

and counterinsurgency warfare based on the deployment of armed robots; and the connections between entertainment, simulation and US military and imperial violence. The final three explore the diffusion of Israeli technology and doctrine in urban warfare and securitization; the links between urban infrastructure and contemporary political violence; and the ways in which Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) culture is embedded within a geopolitical and political-economic setting that links domestic and colonial cities and spaces.

There are ways to challenge the new military urbanism's ideologies, tactics, and technologies and to defend and rejuvenate democratic and non-militarized visions of modern urban existence. It is to these positive possibilities that I turn in the final chapter, looking at a variety of 'counter-geographic' activists, artists, and social movements, each seeking to challenge urban violence, as now constituted, in different ways, and attempting to mobilize radical concepts of security as the bases for new political movements. Rather than the machinations of national security states, these new movements must centre on the human, urban and ecological bases of security in a world of spiralling food, water and environmental crises, burgeoning cities, rapid climate and sea-level change, and fast-diminishing fossil fuels.

## CHAPTER ONE

## War Re-enters the City

## URBAN PLANET

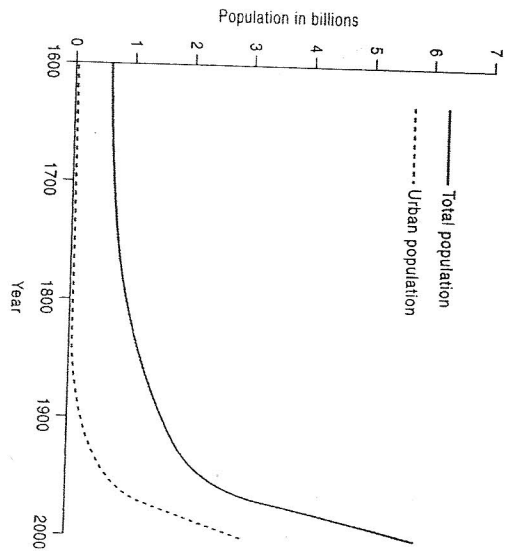
At the dawn of the twentieth century, one in ten of the Earth's 1.8 billion people lived in cities – an unprecedented proportion, even though humankind remained overwhelmingly rural and agricultural. A mere fraction of the urban population, overwhelmingly located in the booming metropolises of the global North, orchestrated the industrial, commercial and governmental affairs of an ever more interconnected colonial world. Meanwhile, in the colonized nations, urban populations remained relatively tiny, concentrated in provincial capitals and entrepôts: 'The urban populations of the British, French, Belgian and Dutch empires at the Edwardian zenith,' writes Mike Davis, 'probably didn't exceed 3 to 5 per cent of colonised humanity'.<sup>1</sup> All told, the urban population of the world in 1900 – some 180 million souls – numbered no more than the total population of the world's ten largest cities in 2007.

In the course of the next half-century, Earth's population grew steadily but unspectacularly, reaching 2.3 billion by 1950. While the urban population nearly tripled to over 500 million, it still formed less than 30 per cent of the whole. Developments in the following half-century, however, were astonishing: the greatest mass movement, combined with the greatest burst of demographic growth, in human history. Between 1957 and 2007, the world's urban population quadrupled. By 2007, half the world's 6.7 billion people could be classed as city-dwellers (Figure 1.1). *Homo sapiens* had precipitously become a predominantly urban species. It had taken almost ten thousand years – from 8000 BC to 1960 – for cities to house the world's first billion urbanites; it will take a mere fifteen for this figure to rise from three billion to four.<sup>2</sup> Dhakar, the capital of Bangladesh, a city of 400,000 in 1950, will by 2025 have mushroomed into a metropolitan area of some 22 million – a fiftyfold increase within only seventy-five years (Figure 1.2). Given the density of cities, more than half of humanity is currently squeezed onto just 2.8 per cent of our planet's land surface, and the squeeze is tightening day by day.<sup>3</sup>

1 Mike Davis, 'The Urbanization of Empire: Megacities and the Laws of Chaos', *Social Text* 22: 4, 2004, 4.

2 Humansecurity-cities.org., *Human Security for an Urban Century*, Vancouver, 2004, 9, available at [humansecuritycities.org](http://humansecuritycities.org).

3 William M. Reilly, 'Urban Populations Booming', *TerraDaily.com*, 27 June 2007.



1.1 Total world population, and total urban population, 1600–2000.

As we move into what has been called the 'urban century', there appears to be no end to this headlong urbanization of our world. In 2007, 1.2 million people were added to the world's urban population each week. By 2025, according to current estimates, there could easily be five billion urbanites, two-thirds of whom will live in 'developing' nations. By 2030, Asia alone will have 2.7 billion; the Earth's cities will be packed with 2 billion more people than they accommodate today. Twenty years further on, by 2050, fully 75 per cent of the world's estimated 9.2 billion people will most likely be living in cities.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, within just over four decades the Earth will host seven billion urban dwellers – 4 billion more than in 2007. The overwhelming majority of these will be in the burgeoning cities and megacities of Asia, Africa and Latin America. To be sure, many cities in developed nations will still be growing, but their growth will be dwarfed by urban explosion in the global South.

As demographic, political, economic and perhaps technological centres of gravity emerge in the South, massive demographic and economic shifts will inexorably continue. As recently as 1980, thirteen of the world's thirty biggest

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Habitat, *State of the World's Cities 2006/7*, United Nations Habitat: Nairobi, 2007, 4.

cities were in the 'developed world'; by 2010, this number will have dwindled to eight. By 2050, it is likely that only a few of the top thirty megacities will be located in the erstwhile 'developed' nations (Figure 1.2).

	1980	1990	2000	2010
1	21.9 Tokyo	25.1 Tokyo	26.4 Tokyo	26.4 Tokyo
2	15.6 New York	16.1 New York	18.1 Mexico City	23.6 Bombay
3	13.9 Mexico City	15.1 Mexico City	18.1 Bombay	20.2 Lagos
4	12.5 Sao Paulo	15.1 Sao Paulo	17.8 Sao Paulo	19.7 Sao Paulo
5	11.7 Shanghai	13.3 Shanghai	16.6 New York	18.7 Mexico City
6	10.0 Osaka	12.2 Bombay	13.4 Lagos	18.4 Dhaka
7	9.9 Buenos Aires	11.5 Los Angeles	13.1 Los Angeles	17.2 New York
8	9.5 Los Angeles	11.2 Buenos Aires	12.9 Calcutta	16.6 Karachi
9	9.0 Calcutta	11.0 Osaka	12.9 Shanghai	15.6 Calcutta
10	9.0 Beijing	10.9 Calcutta	12.6 Buenos Aires	15.3 Jakarta
11	8.9 Paris	10.8 Beijing	12.3 Dhaka	15.1 Delhi
12	8.7 Rio de Janeiro	10.5 Seoul	11.8 Karachi	13.9 Los Angeles
13	8.3 Seoul	9.7 Rio de Janeiro	11.7 Delhi	13.9 Metro Manila
14	8.1 Moscow	9.3 Paris	11.0 Jakarta	13.7 Buenos Aires
15	8.1 Bombay	9.0 Moscow	11.0 Osaka	13.7 Shanghai
16	7.7 London	8.8 Tianjin	10.9 Metro Manila	12.7 Cairo
17	7.3 Tianjin	8.6 Cairo	10.8 Beijing	11.8 Istanbul
18	6.9 Cairo	8.2 Delhi	10.6 Rio de Janeiro	11.5 Beijing
19	6.8 Chicago	8.0 Metro Manila	10.6 Cairo	11.5 Rio de Janeiro
20	6.3 Essen	7.9 Karachi	9.9 Seoul	11.0 Osaka
21	6.0 Jakarta	7.7 Lagos	9.6 Paris	10.0 Tianjin
22	6.0 Metro Manila	7.7 London	9.5 Istanbul	9.9 Seoul
23	5.6 Delhi	7.7 Jakarta	9.3 Moscow	9.7 Paris
24	5.3 Milan	6.8 Chicago	9.2 Tianjin	9.4 Hyderabad
25	5.1 Tehran	6.6 Dhaka	7.6 London	9.4 Moscow
26	5.0 Karachi	6.5 Istanbul	7.4 Lima	9.0 Bangkok
27	4.37 Bangkok	6.4 Tehran	7.3 Bangkok	8.8 Lima
28	4.6 St. Petersburg	6.4 Essen	7.2 Tehran	8.6 Lahore
29	4.6 Hong Kong	5.9 Bangkok	7.0 Chicago	8.2 Madras
30	4.4 Lima	5.8 Lima	6.9 Hong Kong	8.1 Tehran

1.2 World's largest thirty cities in 1980, 1990, 2000 and (projected) 2010. Table illustrates the growing domination of 'mega-cities' in the global South.

## POLARIZING WORLD

We are now learning what countries across the developing world have experienced over three decades: unstable and inequitable neoliberal economics leads to unacceptable levels of social disruption and hardship that can only be contained by brutal repression.<sup>5</sup>

The rapid urbanization of the world matters profoundly. As the UN has declared, 'the way cities expand and organize themselves, both in developed and developing countries, will be critical for humanity.'<sup>6</sup>

While relatively egalitarian cities like those in continental Western Europe tend to foster a sense of security, highly unequal societies are often marked by fear, high levels of crime and violence, and intensifying militarization. The dominance of neoliberal models of governance over the past three decades, combined with the spread of punitive and authoritarian models of policing and social control, has exacerbated urban inequalities. As a result, the urban poor are often confronted with reductions in public services on the one hand, and a palpable demonization and criminalization on the other.

Neoliberalization – the reorganization of societies through the widespread imposition of market relationships – provides today's dominant, if crisis-ridden, economic order.<sup>7</sup> Within this framework, societies tend to sell off public assets (whether utilities or public spaces) and open up domestic markets to outside capital. Market-based strategies for the distribution of public services undermine and supplant social, health and welfare programmes.<sup>8</sup>

An extraordinary expansion of financial instruments and speculative mechanisms is also crucial to neoliberalization. Every area of society becomes marketized and financialized. States and consumers alike pile up drastic financial debt, securitized through arcane instruments of global stock markets. By 2006, just before the onset of the global financial crash, financial markets were trading more in a month than the annual gross domestic product of the entire world.<sup>9</sup>

In practice, the much-vaunted economic axioms of 'privatization, structural adjustment' and the 'Washington consensus' camouflage disturbing

<sup>5</sup> Madeleine Bunting, 'Faith, Belief, Trust: This Economic Orthodoxy Was Built on Superstition', *Guardian*, 6 October 2008.

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Population Fund, *The State of World Population 2007: Unleashing the Potential of Urban Growth*, United Nations, New York: Renaissance Polytechnic Institute, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> See Michael Pryke, 'City Rhythms: Neoliberalism and the Developing World', in John Allen, Doreen Massey and Michael Pryke, eds, *Unsettling Cities*, London: Routledge, 1999, 229–70.

<sup>8</sup> Chris Wright and Samantha Alvarez, 'Expropriate, Accumulate, Financialise', *Mute Magazine*, 10 May 2007, available at [www.muteamute.org](http://www.muteamute.org).

<sup>9</sup> Randy Martin, 'Where Did The Future Go?', *Logos* 5: 1, 2006.

transformations. They serve as euphemisms for what Gene Ray has called 'the coordinated coercions of the global debtors' prison, for the pulverization of local labor and environmental protections, and for the breaking open of all markets to the uncontrolled operations of finance capital'.<sup>10</sup> Wealth has been stripped from poor and vulnerable economies through the flagrant predations of global capital, organized from a mere handful of megacities in the North. Structural adjustment policies (SAPs) imposed on the world's poor nations by the IMF and the World Bank between the late 1970s and the late 1990s re-engineered economies while ignoring issues of social welfare and human security. The result was enormous disruption, widespread insecurity, and massive, informal urbanization. Deteriorating conditions in increasingly marketized agricultural areas – often combined with the mandated withdrawal of welfare systems under the strictures of the SAPs – forced many people to migrate to cities.

Invariably, then, 'liberalization' has meant a collapse in formal employment opportunities for marginal urban populations; a withering of fiscal, social, and medical safety-nets, public health systems, public utilities, and education services; and a massive growth of both consumer debt and the informal sector of economies. Such fiscal and debt regimes have often tended, as Mike Davis puts it, to 'strip-mine the public finances of developing countries and throttle new investment in housing and infrastructure'. SAPs have thus worked in many cases to 'decimate public employment, destroy import-substitution industries, and displace tens of thousands of rural producers unable to compete against the heavily subsidized agri-capitalism of the rich countries'.<sup>11</sup>

Such processes have been a key driving force behind the global ratcheting-up of inequality within the past three decades. Across the world, social fissures and extreme polarization – intensified by the global spread of neoliberal capitalism and market fundamentalism – have tended to concentrate most visibly and densely in burgeoning cities. The urban landscape is now populated by a few wealthy individuals, an often precarious middle class, and a mass of outcasts.

Almost everywhere, it seems, wealth, power and resources are becoming ever more concentrated in the hands of the rich and the super-rich, who increasingly sequester themselves within gated urban cocoons and deploy their own private security or paramilitary forces for the tasks of boundary enforcement and access control. 'In many cities around the world, wealth and

<sup>10</sup> Gene Ray, 'Tactical Media and the End of the End of History', *Afterimage* 34: 1–2, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> See Nigel Harris and Ida Fabricius, eds, *Cities and Structural Adjustment*, London: University College London Press, 1996.

<sup>12</sup> Davis, 'Urbanization of Empire', 2.

poverty coexist in close proximity,' wrote Anna Tibajuk, director of the UN's Habitat Programme, in October 2008. 'Rich, well-served neighbourhoods and gated residential communities are often situated near dense inner-city or peri-urban slum communities that lack even the most basic of services. [The divide is often] prominently marked by electrified fences and high walls, often patrolled by armed private security companies with killer dogs.'<sup>13</sup>

Such trends have two related dimensions. On the one hand, global neoliberalism has accentuated already yawning inequalities between rich nations and poor nations. As markets, speculative bubbles, and mergers add to the monopolistic power of dominant capital, so ever larger portions of wealth accrue to ever smaller numbers of people and to the urban enclaves in which they cluster. 'Gaps in income between the poorest and the richest countries have continued to widen,' confirms the United Nations. 'In 1960 the 20 per cent of the world's people in the richest countries had 30 times the income of the poorest 20 per cent in 1997, 74 times as much.'<sup>14</sup>

Even World Bank Economists noted with concern in 2002 that 'the richest 1 per cent of people in the world get as much income as the poorest 57 per cent.'<sup>15</sup> Startlingly, by 1988, the richest 5 per cent of the world's population had an average income seventy-eight times greater than that of the poorest 5 per cent; just five years later, this had risen to a multiple of 114. At the same time, the poorest 5 per cent of the world's population actually grew poorer, losing a full quarter of their real income.<sup>16</sup>

By 2006, an estimated 10.1 million individuals around the world had a net worth of more than \$1 million, excluding the value of their homes. This was an increase of 6 per cent from the previous year. Each individual within this elite group owned assets totalling, on average, more than \$4 million. This 'transnational capitalist class' now forms what Citigroup researchers have called 'the dominant drivers of demand' in many contemporary economies. They operate to skim the 'cream off productivity surges and technology monopolies, then spend ... their increasing shares of national wealth as fast as possible on luxury goods and services.'<sup>17</sup> In the process, they generate enormous ecological and carbon footprints. Meanwhile, amid the turmoil of

collapsing finance systems, 'most of the world watches the great binge on television.'<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, and not surprisingly, social inequalities are also rising rapidly within nations, regions and cities. Many economists would concur with Giovanni Andrea Cornia when he argues that 'most of the recent surge in income polarization [within nations] would appear to be related to the policy drive towards domestic deregulation and external liberalization.'<sup>19</sup> This has tended to concentrate wealth within social classes, corporations and locations that are capable of profiting from privatization and the extension of finance capital, while undermining wages, wealth and security for more marginalized people and places.

In the US, for example, the Gini coefficient – the best measure of social inequality – rose from an already high level of 0.394 in 1970 to 0.462 in 2000. (A Gini score of 0 indicates perfect equality, with everyone having the same income; a score of 1 represents perfect inequality, with one person collecting all the income and everyone else having an income of zero. A score above 0.3 now exceeded by only a handful of very poor countries in Africa and Latin America.<sup>20</sup>

By 2007, the income of the wealthiest fifth of the US population averaged \$168,170 a year, while the poorest fifth scraped by on an average of \$11,352. It's been a feeding frenzy for a few dozen super-rich: the US had fifty-one billionaires in 2003 and 313 the next year.<sup>21</sup> In the United States, such extreme concentrations of wealth are combined with extraordinarily high levels of incarceration among poorer groups. As the world's pre-eminent 'penal democracy',<sup>22</sup> the US, with 5 per cent of the world's population, held fully 24 per cent of the world's prisoners (more than two million people) in 2007.<sup>23</sup>

The UK, meanwhile, is now the most polarized nation in Western Europe apart from Italy. Its income inequality – again measured by the Gini coefficient

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., xiii.

<sup>19</sup> Giovanni Andrea Cornia, 'The Impact of Liberalisation and Globalisation on Within-country Income Inequality', *CESifo Economic Studies* 49:4, 2003, 581.  
<sup>20</sup> Pat Murphy, 'Peak America – Is Our Time Up?', *New Solutions* 7, 2005, 2, available at [www.communitysolution.org](http://www.communitysolution.org).

<sup>21</sup> Holly Sklar, 'Boom Time for Billionaires', *ZNet Commentary*, 15 October 2004, cited in Henry Giroux, 'The Conservative Assault on America: Cultural Politics, Education and the New Authoritarianism', *Cultural Politics* 1:2, 143.

<sup>22</sup> Joy James, ed., *Wartime in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

<sup>23</sup> Ashley Seager, 'Development: US Fails to Measure Up on "Human Index"', *Guardian*, 17 July 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Cited in 'UN-HABITAT unveils State of the World's Cities report', 23 October 2008, available at [www.unhabitat.org](http://www.unhabitat.org).

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Development Project, *Human Development Report 1999*, United Nations: New York, 1999, 36.

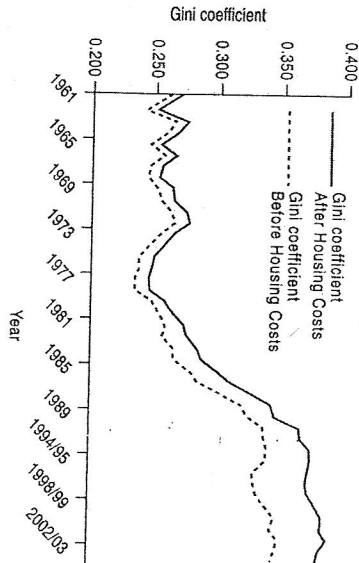
<sup>15</sup> Branco Milanovic, 'True World Income Distribution, 1988 and 1993: First Calculations Based on Household Surveys Alone', *The Economic Journal* 112, 2002, 88.  
<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 51–92.

<sup>17</sup> Both quotes from Mike Davis and Daniel Bertrand Monk, eds, *Evil Paradises: Dreamworlds of Neoliberalism*, New York: New Press, 2007, xi–xii.



– has risen dramatically since the early 1960s, with the remodelling of the economy through radical re-regulation, privatization and neoliberalization (Figure 1.3). For the richest 10 per cent of the UK population, incomes rose in real terms by 68 per cent between 1979 and 1995. Their collective income now matches that of the nation's poorest 70 per cent. During the same period, incomes for the poorest 10 per cent of UK households actually fell by 8 per cent (not considering housing costs). This rapidly reversed reductions in inequality achieved during the post-war Keynesian boom in the UK.

After housing costs, the UK's richest 10 per cent increased their share of the nation's marketable wealth from 57 per cent in 1976 to 71 per cent in 2003. At the same time, according to Philip Bond in the *Independent*, 'the speculative capital that could be deployed or invested by the bottom 50 per cent of the British population fell from 12 per cent to just 1 per cent'.<sup>24</sup>



1.3 Radical growth in income inequality in the UK between 1961 and 2002/3 for income before housing costs (BHC) and after housing costs (AHC), as measured by the Gini coefficient.

The imposition of market fundamentalism had particularly spectacular effects on the ex-Communist Comecon block after the collapse of communism in the late 1980s. Not only did this create a handful of billionaires and oligarchs but, at the same time, it increased the number of people living in poverty and deep insecurity from three million in 1988 to 170 million in 2004.<sup>25</sup>

Globally, by 2007, well over a billion people – a third of all urban

<sup>24</sup> Philip Bond, 'Outside View: The End of Capitalism as We Know It?', *Independent*, 23 March 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, 'Urbanization of Empire', 12.

dwellers – were leading a highly precarious existence in fast-growing slums and informal settlements.<sup>26</sup> Increasingly, the developing world has come to be dominated by immiserized shanty-town populations whose daily insecurities encourage a receptivity to radical, violently anti-Western ideologies and movements. Most residents of informal settlements lead an especially precarious existence because they constitute what Mike Davis calls an 'outcast proletariat'. 'This is a mass of humanity', he writes, 'structurally and biologically redundant to global [capital] accumulation and the corporate matrix'.<sup>27</sup> Neither consumers nor producers, unintegrated into the dominant corporate system of globalization, they instead try to benefit indirectly, through 'black economies' and informal labour from the urban cores they literally surround.

It is all too easy for political, corporate or military elites to portray the residents of informal settlements as existential, even sub-human, threats to the 'formal' neoliberal economy and its archipelago of privileged urban enclaves of residence, production, speculation, transportation, and tourism. Everywhere, the urban boundaries between the 'insides' and the 'outsides' of our planet's dominant economic order present sites of palpable militarization, as state and corporate security forces seek not only to police but also, often, to profit from the relations between the two.<sup>28</sup> Shanty settlements are frequently bulldozed by government planners, police forces or militaries, whether to clear the way for modern infrastructure or real-estate development, to address purported threats of crime or disease, or simply to push the marginalized populations out of sight of the enclaves.

Clearly, however, just as public, social, and health policies have proved ill-suited to deal with the insecurities created by massive informal settlements,<sup>29</sup> so the policies and doctrines of law enforcement and the military are ill-equipped to address their growth. Such places pose what Mike Davis terms 'unique problems of imperial order and social control that conventional geopolitics has barely begun to register'. He predicts, soberly, that 'if the point of the war against terrorism is to pursue the enemy into his sociological and cultural labyrinth, then the poor peripheries of developing cities will be the permanent battlefields of the twenty-first century'.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, London: Verso, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> Davis, 'Urbanization of Empire', 11.

<sup>28</sup> See Loïc Wacziarg, 'The Militarization of Urban Marginality: Lessons from the Brazilian Metropolis', *International Political Sociology* 2: 1, 2008, 56–74.

<sup>29</sup> See Humansecurity-cities.org, *Human Security for an Urban Century*, 9.

<sup>30</sup> Davis, 'Urbanization of Empire', 15.

At the same time, both national and international security policies centre on securing the rapidly merging archipelago of urban enclaves organized by and for the very groups that most benefit from neoliberalization. Yet the moorings of the super-rich are always tenuous, and this emerging class demonstrates the ultimate in *transnational rootlessness*. 'The people of the "upper tier" do not apparently belong to the place they inhabit,' writes Zygmunt Bauman. 'Their concerns lie (or rather float) elsewhere.'<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, certain cities – most notably London – are becoming radically transformed, re-engineered as primary sites for the world's uber-wealthy. Through grandiose city-planning, others – notably Dubai – are emerging as supercharged, hyperreal embodiments of global extremes, aimed primarily at luring the super-rich for vacations and possibly more. As Mike Davis writes, in Dubai developers 'are invited to plug into high-tech clusters, entertainment zones, artificial islands, glass-domed "snow mountains", *Truman Show* suburbs, cities within cities – whatever is big enough to be seen from space and bursting with architectural steroids.'<sup>32</sup>

#### OLD MILITARY URBANISMS

Looking at the urban landscapes of Dubai, one can readily forget that many of the world's cities originate, at least in part, as military constructions. The history of the imagination, construction and inhabitation of urban places cannot be told without considering the central role of such places as the critical sites of militarized power and control.<sup>33</sup> In premodern and early modern times, cities and city-states were the primary agents, as well as the main targets, of war. The sacking of fortified cities, together with the killing of their inhabitants, was the central event in war.<sup>34</sup> Partly allegorical stories of such acts make up a good part of the Bible – especially *Jeremiah* and *Lamentations* – as well as other ancient and classical texts. 'Myths of urban ruin grow at our culture's root,' contends Marshall Berman.<sup>35</sup>

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the emerging modern European

31 Zygmunt Bauman, 'City of Fears, City of Hopes', London: Goldsmiths College, University of London, New Cross, 2003, 16, available at [www.goldsmiths.ac.uk](http://www.goldsmiths.ac.uk).

32 Mike Davis, 'Sand, fear and money in Dubai', in Denis and Monk, eds, *Evil Paradises*, New York: New Press, 2007, 51.

33 See Max Weber, *The City*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1958; Lewis Mumford, *The City in History*, New York: MJF Books, 1961.

34 See Christopher Gravett, *Medieval Siege Warfare*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing.

35 Marshall Berman, 'Falling Towers: City Life After Urbicide', in Dennis Crowe, ed., *Geography and Identity*, Washington: Maisonneuve Press, 1996, 172–192.

nation-states – 'bordered power containers' within the early systems of global imperial capitalism – began to seek a monopoly on political violence.<sup>36</sup> 'The states caught up with the forward gallop of the towns' as agents of war, writes Fernand Braudel.<sup>37</sup> The expanding imperial and metropolitan cities that lay at the core of these nation-states no longer organized their own armies or defences, but they maintained political power and reach. Such cities directed violence, control, and repression, as well as the colonial acquisition of territory, raw materials, wealth, and labour power.<sup>38</sup>

Since then, cities have been central agents in the many forms of violence brought about by capitalist imperialism. A crucial element has been their capacity to 'centralise military, political and economic activities and in so doing draw otherwise disparate social formations into hierarchical and exploitative structural relations at variously extensive spatial scales.'<sup>39</sup> But large-scale repressive violence was not always required within the colonial cities that served to organize the empires of Western powers; both middle and poorer classes were often integrated within, and dependent upon, exploitative colonial economies.<sup>40</sup> Yet war, erasure and the violent suppression of revolts – against rural revolutionary guerrillas, against independence movements, against indigenous communities and industries, against demonized minorities – was equally indispensable to colonial conquest and exploitation. Indeed, as Pierre Mesnard y Méndez writes, the 'economic basis for the triumph of capitalism was colonial warfare-plunder from the 15th to the 18th and 19th centuries.'<sup>41</sup> More specifically, the construction of Europe's imperial empires was sustained by a wide spectrum of urban wars that lurched between the exploitation and the persistent struggles taking place in the colonies, and the equally volatile politics of imperial metropolises at the 'heart of empire.'<sup>42</sup>

Techniques and technologies of colonial urban warfare and repression

36 Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence*, Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1987.

37 Fernand Braudel, *Capitalism and Material Life*, New York: Harper Collins, 1973, 398.

38 See Felix Driver and David Gilbert, ed., *Imperial Cities*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

39 Goonewardena and Kipfer, 'Postcolonial Urbicide'.

40 See Davis, 'Urbanization Of Empire', 9; Anthony King, *Urbanism, Colonialism and the World Economy*, London: Routledge, 1991.

41 Pierre Mesnard y Méndez, 'Capitalism Means/Needs War', *Socialism and Democracy* 16: 2, 2002.

42 See Henri Lefebvre, *The Critique of Everyday Life*, vol. 1, London: Verso, 1991; Kipfer and Goonewardena, 'Colonization and the New Imperialism'.

travelled back and forth between colonial frontiers and European metropolitan heartlands. (Foucault called such links 'boomerang effects, as discussed in the Introduction.)

European powers fought rebellions and insurgencies in the cities and rural areas that lay on their empires' fringes, while at the same time working to protect 'their exploding capital cities against homegrown rebellions and revolutions nourished by class struggles.'<sup>43</sup> In the process:

The battleground shifted from the open fields to the city walls and further positioned itself within the heart of the city, as a fight for the city itself. If historical siege warfare ended when the envelope of the city was broken and entered, urban warfare started at the point of entering the city.<sup>44</sup>

Such colonial urban wars and boomerang effects provide contemporary reminders about the perils of attempting to placate guerilla resistance in occupied cities through superior military power, acts of brutal, urbicidal violence, or aggressive physical restructuring. Spatial experiments in the laboratory of the colonial city have often set the stage for the replanning of the colonial metropole. In the 1840s, for instance, after Marshall Thomas Robert Bugeaud<sup>45</sup> succeeded in quelling the insurrection in Algiers through the combination of atrocities and the destruction of entire neighbourhoods to make way for modern roads, his techniques of 'urban planning skipped over the Mediterranean, from the Algerian countryside, where they were experimented with, to the streets and alleyways of Paris.'<sup>46</sup> To undermine the revolutionary ferment of the poor of Paris, Bugeaud devised a plan for the violent reorganization of the city through the construction of wide military highways – a plan later implemented by his avid reader Baron Haussmann.<sup>47</sup>

By the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, industrial cities in the global North had grown in synchrony with the killing power of technology. They provided the men and matériel to sustain the massive wars of the twentieth

century, while their (often female-staffed) industries and neighbourhoods emerged as the prime targets for total war. The industrial city thus became 'in its entirety a space for war. Within a few years . . . bombing moved from the selective destruction of key sites within cities to extensive attacks on urban areas and, finally, to instantaneous annihilation of entire urban spaces and populations.'<sup>48</sup>

Sometimes, exact replicas of the vernacular architecture of the cities to be bombed were built to facilitate the honing of the process. In Dugway Proving Grounds in Utah, for example, the US Army Air Force built exact replicas of Berlin tenements beside Japanese villages of wood and rice paper, and burned them repeatedly so as to perfect the design of its incendiary bombs.<sup>49</sup>

#### THE BOMBARDIER'S EYE

With the mutually assured destruction of the Cold War, such subtleties became less necessary. 'With the inter-continental missile,' writes Martin Shaw, 'the capacity to simultaneously destroy all major centres of urban life became a symbol of the degeneration of war.'<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, great efforts were made in the US during the Cold War to construct a bastion against both nuclear Armageddon and the Communist menace.<sup>51</sup> From these efforts emerged the nuclear family, the suburban house, and the nuclear state, fused into the political-cultural bastion of American life.

Right up to the start of the twenty-first century, the capture of strategic and politically important cities has remained 'the ultimate symbol of conquest and national survival.'<sup>52</sup> Moreover, ever 'since the demise of obvious systems of urban fortifications, the design, planning and organization of cities has been shaped by strategic and geopolitical concerns – a topic neglected in mainstream urban studies.'<sup>53</sup> In addition to providing the famous 'machine for living' and bringing light and air to the

<sup>43</sup> Eyal Weizman and Phil Mitchell, 'Military Operations as Urban Planning', *Mute Magazine*, August 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> In 1847 Bugeaud wrote perhaps the first Western manual of urban warfare, *La Guerre des Rues et des Maisons* [The War of Streets and Houses], republished in 1997 by Jean-Paul Rocher, Paris.

<sup>46</sup> Eyal Weizman, introduction to 'The War of Streets and Houses' by Thomas Bugeaud, web exclusive, *Cabinet* 22, Summer 2006, available at [www.cabinetmagazine.org](http://www.cabinetmagazine.org).

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Martin Shaw, *War and Genocide*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003.

<sup>49</sup> See Mike Davis, *Dead Cities, and Other Tales*, New York: New Press, 2003, chapter 3.

<sup>50</sup> Martin Shaw, 'New Wars of the City: Relationships of "Urbicide" and "Genocide"', in Stephen Graham, ed., *Cities, War and Terrorism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004, 143.

<sup>51</sup> Laura McEnaney, *Civil Defense Begins at Home*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

<sup>52</sup> Martin Shaw, 'New Wars of the City', unpublished manuscript, 2001, available at [www.martinshaw.org](http://www.martinshaw.org).

<sup>53</sup> Ryan Bishop and Greg Clancey, 'The City-as-Target, or Perpetuation and Death', in Graham, ed., *Cities, War and Terrorism*, 54–73.

urban masses, modernist planners and architects envisaged the situating of housing towers within parks as a means of reducing the vulnerability of cities to aerial bombing. Such towers were also designed to raise urbanites above the killer gas then expected to lie within the bombs.<sup>54</sup>

Along with the 'white flight' to the suburbs, early Cold War urban planning in the US sought to see US cities 'through the bombardier's eye';<sup>55</sup> and actively tried to stimulate decentralization and sprawl as means of reducing the nation's vulnerability to a pre-emptive Soviet nuclear attack.<sup>56</sup> And it is often forgotten that the massive US interstate highway system was initially labelled a 'defense highway' system and was partly designed to sustain military mobilization and evacuation in the event of global nuclear war. Announcing the plan in 1954, Vice President Richard Nixon argued that its prime raison d'être was to 'meet the demands of catastrophe or defense, should an atomic war come'.<sup>57</sup> Meanwhile world, both by Soviet and Western planners and by foreign aid programmes, as a means of shoring up geopolitical support on the globally stretched frontiers of the Cold War.<sup>58</sup>

Back in the United States, meanwhile, massive new high-tech districts such as California's Silicon Valley were forged as motors of a new 'knowledge economy' centred on emerging 'global' cities, as is well known. Much less recognized is the fact that such 'technopolis' were also the key foundries for the militarized control technologies which sustained the Cold War and were later mobilized as the basis for the transformation of US forces through the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, the imperatives faced by the new military science of cybernetics quickly expanded from the remote control of missiles to the task of organizing new means of rebuilding US cities during

<sup>54</sup> See José Luis Sert and International Congresses for Modern Architecture, *Our Cities Survive? An ABC of Urban Problems, their Analysis, their Solutions, Based on the Proposals Formulated by the C.I.A.M.*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Gallison, 'War against the Center', *Grey Room* 4, 2001, 29.

<sup>56</sup> Gallison, 'War against the Center', 5–33; Michael Quinn Dudley, 'Sprawl as Strategy: City Planners Face the Bomb', *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 21: 1, 2001, 52–63; Matthew Farish, 'Another Anxious Urbanism: Simulating Defense and Disaster in Cold War America', in Graham, ed., *Cities, War and Terrorism*, 93–109.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Dan McNichol, *The Roads That Built America: The Incredible Story of the US Interstate System*, New York: Sterling Publishing, 2006, 103.

<sup>58</sup> Michelle Provoost, 'New towns on the Cold War frontier', *Eurozine*, June 2006, available at [www.eurozine.com](http://www.eurozine.com).

<sup>59</sup> See Manuel Castells, 'High Technology and the Transition From the Urban Welfare State to the Suburban Warfare State', chapter 5 in *The Informational City*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989; Anne Markusen, et al., *The Rise of the Gunbelt: The Military Remapping of Industrial America*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

the years of mass 'slum' clearance in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as building early cable TV networks.<sup>60</sup>

We should also not forget the more indirect geopolitical and international security implications of Cold War geographies and architectures of urbanization. State-sponsored suburbanization, for example, was the central axiom of the 'military Keynesianism' that sustained the US during the era of the Cold War. Together, as Andrew Ross has argued, Cold War militarization and technological research and rapid, state-sponsored suburbanization can-in-fact be considered 'the twin economic anchors of the Pax Americana', and, to the degree that they still are, present a clear and present danger to anyone unlucky enough to get in the way of the fuel that supplies their energy needs.<sup>61</sup>

On colonial and imperial frontiers, meanwhile, the Cold War was characterized by a complex array of very 'hot' urban guerilla, independence and proxy wars. Brutal full-scale wars or low-intensity urban struggles in Seoul (1950), Algiers (1954–62), Huế (1968), Prague (1968), Northern Ireland (1968–1998), South Africa (1948–90), Israel-Palestine (1948–) and elsewhere fused with struggles within the imperial metropolitan cores of the North over the 'right of the city' – the civil rights movement; anti-racist, anti-war, environmental and post-colonial social movements; urban riots.<sup>62</sup>

For Western military theorists, though, these were always seen to be largely irrelevant side-shows to the main preoccupation: plans for planetary nuclear 'extremism',<sup>63</sup> for the instant erasure of entire systems of cities from the face of the Earth, and for massed 'Air-Land' battles between Soviet and NATO forces across a European plain. It is fitting, then, that the physical legacies of Cold War military urbanism in the global North are dominated by extraordinary subterranean burrowings designed to ensure the survival of political elites and samples of the wider population in the Strangelovian worlds of the post-apocalyptic future.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Jennifer Light, *From Warfare to Welfare: Defense Intellectuals and Urban Problems in Cold War America*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew Ross, 'Duct Tape Nation', *Harvard Design Magazine* 20, 2004, 2.

<sup>62</sup> See Kipfer and Goonewardena, 'Colonization and the New Imperialism: On the Meaning of Urbicide Today', 1–39.

<sup>63</sup> See E. P. Thompson, 'Notes on extremism: The last stage of civilization', in E. P. Thompson, ed., *Extremism and Cold War*, London: NLB, 1982.

<sup>64</sup> See, for example, Tom Vanderbilt, *Survival City: Adventures Among the Ruins of Atomic America*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002.



## GLOBAL IMPLSIONS

War has entered the city again – the sphere of the everyday.<sup>65</sup>

In the 'new' wars of the post-Cold War era – wars which increasingly straddle the 'technology gaps' that separate advanced industrial nations from informal fighters – the world's burgeoning cities are the key sites. Indeed, urban areas have become the lightning conductors for our planet's political violence.

Warfare, like everything else, is being urbanized. The great geopolitical contests – of cultural change, ethnic conflict and diasporic social mixing; of economic re-regulation and liberalization; of militarization, informatization and resource exploitation; of ecological change – are, to a growing extent, boiling down to violent conflicts in the key strategic sites of our age: contemporary cities. The world's geopolitical struggles increasingly articulate around violent conflicts over urban strategic sites, and in many societies the violence surrounding such civil and civic warfare strongly shapes quotidian urban life.

In the process, the distinctions between wars within nations and wars between nations radically blur, making long-standing military/civilian binaries increasingly unhelpful.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, what this book labels the new military urbanism tends to 'presume a world where civilians do not exist'.<sup>67</sup> All human subjects are thus increasingly rendered as real or potential fighters, terrorists or insurgents, legitimate targets.

Strategies for the deliberate attack of the systems and places that support civilian urban life have only become more sophisticated since the mass urban annihilation that characterized the twentieth century. The deliberate devastation of urban living spaces, by state and non-state actors alike, continues apace. Fuelled by this are multiple, parallel transformations that characterise the post-colonial post-Cold War world.

Here we must consider a veritable blizzard of factors: the unleashing of previously constrained ethnic hatreds since the end of the bipolar system of the Cold War; the proliferation of fundamentalist religious and ethno-nationalist political groups motivated by hatred of urban cosmopolitanism; the militarization of gangs, drug cartels, militias, corrupt political regimes and

65 Philip Misselwitz and Eyal Weizman, 'Military Operations as Urban Planning', in *Territories: Islands, Camps and Other States of Utopia*, ed. Anselme Franke, Berlin: KW, Institute for Contemporary Art, 272.

66 Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, 1.

67 Ibid., 31. See also Derek Gregory, Editorial: 'The Death of the Civilian?', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24: 5, 633–638.

law enforcement agencies, all effectively undermining the state's monopoly of violence; the collapse of certain national and local states; the urbanization of populations and geography; the increasing accessibility of heavy weapons; a crisis of increasing social polarization at all geographical scales already discussed; and the growing scarcity of many essential resources.

In Africa, for instance, there has been rapid urbanization, social hyper-inequality, a proliferation of wars over key global resources, and radical shifts in the political economy of states in the past quarter-century. With many states losing their monopoly on both violence and territory, coercion becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. 'Military manpower is bought and sold on a market in which the identity of suppliers and purchasers means almost nothing', writes Achille Mbembe. 'Urban militias, private armies, armies of regional lords, private security firms, and state armies all claim the right to exercise violence or to kill'.<sup>68</sup>

To this lethal cocktail we must add the destabilizing effects of structural adjustment policies, the United States' increasingly aggressive and violent interventions in a widening range of nations, and its long-term support for many a brutal regime. Added to this, the break-up of Communist or authoritarian states has often unleashed long-repressed ethno-nationalist aspirations and hatreds which often manifest themselves in the deliberate targeting of the sites and symbols of cosmopolitan mixing: cities and their architectural embodiments of collective memory. As in the Balkans during the early 1990s, contemporary genocidal violence is often shot through – if readers will pardon the pun – with deliberate attempts at uricide: the killing of cities and the devastation of their symbols and architectures of pluralism and cosmopolitanism.<sup>69</sup> All too often, then, the heterogeneities and fluidities inherent in contemporary city life fall within the cross-hairs of a wide spectrum of cultural fundamentalisms seeking targets, scapegoats, certainties, and objects suitable for cultural or architectural erasure. Indeed, the calls to violence against cities must themselves be seen as attempts to form political communities based on certainty and simplicity. Stereotyping and othering the immense complexity of the city as a single, pure identity becomes a crucial prelude to calling for violence against it.<sup>70</sup>

Collectively, these factors are now forcing what the anthropologist Arjun

68 Achille Mbembe, 'Necropolitics', *Public Culture* 15:1, 2003, 32.

69 See Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, London: Reaktion Books, 2006.

70 Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*, 7. See also Jean-Luc Nancy, 'In Praise of the Melée', in Jean-Luc Nancy *A Finite Thinking*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Appadurai has called an 'implosion of global and national politics into the urban world'<sup>71</sup> – a process which has led to a proliferation of bloody, and largely urban, wars. Many of these, in turn, have stimulated not only vast migrations but also the construction of city-scale refugee camps to accommodate the displaced populations, who already numbered some fifty million by 2002.<sup>72</sup>

The permeation of organized, political violence within and through cities and systems of cities is complicated by the fact that much 'planned' urban change, even in times of relative peace, itself involves warlike levels of violence, destabilization, rupture, forced expulsion and place annihilation.<sup>73</sup> Particularly within the dizzying peaks and troughs of capitalist and neoliberal urbanism or the implementation of programmes for large-scale urban 'renewal', 'regeneration' or 'renaissance', state-led planning often amounts to the legitimized clearance of vast tracts of cities in the name of the removal of decay, of modernization, improvement, or ordering, of economic competition, or of facilitating technological change and capital accumulation and speculation.<sup>74</sup>

While tracts of booming cities are often erased through state-engineered speculation, the many cities that are shrinking because of de-industrialization, global industrial relocation, and demographic emptying are also vulnerable to clean-sweep planning. 'The economically, politically and socially driven processes of creative-destruction, through abandonment and redevelopment,' suggests David Harvey, 'are often every bit as destructive as arbitrary acts of war. Much of contemporary Baltimore, with its 40,000 abandoned houses, looks like a war zone to rival Sarajevo.'<sup>75</sup>

#### WAR UNBOUND

In such a context, and given the increasingly extreme social inequalities, it is no surprise that Western military theorists and researchers are now particularly preoccupied with how the geographies of cities, especially the cities of the global South, are beginning to influence both the geopolitics and the technoscience of

<sup>71</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996, 152.

<sup>72</sup> See Michel Agier, *Between War and City: Towards an Urban Anthropology of Refugee Camps*, *Ethnography* 3: 3, 2002, 317–341.

<sup>73</sup> Berman, 'Falling Towers'.

<sup>74</sup> For an excellent example, see Greg Clancey, 'Vast Clearings: Emergency Technology and American De-urbanization, 1930–1945', *Cultural Politics* 2: 1, 2006, 49–76.

<sup>75</sup> David Harvey, 'The City as a Body Politic', in Jane Schneider and Ida Susser, eds, *Wounded Cities: Destruction and Reconstruction in a Globalized World*, eds. New York: Berg, 2003, 26.

post-Cold War political violence. After long periods of preaching the avoidance of urban conflict or, conversely, the annihilation of urban centres from afar through strategic bombing, military doctrine addressing the challenges of military operations within cities is rapidly emerging from under what a Canadian colonel, Jean Servielle, recently termed 'the dust of history and the ... weight of nuclear deterrence'.<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, almost unnoticed within 'civil' urban social science, a shadow system of military urban research is rapidly being established, funded by Western military research budgets. As Keith Dickson, a US military theorist of urban warfare, puts it, the increasing perception within Western militaries is that 'for Western military forces, asymmetric warfare in urban areas will be the greatest challenge of this century ... The city will be the strategic high ground – whoever controls it will dictate the course of future events in the world.'<sup>77</sup>

The consensus among the theorists pushing for this shift is that 'modern urban combat operations will become one of the primary challenges of the 21st century'.<sup>78</sup> In this vein, Major Kelly Houlgate, a US Marine Corps commentator, notes that between 1984 and 2004, 'of 26 conflicts fought over by US forces ... 21 have involved urban areas, and 10 have been exclusively urban'.<sup>79</sup>

The widening adoption of urban-warfare doctrine follows centuries of Western military planners preaching a mantra articulated in 1500 BC by the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu, that the 'worst policy is to attack cities'. It follows a Cold War marked by an obsession with massive, superpower-led Air-Land engagements centred on the northern European plain, within and above the spaces between intentionally by-passed European city-regions. Although Western forces fought numerous wars in cities of the developing world during the Cold War, as part of wider struggles against independence movements, terrorist movements and hot proxy wars, as already mentioned, such conflicts were seen by military theorists in the West as unusual side-shows to Air-Land and nuclear engagements, the imagined main events.

As well as the military and geopolitical catastrophe that is the overwhelmingly urban war in Iraq, there are iconic military operations such as the US 'Black Hawk Down' humiliations in Mogadishu in 1991,

<sup>76</sup> Jean Servielle, 'Cities and War', *Doctrine* 3, 2004, 43–44.

<sup>77</sup> Keith Dickson, 'The War on Terror: Cities as the Strategic High Ground', unpublished paper, 2002.

<sup>78</sup> Defense Intelligence Reference Document (DIRC), *The Urban Century: Developing World Urban Trends and Possible Factors Affecting Military Operations*, MCLA-1586-003-9, Quantico, VA: United States Marine Corps, 1997, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Kelly Houlgate, 'Urban Warfare Transforms the Corps', *The Naval Institute: Proceedings*, November 2004, available at [www.navalinstitute.com](http://www.navalinstitute.com).

US operations in Kosovo in 1999 and Beirut in the 1980s, and various US operations in the Caribbean and Central America: Panama City (1989), Grenada (1983), Port-au-Prince (1994). Urban conflicts such as those in Grozny in Chechnya (1994), Sarajevo (1992–5), Georgia and South Ossetia (2008), and Israel-Palestine (1947–) also loom large in current military debates about the urbanization of warfare.

The US military's focus on operations within the domestic urban sphere is also being dramatically strengthened by the so-called *War on Terror*,<sup>80</sup> which designates cities – whether US or foreign – and their key infrastructures as 'battlespaces'. Viewed through such a lens, the Los Angeles riots of 1992, the various attempts to securitize urban cores during major sports events or political summits, the military response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005, the challenges of 'homeland security' in US cities – all become 'low-intensity' urban military operations comparable to conducting counter-insurgency warfare in an Iraqi city.<sup>81</sup> 'Lessons learned' reports drawn up after military deployments whose goal was to contain the Los Angeles riots in 1992, for example, credit the 'success' of the mission to the fact that 'the enemy' – the local population – was easy to outmaneuver given their simple battle tactics and strategies.<sup>82</sup> High-tech targeting practices such as unmanned drones and organized satellite surveillance programmes, previously used to target spaces beyond the nation to (purportedly) make the nation safe, are beginning to colonize the domestic spaces of the nation itself.<sup>83</sup> Military doctrine has also come to treat the operation of gangs within US cities as 'urban insurgency', 'fourth-generation warfare' or 'netwar', directly analogous to what takes place on the streets of Kabul or Baghdad.<sup>84</sup>

Importantly, then, the US military's paradigms of urban control, surveillance and violent reconfiguration now straddle the traditional inside/outside binary of cities within the US nation versus cities elsewhere. Instead, the 'security' concerns which until recently dominated abstract foreign-policy discussions now erupt within ordinary urban sites – spaces of the 'homeland'. What had previously been international security concerns are now 'penetrating ... all

<sup>80</sup> See Nathan Canestaro, 'Homeland Defense: Another Nail in the Coffin for *Posse Comitatus*', *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* 12, 2003, 99–144.

<sup>81</sup> See Phil Boyle, 'Olympian Security Systems: Guarding the Games or Guarding Consumerism?', *Journal for the Arts, Sciences, and Technology* 3, 2, 2005, 12–17.

<sup>82</sup> Deborah Cowen, 'National Soldiers and the War on Cities', *Theory and Event* 10, 2, 2007, 1.

<sup>83</sup> See, for example, Stobhan Gorman, 'Satellite-Surveillance Program to Begin Despite Privacy Concerns', *Wall Street Journal*, 1 October 2008.

<sup>84</sup> Max Manwaring, *Street Gangs: The New Urban Insurgency*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, 2005 available at [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil).

levels of governance. Security is becoming more civic, urban, domestic and personal: security is coming home.<sup>85</sup>

#### CITIES AS BATTLESPACE

The city [is] not just the site, but the very *medium* of warfare – a flexible, almost liquid medium that is forever contingent and in flux.<sup>86</sup>

Driving the military targeting of the ordinary sites and spaces of urban life across the world is a new constellation of military doctrine and theory. In it, the spectre of state-versus-state military conflict is seen to be in radical retreat. Instead, the new doctrine centres around the idea that a wide spectrum of transnational insurgencies now operate across social, technical, political, cultural and financial networks. These are deemed to provide existential threats to Western societies by targeting or exploiting the sites, infrastructure and control technologies that sustain contemporary cities. Such lurking threats are presumed to camouflage themselves within the clutter of cities for protection against traditional forms of military targeting. This situation, the argument goes, necessitates a radical ratcheting-up of techniques of tracking, surveillance and targeting, centred on both the architectures of circulation and mobility – infrastructure – and the spaces of everyday urban life.

The focus of this new body of military doctrine thus blurs the traditional separation of military and civil spheres, local and global scales, and the inside and outside of nations. In so doing, writes Jeremy Packer, 'citizens and non-citizens alike are now treated as an always present threat. In this sense, all are imagined as combatants and all terrain the site of battle.'<sup>87</sup> In the case of the United States, for example, this process allows the nation's military to overcome traditional legal obstacles to deployment within the nation itself.<sup>88</sup> As a consequence, the US military's PowerPoint presentations talk

<sup>85</sup> David Murakami Wood and Jonathan Coffee, 'Security Is Coming Home: Rethinking Scale and Constructing Resilience in the Global Urban Response to Terrorist Risk', *International Relations* 20, 4, 2006, 503.

<sup>86</sup> Eyal Weizman, 'Lethal theory', *LOG Magazine*, April 2005, 53.

<sup>87</sup> Jeremy Packer, 'Becoming Bombs: Mobilizing Mobility in the War of Terror', *Cultural Studies* 20, 4–5, 2006, 378.

<sup>88</sup> The US *Posse Comitatus* act, for example, which explicitly forbade the domestic deployment of US troops within the US mainland. In addition a new US Strategic Command – Northcom – has been established covering North America. Previous to 2002, this was the only part of the world not so covered. US military forces also now regularly conduct exercises within US cities as part of their efforts to hone their 'urban warfare' skills.

of urban operations in Mogadishu, Fallujah or Jenin in the same breath as those during the Los Angeles riots, the anti-globalization confrontations in Seattle or Genoa, or the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina. Such a paradigm permits a host of transnational campaigns and movements – for social justice or ecological sustainability, against state oppression or the devastating effects of market fundamentalism – to be rendered as forms of ‘network’, in effect turning the ideas of the Zapatistas into the equivalent of the radical and murderous Islamism of al-Qaeda.<sup>89</sup> Finally, this blurring means that the militarization and walling of national borders, such as that between the US and Mexico, not only involve the same techniques and technologies as the walling-off of neighbourhoods in Baghdad or Gaza, but sometimes actually involve lucrative contracts being awarded to the same military and technology corporations.

Thus it becomes imperative to continually connect the effects of US military aggression abroad with US domestic counterterrorist policies in what is now commonly called the homeland – policies which target, profile, map and incarcerate Arab and Asian Americans in particular. In a context where imperial power operates by obscuring the links between homeland projects of racial subordination and minority co-optation and overseas strategies of economic restructuring and political domination, as Sunaina Maira and Magid Shihade describe it, ‘this link between the domestic and overseas fronts of imperial power helps us understand that the shared experiences of Asian and Arab Americans in the US, both those that are visible and those not so visible, are due to the workings of empire.’<sup>90</sup>

These radical and multiple blurrings have other manifestations as well. Civil law enforcement agencies, for example, are becoming remodelled along much more (para)militarized lines.<sup>91</sup> As well as reorganizing themselves to engage in highly militarized counterterrorist operations and the fortification of major conventions, sports events or political summits, they increasingly adopt the techniques and language of war to launch SWAT teams against a widening array of civilian events and routine call-outs.<sup>92</sup> ‘There is something

driving an attitudinal shift among police, en masse, states the *Signs of the Times* blog, which ‘is prompting zealous overreaction even to minor disturbances.’<sup>93</sup> Peter Kraska has estimated that SWAT teams are called out in the US about forty thousand times a year, a rise from the three thousand annual call-outs of the 1980s.<sup>94</sup> Most of the call-outs, he notes, are executed to ‘serve warrants on nonviolent drug offenders.’<sup>95</sup>

Explicitly military models thus increasingly sustain new ideas in penology and law enforcement doctrine and technology, as well as civilian surveillance, training, simulation, and disaster assistance.<sup>96</sup> Doctrines addressing urban warfare, military operations on urban terrain, or low intensity conflict – military concepts developed for the purpose of controlling urban masses on the global periphery – are quickly imitated ‘to discipline groups and social movements deemed dangerous within the heartlands of the imperial metropolis.’<sup>97</sup>

Military-style command and control systems are now being established to support ‘zero tolerance’ policing and urban surveillance practices designed to exclude failed consumers or undesirable persons from the new enclaves of urban consumption and leisure.<sup>98</sup> What Robert Warren calls ‘pop-up armies’ are organized transnationally to pre-emptively militarize cities facing major anti-globalization demonstrations.<sup>99</sup> The techniques of high-tech urban warfare – from unmanned drones to the partitioning of space by walls and biometric check-points – increasingly provide models for the reorganization of domestic urban space.<sup>100</sup> In addition, the almost infinite metaphorization of ‘war’ – on crime, on drugs, on terror, on disease – solidifies wider shifts from social, welfareist and Keynesian urban paradigms to authoritarian and militarized notions of the state’s role in sustaining order.

<sup>93</sup> *Signs of the Times* Special Correspondent, ‘Militarized Police, Overreaction and Overkill: Have You Noticed It In Your Town Yet?’, *Signs of the Times*, 16 December 2007, available at [ponerology.blogspot.com](http://ponerology.blogspot.com).

<sup>94</sup> Cited in Ballo, ‘Overkill’.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> See Peter Kraska, ed., *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System*, Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2001.

<sup>97</sup> Ashley Dawson, ‘Combat in Hell: Cities as the Achilles’ Heel of US Imperial Hegemony’, *Social Text* 25: 2, 2007, 176.

<sup>98</sup> Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*, London: Routledge, 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Robert Warren, ‘City streets – The War Zones of Globalization: Democracy and Military Operations on Urban Terrain in the Early 21st Century’, in Graham, ed., *Cities, War and Terrorism*, 214–230.

<sup>100</sup> Leonard Hopper and Martha Droge, *Security and Site Design*, New York: Wiley, 2005.

<sup>89</sup> John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Networks*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2001.

<sup>90</sup> Sunaina Maira and Magid Shihade, ‘Meeting Asian/Arab American Studies: Thinking Race, Empire, and Zionism in the US’, *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 9:2, 2006, 118.

<sup>91</sup> See James Sheppytcki, ‘Editorial – Reflections on Policing: Paramilitarisation and Scholarship on Policing’, *Policing and Society* 9, 2000, 117–123.

<sup>92</sup> See Radey Balko, ‘Overkill: The Latest Trend in Policing’, *Washington Post* 5 February 2006.



## WHEN LIFE ITSELF IS WAR

The US military's search for new doctrine applicable to cities explicitly recognizes the similarities between urbanized terrain at home and abroad, notwithstanding the geographic differences. According to Maryann Lawlor, writing in the military magazine *Signal*, key personnel at the US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) in Norfolk, Virginia, have used large-scale war games and simulations, such as one named Urban Resolve, to 'identify] several key concerns common to both areas'.<sup>101</sup> Among these concerns are the difficulty of separating 'terrorists' or 'insurgents' from the urban civilian population; the high density of infrastructure; the way cities interfere with old-style military surveillance and targeting systems; and the complex three-dimensional nature of the urban 'battlespace'.

All too easily, such a discourse slips into a world where 'life itself is war'.<sup>102</sup> It manifests a profound inability to deal with any notion of the other beyond placing that other in the cross-hairs of the targeting mechanism. If military thinking is allowed to run rampant, eventually there would be nothing left in the world that is not a target for the full spectrum of symbolic or actual violence. 'The truth of the continual targeting of the world as the fundamental form of knowledge production,' writes media theorist Rey Chow, 'is xenophobia, the inability to handle the otherness of the other beyond the orbit that is the bomber's own visual path.' For the xenophobe, she adds, 'every effort needs to be made to sustain and secure this orbit – that is, by keeping the place of the other-as-target always filled'.<sup>103</sup>

This is where domestic and foreign conceptions of the city converge. Thus, on the one hand, US military officials have routinely talked on the wailing-off of neighbourhoods within Baghdad as constructions analogous to the gated communities that encompass more than half of new homes in many Southern and Western cities in the US.<sup>104</sup> Not only military sales pitches but also right-wing media commentaries have blurred homeland and Iraqi cities into a single, demonized space requiring high-tech, heavy-handed assault. Nicole Gelinas, for instance, proposed in 2007 in the Manhattan Institute's

101 Maryann Lawlor, 'Military Lessons Benefit Homeland', *Signal Magazine*, February 2008, available at [www.afcea.org/signal](http://www.afcea.org/signal).

102 Phil Agre, 'Imagining the Next War: Infrastructural Warfare and the Conditions of Democracy', *Radical Urban Theory*, 14 September 2001.

103 Rey Chow, *The Age of the World Target: Self-Referentiality in War, Theory, and Comparative Work*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, 42.

104 Edward J. Blakey and Mary Gail Snyder, *Fortress America: Gated Communities in the United States*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999.

*City Journal* that post-Katrina New Orleans was a 'Baghdad on the Bayou' and argued that the city required a similarly militarized response so as to introduce order and investment amid its supposed pathologies of crime and violence.<sup>105</sup>

A recent advertisement in a military magazine for helicopter infra-red sensors powerfully captures this blurring of domestic and distant (Figure 1.4). Surrounding the image of a two-sided helicopter – the military side with rockets, the police side with aerial cameras – the message reads, 'Every Night, All Night – From Baghdad to Baton Rouge – We've Got Your Back'.

The US response to Hurricane Katrina's devastation of the largely African-American city of New Orleans provides a pivotal example here.<sup>106</sup> Some US Army officers discussed their highly militarized response to the Katrina disaster as an attempt to 'take back' New Orleans from African-American 'insurgencies'.<sup>107</sup> Rather than organizing a massive humanitarian response that treated Katrina's victims as citizens who required immediate help, officials (eventually) executed a largely military operation. Such a response merely reinforced the idea that it is equally fitting to treat both external and internal geographies as the sites of state-backed wars against racialized and 'biopolitically disposable' others.<sup>108</sup> The Katrina operation dealt with those abandoned in the central city as a threat – to be contained, targeted and addressed as a means of protecting the property of the largely white suburban and exurban populations who had escaped in their own cars.<sup>109</sup> In the process, African-American citizens of New Orleans were made refugees within their own country. As Robert Stam and Ella Shohat contend, 'Katrina not only ripped the roofs off Gulf Coast houses but also ripped the façade off "the national security state"'.<sup>110</sup>

105 See Nicole Gelinas 'Baghdad on the Bayou', *City Journal*, Spring 2007, 42–53.

106 See Stephen Graham 'Homeland' Insecurity? Katrina and the Politics of Security in Metropolitan America', *Space and Culture* 9: 1, 2006, 63–77.

107 Peter Chiarelli and Patrick Michaelis 'Winning the Peace: the Requirement for Full-Spectrum operation', *Military Review*, July–August, 2005.

108 See Henry Giroux, 'Reading Hurricane Katrina: Race, Class, and the Biopolitics of Disposability' *College Literature* 33: 3, 171–96.

109 Ibid.

110 Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, *Flagging Patriotism: Crises of Narcissism and Anti-Americanism*, New York: Routledge, 2007, 167.

# URBANIZING MILITARY DOCTRINE

In 1998, at the same time that urban geographers were writing that cities are places where identities form, social capital is built, and new forms of collective action emerge, the US Marine Corps explained the phenomenon a bit differently: 'cities historically are the places where radical ideas ferment, dissenters find allies and discontented groups find media attention' thereby making cities 'a likely source of conflict in the future'.<sup>111</sup>

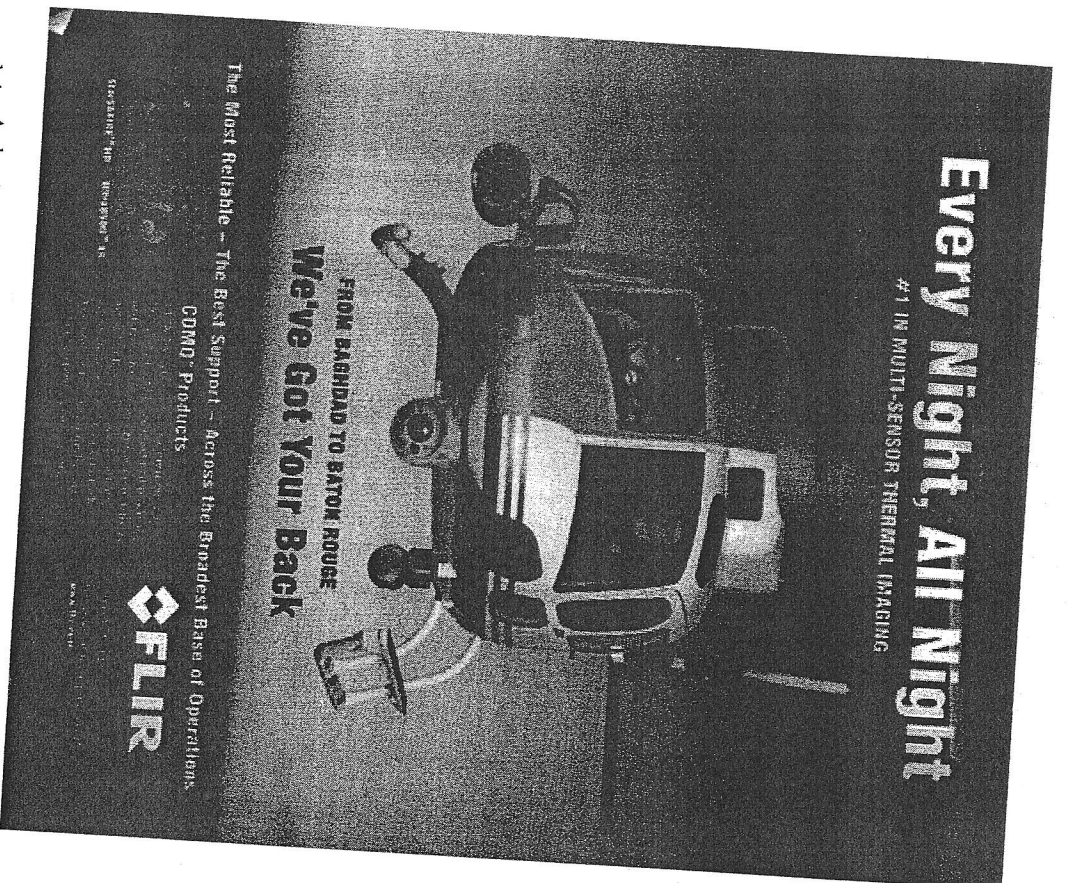
The combination of racialized right-wing anti-urbanism and the new military doctrine is an incendiary one. It means that not only key domestic cities but also far-off cities at the heart of the War on Terror are conceived as troublesome or anarchic battlespaces, presenting stark contrasts to the putative order, security and harmony of the normalized zones of suburbia and exurbia – zones which require protection from the threats and contagions emanating from all cities everywhere. When the techniques of (attempted) urban control – cordoned-off security zones, walling, tracking, targeting, biometrics, ostensibly non-lethal weapons, data-mining – are similar in Gaza, Baghdad and New York, then blurring becomes inevitable, especially if backed by a generalized right-wing demonization of central cities.<sup>112</sup>

The new military doctrine engenders a notion of 'war as a permanent, boundless exercise, pitting high-tech militaries and security operations – along with private-sector outsourcees and military corporations – against a wide array of non-state adversaries. All of this occurs within an environment marked by intense mediatizing, a high degree of mobility, and the rapid exploitation of new military technologies.

Thus, many military theorists speak of a 'fourth generation' of warfare – based, they argue, on 'unconventional' wars, 'asymmetric' struggles, 'global insurgencies' and 'low-intensity conflicts' which pit high-tech state militaries against informal fighters or mobilized civilians.<sup>113</sup> Military theorist Thomas Hammes argues that the key characteristic of such conflicts is that 'superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power'.<sup>114</sup> Relying on such a doctrine, US commanders in Baghdad have emphasized the need to coordinate the entire 'battlespace' of the city – addressing civilian infrastructure and the shattered economy, strengthening

<sup>111</sup> Gan Golan, 'Closing The Gateways of Democracy: Cities and the Militarization of Protest Policing', Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 69, available at [dspace.mit.edu](http://dspace.mit.edu).

<sup>112</sup> Thomas Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone*, New York: Zenith, 2006, p. 208.  
<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 2.



- 1.4 A classic 'boomerang effect': Advert for helicopter infra-red sensors symbolizing the blurring between the military's efforts to use high-tech surveillance and targeting to dominate colonized cities 'outside' the nation and the militarization of the police's 'urban operations' in pervasive 'low-intensity conflict' within domestic cities.

cultural awareness, and using 'the controlled application of violence' to try to secure the city.<sup>114</sup>

Such paradigms turn the prosaic social acts that collectively constitute urban life into existential, societal threats. As we saw in the Introduction, US military theorist William Lind – extending the US 'culture wars' debates of the 1980s and 1990s, and swallowing whole Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' binary – has argued that even urban immigration must now be understood as an act of warfare. 'In Fourth Generation war', Lind writes, 'invasion by immigration can be at least as dangerous as invasion by a state army'. Under what he calls the 'poisonous ideology of multiculturalism', Lind contends that immigrants within Western nations can now launch 'a homegrown variety of Fourth Generation war, which is by far the most dangerous kind'.<sup>115</sup>

Here we confront what the Center for Immigration Studies has called the 'weaponization' of immigration.<sup>116</sup> Such conceptions of political violence are particularly pernicious because they render all aspects of human life as nothing but war: nations are conceptualized in narrow ethno-nationalist terms, and diasporic cities emerge as cultural pollutants.<sup>117</sup> 'The road from national genius to a totalized cosmology of the sacred nation', writes Arjun Appadurai, 'and further to ethnic purity and cleansing, is relatively direct'.<sup>118</sup>

Other US military theorists and commanders, meanwhile, have generated a massive debate since the early 1990s of a purported revolution in military affairs (given the acronym RMA).<sup>119</sup> This debate considers how new technologies of surveillance, communications, and 'stealth' or 'precision' targeting through 'smart weapons' can be harnessed to sustain a globe-spanning form of US military omnipotence based on 'network-centric' warfare. In a unipolar, post-Cold War world, the dream of the RMA was that the United States' dauntingly high-tech 'military superiority would now signal the capacity to defeat the prospect of any challenge to the way the world was being ordered', as Randy Martin frames it.<sup>120</sup> With the 'fog of war'

<sup>114</sup> Chiarelli and Michaels, 'Winning the Peace'.

<sup>115</sup> William Lind, 'Understanding Fourth Generation War', *Military Review* Sept–Oct 2004, 13–4.

<sup>116</sup> See Cato, *The Weaponization of Immigration*, Center for Immigration Studies, Backgrounders and Reports, February 2008, available at [www.cis.org](http://www.cis.org).

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers*, 2006, 4.

<sup>119</sup> See Richard Ek, 'A Revolution in Military Geopolitics?', *Political Geography* 19, 2000, 841–74; Jerry Harris, 'Dreams of Global Hegemony and the Technology of War', *Race and Class* 45: 4, 2003, 54–67.

<sup>120</sup> Randy Martin, 'Derivative Wars', *Cultural Studies* 20: 4–5, 2006, 4059.

rendered historic by the perfect real-time sensing and killing capabilities of remote US military control technologies, dominance over any enemy was to be assured, even though numbers of troops as well as the sheer weight of armies were to be radically reduced. War, in other words, was to be a capital-intensive process of high-tech killing at a distance.

Such a vision of technological omnipotence was especially attractive, militarily and culturally, because, in Ashley Dawson's words, 'the big technostick sanitized the gory side of warfare through its pixellated displays of precision destruction'.<sup>121</sup> The technophilic fantasies of perfect power that drove RMA debates thus offered to 'absolve those who wielded it from moral responsibilities for their acts'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, amongst many hawks and neocons, the RMA helped to make American imperial wars a desirable means of forcing the 'pre-emptive' reordering of the world so as to extend US political and economic power within the framework of the clash of civilisations.<sup>124</sup> Marshallled by Donald Rumsfeld, the US secretary of defense between 2001 and 2006, these conceptualizations of war underpinned the Bush administration's strategy of using new military technology to sustain a new phase of US political hegemony and imperialism. The RMA thus provided 'an immense boon and alibi for hawks'.<sup>125</sup>

However, as the gurus of fourth generation warfare never tire of pointing out, and the bloody morass in Iraq's cities continues to demonstrate, RMA theorists' obsession with hardware has done little, in a rapidly urbanizing world, to make the US military invincible. In Iraq, as so often in urban and military history, the violent occupation of a far-off city seems to have rendered all dreams of conducting warfare at a distance – withdrawing the US soldier from risk whilst high-tech weapons annihilate the enemy – as little more than science fiction (or perhaps simply convenient PR for the military-industrial-security complex). Once again it has become clear that, as Edward Luttwak put it, 'the armed forces of the most advanced countries, and certainly of the United States, all formidable against enemies assembled

<sup>121</sup> Dawson, 'Combat in Hell', 171.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> See Christian Parent, 'Planet America: The Revolution in Military Affairs as Fantasy and Fetish' in Ashley Dawson and Malini Johar Schueller, *Exceptional State: Contemporary US Culture and the New Imperialism*, eds. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007, 101.

<sup>124</sup> Susan Roberts, Anna Secor, and Matthew Sparke, 'Neoliberal Geopolitics', *Antipode* 35: 5, 2003; Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*; Lutz Bialasiewicz, "'The Death of the West': Samuel Huntington, Oriana Fallaci and a New "Moral" Geopolitics of Births and Bodies', *Geopolitics* 11: 4, 2006, 1–36.

<sup>125</sup> Dawson, 'Combat in Hell', 171.



in conveniently targetable massed formations, are least effective in fighting insurgents.<sup>126</sup>

In the cities of Iraq, the US military has found it largely impossible to separate insurgents from civilians. The military's catastrophic linguistic and cultural ignorance of the places it has been fighting in has been a massive hindrance. In addition, the complex three-dimensional geometry of Iraqi cities has interfered with the sensing and networking systems meant to create military omniscience and a clear battlespace,<sup>127</sup> and the superior firepower and aggressive tactics of the US – often imposed with racist contempt for the lives of Iraq's urban inhabitants, who live in inescapable proximity to the point of impact – has been massively counterproductive. The resulting masses of maimed and dead Iraqi civilians have only added to the legitimacy and power of the Iraqi insurgencies.

Strangely, however, the cultural resilience of US military technophilia is such that 'the seductive mythology of high-tech, postmodern warfare still enshrined in the mythic active-combat phase of the invasion of Iraq has been kept carefully uncontaminated by the brutal, chaotic realities of the occupation'.<sup>128</sup> As we shall see later, dreams of high-tech omnipotence have simply migrated from the RMA's planet-straddling fantasies of domination from above, into fantasies of controlling the complex microgeographies of the urban realm through robotic warriors and ubiquitous sensors.

A third and final group of US military theorists now obsesses about the need to be concerned by 'effects-based operations' – the complex effects of military operations rather than the simple imperative of destroying or killing the enemy. In typically unobvious language, one such theorist argues that warfare has become more than a matter of 'putting steel on the target'.<sup>129</sup> The control or manufacture of war imagery and information is thus considered as important as the dropping of bombs or the firing of missiles. Hence 'information warfare' may involve everything from dropping leaflets and bombing TV stations that depict civilian casualties, to efforts at political and social coercion that bring the entire infrastructure of urbanized nations to a sudden, grinding halt.

<sup>126</sup> Edward Luttwak, 'Dead-end: Counterinsurgency Warfare as Military Malpractice', *Harper's Magazine*, February 2007, 33–42.

<sup>127</sup> Tim Blackmore, 'Dead Slow: Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Loitering in Battlespace', *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 25: 3, 2005, 195–214.

<sup>128</sup> Patrick Deer, 'Introduction: The Ends of War and the Limits of War Culture', *Social Text* 25: 2, 2007, 1.

<sup>129</sup> John W. Bellflower, 'The Indirect Approach', *Armed Forces Journal* January 2007, available at [www.armedforcesjournal.com](http://www.armedforcesjournal.com).

The key concept driving current military thinking and practice is 'battlespace'. It is crucial because, in essence, it sustains 'a conception of military matters that includes absolutely everything'.<sup>130</sup> Nothing lies outside battlespace, temporally or geographically. Battlespace has no front and no back, no start nor end. It is deep, high, wide, and simultaneous.<sup>131</sup> The concept of battlespace thus permeates everything, from the molecular scales of genetic engineering and nanotechnology through the everyday sites, spaces and experiences of city life, to the planetary spheres of space and the Internet's globe-straddling cyberspace.<sup>132</sup>

With wars and battles no longer declared or finished, temporalities of war threaten to extend indefinitely. 'War is back and seemingly forever', writes Patrick Deer.<sup>133</sup> No wonder Pentagon gurus convinced George W. Bush to replace the idea of the 'War on Terror' with the new Big Idea of the 'Long War' in 2004.<sup>134</sup>

Managing and manipulating the politics of fear through what the US military terms 'information operations' – propaganda – are central to these new constellations of military doctrine. As ever in warfare, the use of propaganda to convince domestic populations that only bold military action abroad can prevent them from being terrorized at home has been particularly important to the War on Terror. Indeed, fear-mongering permitted the catastrophic macroeconomic mismanagement of the US economy, and the resulting economic distress of the US population, to be glossed over – at least until the financial collapse of 2008–9. The fusion of entertainment, media and war into what James Der Derian calls the 'military-industrial-media-entertainment network' has been centrally important here.<sup>135</sup> 'With the advent of the so-called war on terror', wrote Andrew Ross in 2004, 'the US government's legitimacy no longer derives from its capacity or willingness

<sup>130</sup> Agre, 'Imagining the Next War'.

<sup>131</sup> Tim Blackmore, *War X: Human Extensions in Battlespace*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

<sup>132</sup> Major David Pendall of the US Army writes, 'Friendly cyber or virtual operations live on the same networks and systems as adversaries' networks and systems. In most cases, both use the same protocols, infrastructures, and platforms. They can quickly turn any space into a battlespace.' David Pendall, 'Effects-Based Operations Exercise of National Power', *Military Review*, Jan–Feb 2004, 26.

<sup>133</sup> Deer, 'The Ends Of War', 1.

<sup>134</sup> Dr David H. McIntyre, 'Strategies for a New Long War: Analysis and Evaluation', Statement before the House Committee on Government Reform, Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations, 3 February 2004, available at [www.iwar.org.uk](http://www.iwar.org.uk).

<sup>135</sup> James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001.



to ensure a decent standard of living for those citizens; it depends, instead, on the degree to which they can be successfully persuaded they are on the verge of being terrorized.<sup>136</sup> Even amid the chaos and devastation of the credit crunch, desperate Republican campaign managers widely depicted the Democratic presidential candidate, Barack Obama, as a lurking ally of that ultimate terrorist foe, Osama bin Laden.

#### 'THE CITIES ARE THE PROBLEM'

The future of warfare lies in the streets, sewers, high-rise buildings, industrial parks, and the sprawl of houses, shacks, and shelters that form the broken cities of our world.<sup>137</sup>

Urban sites and urban military operations increasingly take centre-stage in all these new conceptualizations of war. Anti-urban military theorists propagate the notion that urban sites concentrate, shelter and camouflage an array of anti-state agitators, insurgents and social movements. It is cities, they contend, where the high-tech advantages of Western militaries break down because it is no longer possible to use the weapons of the Revolution in Military Affairs to annihilate targets on desert plains conveniently and cheaply, as was done in Iraq in 1991. It is in the burgeoning cities that the vulnerabilities of Western state, economic and military power are most exposed. And it is cities that serve as camouflage against the vertical omniscience and omnipotence of US forces. After 1991, many theorists hypothesized that 'insurgent forces around the world, having witnessed the annihilation of Saddam's troops in the open desert by US "smart bombs," [during the first Gulf War], had realized that their only chance of survival lay in fighting future wars in the urban jungles of the underdeveloped world.'<sup>138</sup>

Such perspectives suggest, as Duane Schattle of the US Joint Forces Command's Joint Urban Operations Office puts it, that 'the cities are the problem'<sup>139</sup> for US military power. In the same vein, James Lasswell, head of the Office of Science and Technology at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, thinks that 'urban is the future' and that 'everything worth fighting for is in the urban environment'. And Wayne Michael Hall, advisor in the Joint Urban

<sup>136</sup> Ross, 'Duct Tape Nation', 4.

<sup>137</sup> Ralph Peters, 'Our Soldiers, Their Cities', *Parameters, US Army War College Quarterly* 26: 1, 1996, 43.

<sup>138</sup> Dawson, 'Combat in Hell', 172.

<sup>139</sup> Nick Turse, 'Slum Fights: The Pentagon Plans for a New Hundred Years' War', *Tom Dispatch*, 11 October 2007.

Operations Office, posits that US forces 'will be fighting in urban terrain for the next hundred years'.<sup>140</sup>

#### CULTURAL TURNS, WANING POWER

Strikingly, however, broad-brush discussions within the US military about urban warfare are now being supplemented by discussions about how to colonize the intimate inflections of urban culture within the main counterinsurgency cities. This 'cultural turn'<sup>141</sup> in military urban and counterinsurgency doctrine centres on what the Pentagon calls the 'Human Terrain System'<sup>142</sup> (see Figure 1.5). In the Long War, it seems, 'anthropologists are hot property'.<sup>143</sup>

As well as recruiting anthropologists, 'Pentagon budgets reflect an increasing commitment to so-called "cultural knowledge" acquisition', writes Roberto González.<sup>144</sup> The cultural specifics of cities and districts are thus now being modelled and simulated. US soldiers are being given rudimentary training in the appreciation of Iraqi cultural traditions, Islamic urbanism, Iraq's complex ethnic make-up, and local mores and customs. Specifically military studies of the Islamic city are being done, laden with Orientalist clichés.<sup>145</sup> The goal of collecting anthropological and ethnographic data about the human terrain of US counterinsurgency operations is apparently, as González puts it, 'to help win the "will and legitimacy" fights' (perhaps through propaganda), 'to surface the insurgent IED networks' (presumably for targeting), and to serve 'as an element of combat power' (i.e. as a weapon). The concern here, he notes, is that 'in the near future, agents might use cultural profiles for pre-emptive targeting of statistically probable (rather than actual) insurgents, or extremists in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan or other countries deemed to be terrorist havens'.<sup>146</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> See Derek Gregory, 'The Rush to the Intimate' Counterinsurgency and the Cultural Turn in Late Modern War', *Radical Philosophy* 150, 2008.

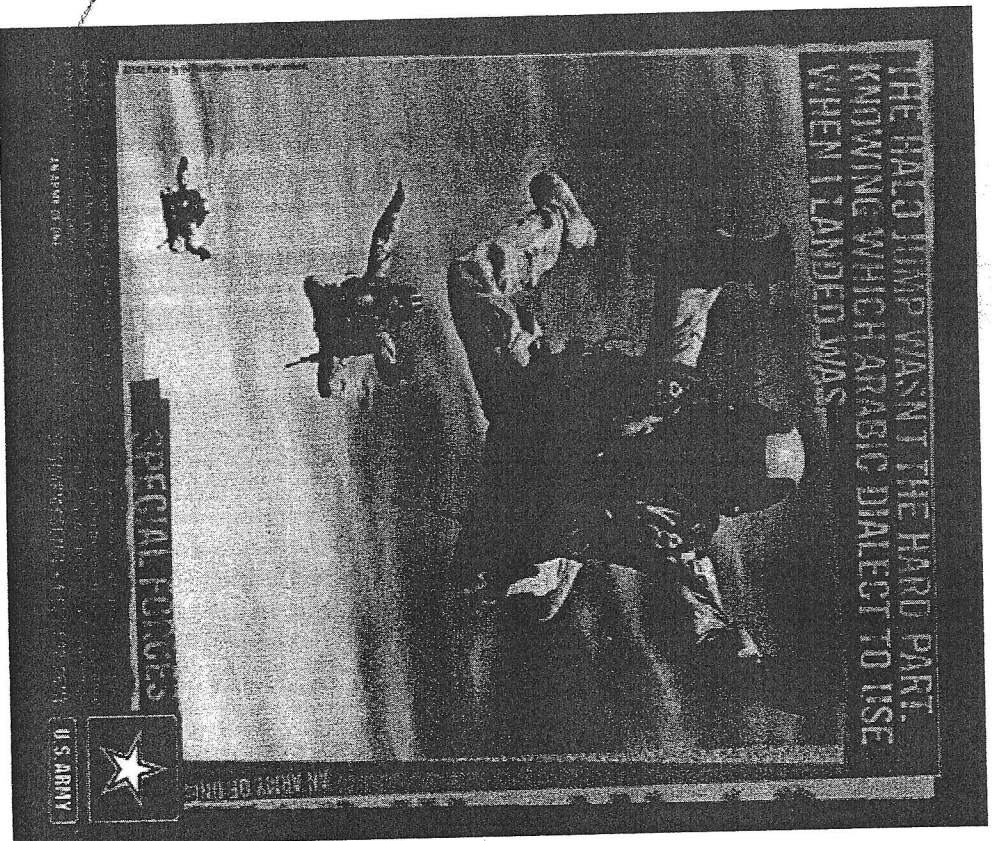
<sup>142</sup> Not surprisingly, this trend has received vociferous criticism from many academic anthropologists. See Roberto González, 'Human Terrain': Past, Present and Future Applications', *Anthropology Today* 24: 1, 2008 21–6.

<sup>143</sup> Laura McNamara, 'Culture, Critique and Credibility: Speaking Truth to Power during the Long War', *Anthropology Today* 23: 2, 2007, 20–1; and Roberto González, 'Towards Mercenary Anthropology? The New US Army Counterinsurgency Manual FM 3-24 and the Military-Archaeology Complex', *Anthropology Today* 23: 3, 2007, 14–5.

<sup>144</sup> González, 'Human Terrain', 22.

<sup>145</sup> See Louis DiMarco, *Traditions, Changes, and Challenges: Military Operations and the Middle Eastern City*, Global War On Terrorism Occasional Paper #1, Fort Leavenworth, KS: US Army Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006.

<sup>146</sup> González, 'Human Terrain', 21–6.



1.5 Culturally sensitive imperialism: A recruitment advert for US special forces.

The deployment of so-called cultural awareness as a weapon against Iraq's insurgencies is, however, completely fraudulent. In its attempt to reposition US forces as little more than innocent bystanders amidst the carnage on Baghdad's streets, it obfuscates and sanitizes the imperial

violence and radical insecurity generated by the very presence of those forces,<sup>147</sup> and instead blames such conditions entirely on the pathologies created by intra-Iraq ethnic and sectarian divides. It obscures the provocative presence and murderous actions of US military personnel, along with their proxy forces and mercenary legions. It fails to take account of the complex ways in which myriad deals between the US military, their proxy regimes and militia, and a wide spectrum of private military contractors have massively amplified, and indeed exploited, sectarian tensions in Iraq and thereby fostered programmes of ethnic cleansing.

This failure is symptomatic of a much broader problem that pervades the urban and cultural turn in US military doctrine. It underpins a highly technocratic and technophilic discussion centred on what Ashley Dawson refers to as 'the increasing prominence of urban combat zones' combined with a complete inability 'to acknowledge the underlying economic and political forces that are driving urbanization in the megacities of the global South'.<sup>148</sup> In failing to address the root causes of the extreme polarization and violence generated by neoliberalization and the massive growth of informal settlements, urban military discourse simply echoes the catastrophic failure of the world's political and economic elites to 'question how to integrate the surplus humanity of the global South into the global economy'.<sup>149</sup> Fantasies harboured by US military theorists of controlling the world's burgeoning cities and settlements are probably best interpreted as what Dawson calls 'an index of the waning hegemony of US imperial power rather than a sign of the empire's invincible might'.<sup>149</sup> In 2009, as one witnesses the rapidly waning power of the US economy, reeling under the current financial crash, one is hard pressed to disagree. This does not mean, of course, that these military fantasies are of no consequence. Rather, as becomes evident in the next chapter, they reflect deep-rooted and extremely problematic ways of thinking which turn our urbanizing world into a dangerously seductive geography of goodness versus enmity.

<sup>147</sup> Gregory, 'The Rush to the Intimate'.

<sup>148</sup> Dawson, 'Combat in Hell', 171.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 174.