

What's really driving border enforcement?

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Earlier this month, the militarized Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids in Los Angeles and the subsequent deployment of National Guard personnel and Marines in response to peaceful protests sent shock waves through L.A., California, and the nation. Also in the news at this time, but an item that received much less attention, was a report from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and [Scripps Institution of Oceanography](#) at the University of California, San Diego that carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration in the atmosphere peaked above 430 parts per million (ppm). This is significantly above the 350 ppm that climate scientists say is the upper limit if the planet is to avoid catastrophic global warming.

A [recent article by journalist and border specialist Tod Miller](#), posted on the TomDispatch website, explores the interconnection between migration and global climate change. Miller reflects on his experiences of visiting a drought-stricken area of Mexico and his attendance at the 2025 Border Security Expo, a trade show that brings ICE and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) together with private industry or what Miller calls the *Border- Industrial Complex*.

He says, “Then came the realization that gave me pause: although that devastated Sierra Tarahumara terrain and the Border Security Expo couldn’t be more different, they are, in fact, also intimately connected. After all, Sierra Tarahumara represents the all too palpable and devastating reality of climate change and the way it’s already beginning to displace people, while the Expo represented my country’s most prominent response to that displacement (and the Global North’s more generally). For the United States — increasingly so in the age of Donald Trump — the only answer to the climate crisis and its mass displacement of people is yet more border enforcement.”

Miller notes that the U.S., the largest historic carbon emitter, spends eleven times more on border and immigration enforcement than it does on countering climate change. “U.S. climate policy now boils down to this: reducing fossil fuel extraction and consumption are far less important (if important at all) than the creation of a profitable border and immigration apparatus.”