A Narrative Table of Contents

Bearing an eagle staff and an American flag, a Color Guard of Native American Veterans opened the World Human Geography Conference at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, on September 15, 2011. Standing in front of the audience assembled in the auditorium, the Color Guard implored all present to speak the truth freely and respectfully. It was an auspicious beginning for the event.

Though Haskell was the official host of the conference, the event had been organized by the Department of Geography at the University of Kansas, Haskell's cross-town sibling, and by the American Geographical Society (AGS). Passed off as an academic conference about research ethics, the event was wholly funded by the U.S. Army Research Office. Indeed most of the presentations over the course of the two-day conference were given by researchers working with funding from the U.S. Army or otherwise aligned with the military. Out in front of them—and they included representatives from the Foreign Military Studies Office, the Human Terrain Systems program, and the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College—was a pair of geography professors from the University of Kansas: Jerome Dobson and Peter Herlihy.

In his capacity as president of the AGS, Dobson had secured funding in 2005 for the organization's first Bowman Expedition, aimed at mapping indigenous[1] lands in Mexico. Herlihy led the expedition, employing "participatory research mapping" techniques he had perfected during two decades of research in Central America. In spite

of Herlihy's claims to be using maps to advance indigenous rights, he failed to disclose to a number of participating communities that the U.S. Army's Foreign Military Studies Office was bankrolling the entire expedition. Nor did he tell these communities that all the data collected were being transmitted to a military contractor, Radiance Technologies, which bills itself as "creating innovative solutions for the warfighter." In the end, the project concluded in storm of controversy, ignited when the Zapotec communities mapped by Herlihy found out about the Army's involvement. In a series of sharply worded declarations, communities both individually and collectively demanded the return of all data collected by Herlihy's expedition.

Among other things, the Haskell conference was intended to put an end to this controversy by distinguishing the AGS's Bowman Expedition from other, more controversial efforts by the U.S. military to enlist social scientists in counterinsurgency campaigns. At the same time, the AGS actively sought the implicit approval for its work that holding the event at Haskell might convey. To that end, the conference included presentations from a number of Native American educators as well as from Herlihy's collaborators on the latest Army-funded project, the Bowman Expedition to the "Borderlands Region" in the predominantly indigenous region of eastern Honduras known as La Mosquitia.

As the conference wore on, the choice of Haskell to host it became more and more disconcerting. Founded in 1884, Haskell originally opened as the U.S. Indian Industrial Training School, together with other institutions designed to assimilate Native American children into U.S. society through education. Many of the children who attended Haskell were refugees of the Indian wars launched from nearby Fort Leavenworth, located not an hour's drive away, hard on the banks of the Missouri River. In an 1892 speech before the U.S. Congress, Indian war veteran and boarding school advocate Captain Richard H. Pratt described the goal of the schools this way:

> A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.[2]

Pratt saw himself as an alternative to the military campaigns that culminated in the massacre of as many as 300 Lakota men, women,

and children at Wounded Knee not two years prior, on December 29, 1890. Pratt's good intentions were not enough to save Indian children from the mass graves used at Wounded Knee. In a corner of the Haskell campus, a short walk from the auditorium where the World Human Geography Conference convened, lies a cemetery where many of the children who died at the school are buried. Most of them died within five years of Haskell's opening, their names and lives commemorated on the 103 Army-issue white marble headstones lining the cemetery. Countless more children died out of sight of school administrators in the swamp that lies beyond the cemetery.

In the shadow of that history, Native Americans themselves have slowly transformed the former boarding school into Haskell Indian Nations University, turning the grim reminders of the murderous past into the basis for a new way of life. That transformation was emphasized by the Color Guard's entrance, demanding the truth while reminding all of their service to the nation that had colonized them. It was all enough to make one wonder what the conference was *really* about.

Answering that question requires putting the AGS's World Human Geography Conference into a larger historical and geographical context, tracing an arc that connects *internal* colonialism with the *external* expansion of U.S. power through the Banana Wars in Central America, Cold War proxy battles, and, most recently, the so-called war on terror. In what follows, we trace the links among these seemingly disparate contexts in terms of the tactics and strategies of counterinsurgency. In all of them, the U.S. military has confronted a series of unconventional armed threats, both real and potential, posed by rebel organizations, criminals, and others not content to simply bow before the demands of U.S. security. Throughout, the U.S. military has been at pains to define the terrain of struggle, one that too often spills off the battlefield into the forests, fields, and cities where people make their everyday lives. Under such conditions, *all* of society becomes a potential battlefield.

Maps have long been an important means of knowing this terrain, showing the locations of towns, where people farm and obtain food, and the trails and waterways they use to move from place to place. To borrow Mao Zedong's aphorism, the insurgent must move in this everyday landscape "the way the fish swims in the sea," but this means being intimately acquainted with it. Counterinsurgency relies on the same approach to identify threats to security and to manipulate the vulnerability of life in settings where the battlefield is everywhere. In most

cases, this involves detailed mapping. Indeed it is often only through maps that the U.S. military has been able to aggregate individual lives into populations, defining societies in a manner capable of identifying threats to them, both external and internal. At the same time, maps have come to play an indispensable part in indigenous peoples' own efforts to secure protection of their rights as distinct populations. In these efforts, maps showing indigenous peoples' knowledge of the territory, fashioned from their use and occupancy of a particular area, have become an indispensable means of countering state claims to authority. As is often the case, a quintessentially colonial instrument has become a weapon for liberation.

This book concerns itself with this tension between military application and political advocacy in the practice of indigenous mapping. By this latter term, we refer to the broad field of practices used to make maps of, for, and occasionally by indigenous peoples for a broad range of political purposes. As divergent as those purposes have been, and as they continue to be, they share in an undeniably colonial logic that locates indigenous peoples as historically antecedent to and outside the sociospatial order guaranteed by states through institutions such as citizenship and property rights. Indigenous mapping, then, constitutes the grounds for the recognition of indigenous peoples' basic human rights to territory, self-determination, and self-government.

But it also helps bring the conquest *home* in important ways. This happened in the halls of Haskell Indian Nations University during the AGS's conference, where indigenous rights activists, academic geographers, and the U.S. military were brought together. Here we explore these connections further, examining the conditions under which indigenous mapping has come into existence, the problems it has been used to identify, and the political and military interventions it has produced.

Our narrative weaves together a motley array of characters and institutions. We chronicle the decline and fall of the once august AGS; "Red Mike" Edson's Río Coco patrols in Nicaragua in 1928–1929 and his role in developing the U.S. Marine Corps' *Small Wars Manual*; the rise of indigenous mapping with indigenous rights movements in Canada and Latin America; the more recent rediscovery and revision of the *Small Wars Manual* in the wake of U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; the AGS's quest to rebuild itself through military-funded "Bowman Expeditions" aimed at compiling "geographical intelligence"; the alliance of the AGS, the University of Kansas Department of Geography, and the Foreign Military Studies Office in the México Indígena

("Indigenous Mexico") Project; the response of the Zapotec of the Sierra Juárez; and the World Human Geography Conference at Haskell Indian Nations University.

This configuration can be distilled into three strands. There's a military strand that traces the creation and modification of counterinsurgency tactics within the Marine Corps and Army from the Río Coco to Kandahar and beyond. There's an academic strand that follows the transformation of indigenous mapping from a method for collecting data on land use and occupancy to a vehicle for participatory research. And there's an indigenous strand that traces indigenous peoples' own experiences with the use of mapping as a tool for advocacy. This last strand is often invoked as justification for mapping, but it glosses over an indigenous discomfort with the very idea of mapping. For this reason, our account begins in the Rincón de Ixtlán of the Sierra Juárez, above the Mexican city of Oaxaca. Residents of the Rincón were the first to denounce the Bowman Expeditions' coupling of military interests and academic geography. Their words serve as a reminder of what's really at stake, shifting the focus from the defense of academic reputations on the Haskell stage to Zapotec lives. We follow this discussion with a mosaic of chapters that interweaves the three strands of our story.

Our approach is genealogical, tying together sites where indigenous mapping has emerged as method and political tool. Though the chapters are organized chronologically, the links between them are not causal. But to assert that the relationship between these sites is simply a historical one or, worse, the outcome of a singular strategy is to oversimplify their complexity and overwrite their specific contributions. The Indian wars of the 19th century are not the same as the proxy wars of the 1980s in Central America or the counterinsurgency campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan in the 2000s. Instead, each serves as an important site for understanding the emergence of indigenous or tribal areas as particular kinds of space, defined as much by a collective way of life as by the particular approach to war fought there. Each setting provides a new set of challenges and conditions, addressed through the application of lessons learned from past wars through the innovations of new tactics and strategies.

Chapter 1. In the Rincón of the Sierra Juárez

The immediate origins of the AGS conference at Haskell lie in the Zapotec towns of the Rincón de Ixtlán of the Sierra Juárez (p. 1). In 2006,

Peter Herlihy led a U.S. Army–funded Bowman Expedition into the Rincón (p. 4) under the pretext of mapping the region's complex system of communal land tenure. Instead of mapping an isolated, mountainous "corner" (*rincón*) of Mexico, Herlihy found himself navigating the complexities of a Zapotec society knit together by communal land ownership and a healthy skepticism of outsiders. Herlihy took his offer to map traditional lands directly to the communities of Yagavila, Yagila, and Tiltepec (p. 6). Yagavila dropped out of the program almost immediately, but the México Indígena team succeeded in mapping Yagila and Tiltepec—*and* in transmitting the full results of its investigations to the Foreign Military Studies Office of the U.S. Army, which, in fact, had funded the entire expedition. With this becoming clearer and clearer, on January 14, 2009, the Union of Organizations of the Sierra Juárez of Oaxaca (UNOSJO) issued a proclamation denouncing México Indígena for engaging in geopiracy; on March 17, 2009, the community of Tiltepec issued a proclamation demanding an apology from Herlihy, the University of Kansas, the AGS, and the Foreign Military Studies Office (p. 7); and on July 24, 2011, the communities of Yagila, Yagavila, Tepanzacoalco, Zoogochi, and Teotlaxco joined in denouncing the México Indígena expedition (p. 13).

Chapter 2. The Decline and Fall of the Once August American Geographical Society

Why was the AGS sending an expedition into the Sierra Juárez in 2006? Founded in 1851 by 31 wealthy New Yorkers (p. 17), the AGS (as geographers call it) is still the oldest organization of U.S. geographers, though today it exists as a shadow of its former self. In its day, it mounted "expeditions" to "far-off places" (p. 18) and played an important role in preparations for the Paris Peace Conference, to which the society's director, Isaiah Bowman, accompanied Woodrow Wilson. In 1904, however, a number of academics founded the Association of American Geographers (p. 20), which has become, by a very great margin, the largest and most important association of professional geographers in North America, perhaps in the world (it has members from over 60 different countries). As the AAG (as geographers call it) has grown, the AGS has shriveled (p. 21). The AGS was forced to sell its resplendent headquarters building on Manhattan's Audubon Terrace (p. 30); it had to give its famous library to the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; and it teetered on the brink of *complete* irrelevance until it struck a deal to collect intelligence for the Army (p. 32).

Chapter 3. "Red Mike" Edson's U.S. Marine Patrols Up Nicaragua's Río Coco in 1928–1929 and the Development of the *Small Wars Manual*

Meanwhile, in Nicaragua, U.S. Marine Corps Captain Merritt A. "Red Mike" Edson was leading a series of patrols up the Río Coco during the U.S. occupation of the country between 1926 and 1931 (p. 34). By the later 1920s, the occupation had devolved into a "messy guerrilla conflict" with General Augusto Sandino and his adherents (p. 36). In Edson's effort to enlist the indigenous Miskitos to the U.S. cause, he stirred an anthropological element into the politically sensitive and highly personal diplomacy required by his mission (p. 40); and he and his immediate superior, Major Harold Utley, later taught this method at Quantico and elsewhere (p. 47). Utley incorporated the method into his *Small Wars Operations*, renamed the *Small Wars Manual* in 1940 (p. 49). For most of the Cold War, the *Small Wars Manual* languished in the Marine archives (p. 52), dusted off occasionally during the Vietnam War and again in the 1980s at the height of the Reagan Administration's support for proxy wars in Central America and Afghanistan, wars in which "tribes" and "ethnic groups" characteristically played enormous roles.

Chapter 4. The Birth of Indigenous Mapping in Canada

In 1967, Frank Arthur Calder and the Nisga'a Nation Tribal Council initiated an action that led the Canadian Supreme Court to rule for the existence of an *aboriginal title*, one dating to a Royal Proclamation of 1763 (p. 54). This decision prompted the still young liberal federal government of Pierre Elliot Trudeau, eager to recover from an initial "misstep" in Indian affairs, to attempt to extinguish these titles by negotiating treaties with those indigenes who had never signed them; and in 1974, it began supporting work capable of leading to such negotiations (p. 57). Maps showing patterns of indigenous land use and occupancy, traditional ties to the land, and cultural cohesion proved invaluable to framing the negotiations, so much so that by middle of the decade, the Canadian government itself was financing mapping projects (p. 60). Leery of cooptation, some Indian organizations in Canada broke from that mold, insisting on their status as nations properly subject to international—as opposed to domestic—law (p. 64). That approach was no less reliant on maps to demonstrate the status of Indian peoples as nations, but it also helped conjure a political vision of a "Fourth World" linking indigenous nations around the globe (p. 71).

Chapter 5. Maps, Guns, and Indigenous Peoples

Among the Fourth World allies that Indians in Canada found were the Miskito people of eastern Nicaragua, previously mapped by "Red Mike" Edson's Marines (p. 74). Miskito political mobilization in the 1970s hinged in part on demonstrating their historical rights to land and resources. Like First Nations in Canada, maps made by anthropologists and geographers of Miskito use and occupancy of land and resources proved to be an invaluable tool for political mobilization (p. 75). In particular, they made use of maps made by then cultural ecologist Bernard Nietschmann, transforming his data into evidence of their political claim to territory (p. 80). Reluctant at first, Nietschmann became one of the more visible advocates of the Miskito position during their armed struggle with the Sandinista government during the Contra War in the 1980s (p. 88). Following the Miskitos' lead, Nietschmann pioneered the use of maps as a means of bringing the Fourth World into reality by using them to represent indigenous national struggles for territory and self-determination. In spite of their anticolonial stance, both Nietschmann and the Miskito crossed paths with the Reagan Administration's policy of supporting proxy battles waged by "oppressed minorities" and "freedom fighters" against Communism (p. 87). The Reagan Administration controversially slotted the Miskito into that geopolitical vision, revisiting the terrain mapped by "Red Mike" Edson on his Coco Patrols in 1928–1929 and in the first version of the *Small Wars Manual* (p. 90). The events proved pivotal in weaponizing maps as both a tactic for indigenous mobilization and a new approach to small wars in terms of "counterinsurgency" (p. 93).

Chapter 6. From Territory to Property: Indigenous Mapping after the Cold War

Nietschmann's combination of mapping and advocacy provided a template for the diffusion of indigenous mapping in the 1990s (p. 96). But instead of charting the contours of a great wave of decolonization, as Nietschmann predicted, the decade culminated in the mainstreaming of indigenous mapping (p. 98). In the hands of conservationists and development experts, mapping indigenous communities became a key strategy for recognizing indigenous rights to property as opposed to territory, as citizens rather than nations (p. 100). This transformation was first driven by appeals to conservationists to see "the coexistence of indigenous peoples and natural ecosystems" concentrated in tropical forests such as

those in Central America (p. 101). Among the geographers advocating this approach was Peter Herlihy, the man who would later lead the AGS's first Bowman Expedition to Mexico (p. 103). However, conservationists soon soured on the idea, insisting on the importance of science, and not politics, in guiding their efforts (p. 107). Instead, indigenous mapping was taken up by advocates of "ethnodevelopment" at the World Bank and similar institutions (p. 108). Recognizing community rights to property proved to be an effective way of absorbing indigenous challenges to development projects, extending efforts to transfer state lands to private ownership consistent with neoliberal economic reforms (p. 113). This mainstreaming of indigenous mapping helped roll out a kind of slow-motion counterrevolution that neutralized (or at least tried to neutralize) indigenous demands for territory and autonomy (p. 115). This effort was critical to new efforts to economically integrate Mexico and Central America through the Plan Puebla–Panamá and fashion new regional approaches to security through the Mérida Initiative. Mapping indigenous property rights also paved the way for the technique's return to prominence among U.S. military officials and security experts, who made it a key counterinsurgency tactic in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Chapter 7. Counterinsurgency and the Rise of the "Warrior Scholars"

The emphasis on recognition of indigenous rights to property, facilitated by mapping, coincided with approaches to Latin America security that emphasized formal recognition of property rights as necessary to the functioning of markets (p. 127). Peruvian economist Hernando de Soto popularized this approach, claiming that the Peruvian state could defeat the Shining Path, a Maoist insurgency, through formal recognition of de facto property rights (p. 130). De Soto's idea became tremendously influential at the World Bank, where it reinforced free-market policies. Military personnel also took note, seeing in property a means of ordering the complex terrain of urban warfare, and in forested areas a means of identifying security threats (p. 132). Geoffrey Demarest folded de Soto's emphasis on property into his own experience as a military attaché to Guatemala in the late 1980s and to Colombia in the 1990s. In particular, Demarest called for comprehensive mapping of areas without mapped property records as an effective counterinsurgency technique (p. 133). As Demarest argued, "to succeed in both counternarcotics as well as the suppression of lawlessness, an indispensable starting

point is the knowledge of ownership and the value of land." Demarest presented his argument in 1998, reprising it again in 2003 with specific regard to Colombia, just as the U.S. Army was rediscovering the value of "counterinsurgency" as a military tactic in Afghanistan and Iraq. The Army incorporated this approach into its new *Counterinsurgency Field Manual,* compiled by General David Petraeus and published in 2007 (p. 134). Among other points, the *Manual* highlighted the importance of mapping the "human terrain" as a critical aspect of counterinsurgency, revising "Red Mike" Edson's vision of the battlefield in the face of an expanding "war on terror" (p. 136).

Chapter 8. The AGS, the Bowman Expeditions, and the México Indígena Project

Demarest's vision for a global cadaster registering property ownership might never have made it out of the military archives were it not for the AGS's singular approach to "saving" geography from its academic practitioners (p. 142). In 2001, geographer Jerome Dobson left a 26-year career at the Oak Ridge National Laboratories in Tennessee to take a position at the University of Kansas (p. 144). In 2002, Demarest submitted a proposal to the Defense Intelligence Agency for determining the feasibility of creating a digital database of property ownership in Colombia (p. 146). The proposal identified the AGS as an ideal academic partner for the project. That year, Dobson became the president of the AGS. One year later, in 2003, the University of Kansas signed a joint research and education agreement with the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the Foreign Military Studies Office, both housed at nearby Fort Leavenworth. By 2005, the AGS had secured a pair of contracts worth $281,213 from the Foreign Military Studies Office to launch its Bowman Expeditions program aimed at gathering "open source intelligence" on foreign countries (p. 147). Peter Herlihy led the first expedition to Mexico that same year, mapping indigenous communities in the Huasteca Potosina in central Mexico (p. 148). Following a second round of funding that brought the cash total for the project over $700,000, Herlihy expanded the project south to the Sierra Juárez of Oaxaca (p. 149). Under the terms of his contract, Herlihy's team submitted all data gathered by the expedition to a third party, Radiance Technologies, a military contractor known for generating intelligence databases (p. 158). In 2009, the project exploded in controversy following a series of public statements made by organizations

and communities in the Sierra Juárez, claiming that Herlihy had never informed them of the military's role in the project (p. 159). Aware that the U.S. Army could easily share that information with the Mexican Army, the communities accused Herlihy and the AGS of geopiracy and demanded the return of the data collected (p. 160). The AGS, however, was undeterred, expanding its Bowman Expeditions program to the Antilles, Jordan, and Colombia with geographers from Louisiana State University, the University of Akron, Western Kentucky University, and elsewhere.

Coda. Kill the Insurgent, Save the Man: Indigenous Peoples and Human Terrain

The AGS's World Human Geography Conference in 2011 brought the three strands of our account—indigenous mapping, counterinsurgency, and academic geography—into stunning relief (p. 163). An elaborate charade to end the controversy over the México Indígena project, the conference's real purpose was to trumpet the virtues of applied human geography for producing intelligence for the massive geospatial intelligence complex now linking the military with security and intelligence agencies throughout the U.S. government (p. 165). Correspondingly, the military has funded further Bowman Expeditions, sending Herlihy and Dobson to Central America (p. 171). The new project, "CA [Central America] Indígena," expands the approach taken by the México Indígena project (p. 173). It also further outlines the strategic orientation of their approach, expanding the AGS's efforts to map the U.S. "Borderlands Region" that includes "all of Latin American countries bordering the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea." Herlihy again claims to be acting in the best of interest of indigenous peoples, providing them with detailed, accurate maps that they can use to make themselves visible to state agencies, while saying nothing about the escalating U.S. military presence in Central America, much less addressing indigenous concerns with the militarization of their territories. These challenges raise pressing issues about the continued importance of mapping to indigenous peoples' struggles for territory and autonomy (p. 174).