original and underlying causes of the growing flow of illegal migrants and refugees.

### Increased Concentration of Migrants in Border Towns

The spirit of Donald Trump's administration approach to the immigration issue is fully reflected in the attitude towards asylum seekers in the U.S. who attempt to enter the country through the common border with Mexico — now they must remain on Mexican territory for the duration of the official registration procedure. The same fate awaits those who have already entered the country but were detained by the immigration service — they will also have to wait on the other side of the border. This procedure was introduced back in January 2019 by Migrant Protection Protocols<sup>6</sup>. However, neither these agreements, nor the ones adopted later take any measures to ensure the safety of applicants who are forced to stay in areas with sufficiently high level of criminality. This way the “Remain in Mexico” program significantly increases the concentration of people seeking U.S. asylum in Mexican border towns, which have for many decades been characterized by increased crime rates, in particular per capita homicide [Woodward 2018].

<sup>6</sup> Migrant Protection Protocols // U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 24.01.2019. URL: <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2019/01/24/migrant-protection-protocols> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

In fact, people seeking asylum in the U.S. are by definition socially vulnerable, which on insecure Mexican soil makes them an ideal target for both organized crime and natural violence. The “Human Rights First” organization has counted 110 violent crimes against this social group in Mexico since the program was launched<sup>7</sup>.

The amount of transit points between Mexico and US has recently decreased from 10 to 8 and the amount of asylum seekers has gone over 52,000 people<sup>8</sup> [Martínez Flores 2020]. All of the above contributes to the extremely high concentration rates of this socially unprotected group, once again making its representatives even more visible and vulnerable to criminal structures. For comparison, before the adoption of the program “Remain in Mexico”, the amount of people awaiting the decision on Mexican soil used to be almost 10 times lower and did not exceed the mark of 5,000<sup>9</sup>.

Combined with the long and overly bureaucratic decision-making process on migration issues by the US authorities, such a high risk of becoming a violent crime victim for refugees is a reason for human rights defenders to consider it a fundamental human rights violation on Washington’s part [Armendares, Moreno-Brid 2019].

### **Mexico’s Position on Tightening U.S. Migration Policy**

With the radicalization of migration policy in the United States, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has faced increasing pressure from the administration of the 45th US President, in whose understanding Mexico is the

main source of problems in this area. It is important to consider that Mexico is seriously dependent on the US in many spheres, most of all trade and economy. This undoubtedly gives Washington an opportunity to effectively exert serious political pressure, which President Trump actively uses in negotiations on tightening the border control between Mexico and the United States. A good example in this vein is the elimination of NAFTA, which has long been criticized by a conservative part of the American population for making too many concessions to Canada and Mexico. In the context of Donald Trump’s commitment to anti-globalism, such a step not only proved to be an effective deterrent mechanism for Mexico, but also blended perfectly into the formed image of a “successful businessman willing to negotiate better terms”. Instead of NAFTA, US-M-CA (USMCA)<sup>10</sup> was introduced, changing basic trade agreements in North America.

President Trump’s attitude towards the Southern neighbor can be seen throughout his political career since the election race, when Donald Trump conceptually revived the idea of building a wall on the border between the two countries<sup>11</sup>. In his understanding building such a wall should happen mainly at the expense of the Mexican authorities. The quintessence of such an idea is to shift the responsibility for reducing the flow of illegal immigrants onto the US soil to Mexico and its border security agencies. In fact, this notion of making border security the problem of Mexico has even become a reality under Trumps administration — while the U.S. Border Agency reports a decrease in the number of detainees, their Mexican counterparts have reported record numbers of deportations from their territory in the first seven months of 2019, which is 38 % higher than in the previous year<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Delivered to Danger: Illegal Remain in Mexico Policy Imperils Asylum Seekers’ Lives and Denies Due Process // Human Rights First. August 2019. URL: <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Delivered-to-Danger-August-2019%20.pdf> (accessed: 30.09.2020).

<sup>8</sup> Increasing Numbers “Remain in Mexico” Awaiting Immigration Court Hearings // Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. URL: <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/571/> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>9</sup> Petition for a writ of Certiorari // U.S. Department of Justice. URL: <https://www.justice.gov/brief/file/1269196/download> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>10</sup> United States — Mexico — Canada agreement // USMCA. URL: <https://usmca.com/> (accessed: 30.01.2020).

<sup>11</sup> Donald Trump wants to build a wall on the border with Mexico. Can he do it? // PBS. 02.05.2016. URL: <https://www.pbs.org/weta/washingtonweek/blog-post/donald-trump-wants-build-wall-border-mexico-can-he-do-it> (accessed: 20.09.2020).

<sup>12</sup> Boletín Mensual de estadísticas migratorias // Unidad de política migratoria, registro e identidad de personas.

Thus, Mexico provides a significant service to the United States — reducing the number of potential applicants for asylum in the United States, as well as reducing the number of those waiting for a decision by the U.S. Migration Service in the USA's own territory, which naturally, always takes up federal funds. This means that many people with a legitimate claim to asylum in the United States will often not even get a chance to apply, as they will be deported back to their country by the Mexican authorities. Experts predict that this pattern will not only fail to harm the services of criminal gangs who guarantee transfer across national borders, but also motivates people to turn to them more often, even though such routes will become even more complicated and dangerous. It is clear, however, that potential clients of such services are at great risk of being subjected to violent crimes and being sold into slavery [Armendares, Moreno-Brid 2019].

By shifting responsibility to its southern neighbor, Washington was able to declare the success of the new direction — official figures demonstratively say that the border area between the two countries has become much less accessible to people, as evidenced by the significant decrease in the total number of arrests at the common border. The fact that a significant share of these potential migrants ends up in the hands of Mexican border guards is overlooked [Barret 2016].

Thus, the statistically vital performance indicator is formally decreasing, but in absolute figures the flow of potential migrants, including those from Central America, continued to grow rapidly. This fact, however, did not prevent Donald Trump from stating that further success depends primarily on the Mexican side's contribution to solving the problem of illegal migration.

According to one of the Washington Post's articles, one of the president's goals in this situation was to get the numbers to the level of 2017, when the 45th president was just beginning

to reform the system of migration control in the United States<sup>13</sup>.

However, most experts agree that it is almost impossible to achieve such a level, because initially the record of 2017 was motivated by the wait-and-see tactics of criminal elements who tried to predict further actions of the new administration on the issue of border control<sup>14</sup>.

The abovementioned statistical phenomenon has a great chance to return to its original state, as during previous attempts to tighten the border regime, migration patterns had a tendency to stabilize after strong statistical fluctuations. This fate, for example, fell upon the initiative of the previous U.S. President Barack Obama in the period from 2014 to 2015, when the “Southern Border Plan” program was implemented, which logically resembled the “Merida Initiative”, only aimed at the problem of illegal migration<sup>15</sup>. Significant statistical result that immediately followed the implementation of the program was not of great benefit in the long run — migration flows have successfully adapted to new obstacles. This suggests that the new measures to tighten border controls will lose effectiveness after some time [Martin 2019a].

It is worth mentioning that with the general trend of pushing Mexico towards more responsibilities in the issue of border control, it is already receiving a record number of asylum applications from people who originally sought asylum in the United States. In 2019 Mexican authorities already received more than 48,000 applications, which is almost twice as

<sup>13</sup> Miroff N., Sieff K. Mexico's crackdown on migrants is stalling, U.S. officials say ahead of talks next week // Washington Post. 07.09.2019. URL: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/mexicos-crackdown-on-migrants-is-stalling-us-officials-say-ahead-of-talks-next-week/2019/09/06/b46296a6-d0b3-11e9-8c1c-7c8ee785b855\\_story.html?noredirect=on](https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/mexicos-crackdown-on-migrants-is-stalling-us-officials-say-ahead-of-talks-next-week/2019/09/06/b46296a6-d0b3-11e9-8c1c-7c8ee785b855_story.html?noredirect=on) (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Programa Frontera. 2012 // U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. URL: [https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/b2012close\\_esp.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/b2012close_esp.pdf) (accessed: 01.10.2019).

2019. URL: [http://portales.segob.gob.mx/work/models/PoliticaMigratoria/CEM/Estadisticas/Boletines\\_Estadistico/s/2019/Boletin\\_2019.pdf](http://portales.segob.gob.mx/work/models/PoliticaMigratoria/CEM/Estadisticas/Boletines_Estadistico/s/2019/Boletin_2019.pdf) (accessed: 30.09.2020).

many as in 2018<sup>16</sup>. At the same time asylum program in Mexico has a very limited budget (only 1.2 million USD), which makes it impossible to process all the applications in due time<sup>17</sup>. The experts of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees therefore tend to question the very ability of Mexican government to cope with the influx of Central American refugees<sup>18</sup>.

### Contemporary Dimension of Illegal Migration in the USA

The main claim of human rights defenders to the new policy on migration by Trump's administration is that it definitely ignores the preconditions of the problem, preferring to focus on the consequences, making deterrence the basic instrument of border control. First and foremost, the problem of the U.S. — Mexico border in the context of migration today is not about weak border regime but growing instability in Central America. Statistics on violent crime in countries such as El Salvador and Guatemala are among the most discouraging not only in the region, but worldwide<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, situation is aggravated by the fact that people most often susceptible to violence are the most vulnerable social groups including women and children. All this has led to a structural change in migration flows, which now include not only men of single

Mexican origin (a major trend until 2012), but also entire families from Central America, who under current circumstances account for up to 2/3 of the total migrant population<sup>20</sup>.

While a predominantly forceful approach to combating migration could still be justified before the conservative part of the electorate when speaking about adult males seeking the obvious benefits of the North American economy; in case of entire families fleeing from violence and arbitrariness public sentiment is not be favorable for new policy [De Zarate, Shubic 2018]. Unfortunately, the administration of the 45th President of the United States was not seeking to adapt migration programmes to the humanitarian catastrophe in Central America — instead, it has shifted responsibility to a country that itself is experiencing highest levels of instability regarding violence and organized crime.

The situation gets even more aggravated by cancellation of more than 450 million USD in humanitarian aid to Central American countries at the initiative of D. Trump<sup>21</sup>. The money was to be channeled through USAID to help develop programs in a variety of areas: stimulate economic growth, ensure food security, rural development and promote social mobility. Among other spheres of cooperation that are now be underfinanced because of this decision include combating drug trafficking and crime, strengthening political institutions, ensuring human rights and judicial system improvements<sup>22</sup>.

Another interesting tendency is the way how the Trump's administration is utilizing the image of looming humanitarian disaster to justify the

<sup>16</sup> Meyer M., Isacson A. The 'Wall' Before the Wall: Mexico's Crackdown on Migration at its Southern Border // WOLA. URL: <https://www.wola.org/analysis/mexico-southern-border-report/> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>17</sup> Diaz L., Schrank D. Mexico's refugee agency turns to U.N. amid asylum surge, funding cuts // Reuters. 22.05.2019. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-mexico/mexicos-refugee-agency-turns-to-u-n-amid-asylum-surge-funding-cuts-idUSKCN1SS06N> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>18</sup> Fontanini F., Romo A. Central American refugees and migrants reach Mexico City // United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). 07.11.2018. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2018/11/5be2ed814/central-american-refugees-migrants-reach-mexico-city.html> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>19</sup> Dalby C., Carranza C. InSight Crime's 2018 Homicide Round-Up // InSight Crime foundation. 22.01.2019. URL: <https://www.insightcrime.org/news/analysis/insight-crime-2018-homicide-roundup/> (accessed: 01.10.2019).

<sup>20</sup> Total Illegal Alien Apprehensions by Fiscal Year // The U.S. Border patrol. URL: <https://www.cbp.gov/sites/default/files/assets/documents/2019-Mar/bp-southwest-border-sector-apps-fy1960-fy2018.pdf> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>21</sup> Wroughton L., Zengerle P. As promised, Trump slashes aid to Central America over migrants // Reuters. 17.06.2019. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-trump-idUSKCN1T2C7> (accessed: 01.10.2020).

<sup>22</sup> USAID Guatemala country fact sheet // USAID. July 2018. URL: [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Guatemala\\_External\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_July\\_2018.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1862/Guatemala_External_Fact_Sheet_July_2018.pdf) (accessed: 01.10.2020).



strengthening of the coercive component in the anti-migration policy. In early 2019, the U.S. government went into the so-called “Shutdown”<sup>23</sup> due to inability of two major parties to settle on federal budget [Genovese 2017]. A significant role in the Shutdown was caused by president himself after his aggressive anti-migrant policy including decision to delegitimize “Dreamers”<sup>24</sup>, obtrusive intention to build a costly wall on the Southern border and restricting the rights of children born from baby tourism<sup>25</sup>.

To gain leverage against the liberal public the presidential administration actively relied upon the fact that during the closure of federal institutions an impressive wave of illegal aliens has crossed the border with Mexico into the US soil. Trump’s main argument in this regard was that without a wall on the border with Mexico it is impossible to contain such numerous caravans of illegal migrants. So, under the proposed logics the only way out is to intensify border control. It is worth noting that such manipulation of a direct consequence of the humanitarian crisis in Central America played a significant role in stopping the “Shutdown” in favor of Donald Trump’s anti-migration initiatives.

### Conclusion

Analysis of the US migration policy under Donald Trump allows us to draw a number of conclusions.

First, it seems logical to conclude that the problem with the Mexican-American border is now being reincarnated in the context of the humanitarian crisis in Central America. The rapid increase in the flow of migrants to the United States through the South and South-West borders is happening primarily due to the desire

<sup>23</sup> A state of affairs in United States when federal institutions cannot function because the parliament could not agree on annual budget.

<sup>24</sup> People who were illegally brought in United States at a very young age. They are socially adapted to the life in the US and at times do not even know their native language.

<sup>25</sup> Children born on US soil until recently had legal right to citizenship, which created a blooming touristic multimillion industry of baby tourism.

of the people who are unfortunate enough to have been born in world’s most dangerous countries to seek refuge from an unprecedented level of violent crime, corruption, impunity, social injustice and poverty, making them refugees rather than illegal migrants. This, in turn, implies that a fundamentally different approach is required — most of these people are legally eligible to get the help they want from United States. However, it would seem like Washington, D.C. under Donald Trump was not willing to provide it anymore at a previous extent, at least to the applicants from Latin America.

A proper approach required in this situation should be based on the principles of humanism and human rights protection and definitely not force and coercion. It also seems quite reasonable to conclude that with the annulment of a considerable number of international assistance programs to Central America, where most refugees in the continent tend to originate, the situation in this sub-region will only continue to worsen, leading to an even greater increase in migration. This will in return contribute to the development of organized crime operation on the U.S. — Mexico border due to a high demand on smugglers.

It is obvious that in order to avoid possible allegations of human rights violations and the aggravation of a growing humanitarian catastrophe in the region President Trump’s administration chose to shift responsibility to the Mexican authorities. Donald Trump’s new political rhetoric on this issue directly links the success of the border issue to that country’s new obligations and contribution. Meanwhile, it is already clear that pressure on the Mexican side will continue to grow in the short term. This will help Washington to minimize the number of people from Central America who will get the chance to exercise the right of asylum on U.S. territory — and all that at the expense of Mexican party. Mexico, with its own set of unresolved problems, appears even more constrained and will almost certainly base their approach on coercive measures.

It should be noted that such a development of the 45th President administration’s approach



to the issue of migration control clearly outlines a trend for general policy radicalization. Of course, factors such as the decline in popularity of the incumbent president among the electorate [Balakina, Jucovscaia 2019], as well as the unsuccessful attempt at impeachment have played a significant role in this process. An important consequence of such a radical migration policy is that it has definitely costed Donald Trump some credibility points with the potential electorate, which could be considered one of the reasons why he lost the 2020 elections to Joe Biden. On top of that, Western scientific community has already given Donald Trump a partial evaluation of his policies, naming them

nationalist and populist [Martin 2019b] besides being obviously disastrous for U.S. economy in the upcoming years [Valli 2018; Rodrik 2018]. In this regard, newest President of the United States will be the one to face direct negative consequences of his predecessor's aggressive migration policy and also will find himself responsible to undo the damage and fundamentally change the course of U.S. migration policy for good. Moreover, this will be additionally complicated by the drop of significance of presidential public leadership that was caused in the last years of Trump's Presidency [Heith 2020; Walsh 2020].

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