CASAR cordially invites you to a lecture entitled:

From the American People: Aid and Its Fragmentary States in Palestine.

by Lisa Bhungalia

Date: Monday February 22 2016
Time: 5:30 PM
Place: building 37 (behind the old Lee observatory)

War is most often theorized in relation to overt and sensational displays of sovereign power and military force. Less frequently however is war considered within the remit of development and humanitarian technologies, discourses, and practices. This talk traces the deepening entanglements of American warfare and aid in Palestine. Drawing on eighteen months of ethnographic research in the West Bank, it examines operations of the U.S. security state in the Palestinian territories through a civilian regime of aid workers, non-governmental organizations, private contractors, local entrepreneurs, and foreign experts. Based on research conducted in the West Bank on the U.S. Agency for International Development and the vast web of aid intermediaries, experts, lawyers, and contractors through which it operates, this talk explores how tactics of liberal warfare and counterinsurgency are being mobilized through the networks of aid governance. It traces in particular how the tethering of counterterrorism laws and security infrastructures to civilian aid programs has produced new modes of policing, fragmentation, and pacification across the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Through examination of these processes, this talk demonstrates how foreign aid to the Palestinians both mitigates the most deleterious effects of military rule and dispossession while extending a regime of war and policing into ever-more intimate spaces of Palestinian everyday life. In so doing, this talk offers insight into how regimes of war and violence are reproduced through mediums, practices, and institutions that emerge to realize "stability" and "peace". More broadly, it argues that the case of Palestine lends insight into the multiple forms of violence that exist within our concept of "war" - not only the spectacular and the crisis-laden, but also the mundane, bureaucratic, routinized and largely concealed.

Lisa Bhungalia is a Social and Behavioral Sciences Diversity Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Geography at Ohio State University. She received her PhD in Geography from Syracuse University where she also held a Postdoctoral Faculty Fellowship in the Humanities. Her research explores the relationship between national securitization, liberal warfare, and transnational linkages and encounters between the U.S. and the North Africa/Middle East region. Her current book project examines the deepening entanglements of regimes of war and policing and aid in Palestine with attention in particular to the role of humanitarianism and development in liberal strategies of warfare. Her work has appeared in Geopolitics, Environment and Planning A, Geojournal, and Jadaliyya among other venues.