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Stephen Graham, Newcastle

## Introduction: 'Target Intercept ...'

On 14 November 2007, Jacqui Smith, then the UK's home secretary, announced one of the most ambitious attempts by any state in history for the systematic tracking and surveillance of all persons entering or leaving British territory. The highly controversial e-Borders programme aims to deploy sophisticated computer algorithms and data-mining techniques to identify 'illegal' or threatening people or behaviour before they threaten the UK's territorial limits. The programme utilizes technology developed by the Trusted Borders consortium, led by the massive Raytheon defence corporation.

The e-Borders project is based on a dream of technological omniscience: to track everyone flowing across the UK's borders, using records of past activity and associations to identify future threats before they materialize. Smith promised that when the system is finally functional in 2014 – although many argue that it is unworkable – border control and security will be reinstated for the UK in a radically mobile and insecure world. 'All travellers to Britain will be screened against no-fly lists and intercept target lists,' she predicted. 'Together with biometric visas, this will help keep trouble away from our shores ... As well as the tougher double check at the border, ID cards for foreign nationals will soon give us a triple check in country.'<sup>1</sup>

Smith's language here – 'target lists', 'screening', 'biometric visas' and so on – reveals a great deal. The massive global proliferation of deeply technophilic state surveillance projects like the e-Border programme signals the startling militarization of civil society – the extension of military ideas of tracking, identification and targeting into the quotidian spaces and circulations of everyday life. Indeed, projects like this one are more than a state's responses to changing security threats. Rather, in a world marked by globalization and

<sup>1</sup> Nicole Kobe, 'Government announces that half of £1.2 billion in funding for technology to boost border security will go to Raytheon-led Trusted Borders consortia for a screening system,' *IT Pro*, 14 Nov. 2007, at <http://www.itpro.co.uk/139053/650-million-e-borders-contract-to-raytheon-group>. In a rich irony, another sort of surveillance – a record of the pay-per-view bills – almost forced Smith to resign in late March 2009, when it was discovered that she tried to claim for the costs of her husband's pornographic viewing habits as a parliamentary expense. In the same month, a later exposé of MPs abusing such expenses also put her, and many of her colleagues, under pressure. Smith eventually resigned in June 2009.

increasing urbanization, they represent dramatic attempts to translate long-standing military dreams of high-tech omniscience and rationality into the governance of urban civil society.

With both security and military doctrine within Western states now centred on the task of identifying insurgents, terrorists and an extensive range of ambient threats from the chaos of urban life, this fact becomes clearer still. Moreover, whether in the queues of Heathrow, the tube stations of London or the streets of Kabul and Baghdad, the latest doctrine stresses that ways must be found to identify such people and threats before their deadly potential is realized, at a point when they are effectively indistinguishable from the wider urban populace. Hence the parallel drive in cities within both the capitalist heartlands of the global North and the world's colonial peripheries and frontiers to establish high-tech surveillance systems which mine data accumulated about the past to identify future threats.

#### THEIR SONS AGAINST OUR SILICON

At the root of such visions of war and security in the post-Cold War world are fantasies in which the West harnesses its unassailable technological power to reinstate its waning military, economic and political supremacy. 'At home and abroad,' wrote US security theorists Mark Mills and Peter Huber in the right-wing *City Journal*, a year after the 9/11 attacks, 'it will end up as their sons against our silicon. Our silicon will win.'<sup>2</sup>

Huber and Mills foresee a near future straight out of *Minority Report*. In their vision, a whole suite of surveillance and tracking systems emerge on the back of high-tech modes of consumption, communication and transportation to permeate every aspect of life in Western cities. Continually comparing individuals' current behaviour with vast databases recording past events and associations, these tracking systems – so the argument goes – will automatically signal when the city's bodies, spaces, and infrastructure systems are about to come under terrorist attack. Thus, what Huber and Mills call 'trustworthy' or 'cooperative targets' are continually separated from 'non-cooperators' and their efforts to use postal, electricity, Internet, finance, airline and transport systems as the means to project resistance and violence. In effect, Huber and Mills's vision calls for an extension of airport-style security and surveillance systems to encompass entire cities and societies utilizing, at its foundation, the

high-tech means of consumption and mobility that are already established in Western cities.

As for the resistant colonial frontiers, Huber and Mills, like many US military and security theorists, dream of continuous, automated and robotized counter-insurgency warfare. Using systems similar to those deployed in US cities, but this time granted the sovereign power to kill autonomously, they imagine that US troops might be spared from the dirty job of fighting and killing on the ground in rapidly urbanizing frontier zones. Swarms of tiny, armed drones, equipped with advanced sensors and communicating with each other, will thus be deployed to loiter permanently above the streets, deserts and highways. Huber and Mills dream of a future where such swarms of robotic warriors work tirelessly to 'project destructive power precisely, judiciously, and from a safe distance – week after week, year after year, for as long as may be necessary.'<sup>3</sup>

Such fantasies of high-tech omnipotence are much more than science fiction. As well as constructing the UK's e-Borders programme, for example, Raytheon is also the leading manufacturer of both cruise missiles and the unmanned drones used regularly by the CIA to launch assassination raids across the Middle East and Pakistan since 2002. Raytheon is also at the heart of a range of very real US military projects designed to use computer software to allow robotic weapons to target and kill their foes autonomously without any human involvement whatsoever, as Huber and Mills have envisioned.

#### THE NEW MILITARY URBANISM

The crossover between the military and the civilian applications of advanced technology – between the surveillance and control of everyday life in Western cities and the prosecution of aggressive colonial and resource wars – is at the heart of a much broader set of trends that characterize the new military urbanism. Of course, the effects observed in the urban Western setting differ wildly from those seen in the war-zone. But, crucially, whatever the environment, these hi-tech acts of violence are predicated on a set of shared ideas.

Fundamental to the new military urbanism is the paradigmatic shift that renders cities' communal and private spaces, as well as their infrastructure – along with their civilian populations – a source of targets and threats. This is manifest in the widespread use of war as the dominant metaphor in describing the perpetual and boundless condition of urban societies – at war against

<sup>2</sup> Mark Mills and Peter Huber, 'How Technology Will Defeat Terrorism,' *City Journal*, Winter 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Mills and Huber, 'How Technology Will Defeat Terrorism.'



drugs, against crime, against terror, against insecurity itself. This development incorporates the 'stealthy militarization of a wide range of policy debates, urban landscapes, and circuits of urban infrastructure, as well as whole realms of popular and urban culture. It leads to the creeping and insidious diffusion of militarized debates about 'security' in every walk of life. Together, once again, these work to bring essentially military ideas of the prosecution of, and preparation for, war into the heart of ordinary, day-to-day city life.

The insidious militarization of urban life occurs at a time when humankind has become a predominantly urban species for the first time in its 150,000-year history. It gains its power from multiple circuits of militarization and securitization which, thus far, have not been considered together or viewed as a whole. It is this task to which the current book is devoted.

By way of introduction, and to give a flavour of the remarkable range of political, social and cultural circuits currently being colonized by the new military urbanism, it is worth introducing its five key features.

#### URBANIZING SECURITY

As with Huber and Mills's prescriptions for the future, the new military urbanism, in all its complexity and reach, rests on a central idea: militarized techniques of tracking and targeting must permanently colonize the city landscape and the spaces of everyday life in both the 'homelands' and domestic cities of the West as well as the world's neo-colonial frontiers. To the latest security and military gurus, this is deemed imperative, the only adequate means to address the new realities of what they call 'asymmetric' or 'irregular' war.

Such wars pitch non-state terrorists or insurgents against the high-tech security, military and intelligence forces of nation-states and their burgeoning array of private and corporate affiliates-in-arms. Non-uniformed and largely indistinguishable from the city populace, non-state fighters, militia, insurgents and terrorists lurk invisibly thanks to the anonymity offered by the world's burgeoning cities (especially the fast-growing informal districts). They exploit and target the spiralling conduits and arteries which link modern cities: the Internet, YouTube, GPS technology, mobile phones, air travel, global tourism, international migration, port systems, global finance, even postal services and power grids.

The terrorist outrages in New York, Washington, Madrid, London and Mumbai (to name but a few sites of attack), along with state military assaults on Baghdad, Gaza, Nablus, Beirut, Grozny, Mogadishu and South Ossetia, demonstrate that asymmetric warfare is the vehicle for political violence across transnational spaces. More and more, contemporary warfare takes place in

supermarkets, tower blocks, subway tunnels, and industrial districts rather than open fields, jungles or deserts.

All this means that, arguably for the first time since the Middle Ages, the localized geographies of cities and the systems that weave them together are starting to dominate discussions surrounding war, geopolitics and security. In the new military doctrine of asymmetric war – also labelled 'low-intensity conflict', 'netwar', the 'long war', or 'fourth-generation war' – the prosaic and everyday sites, circulations and spaces of the city are becoming the main 'battlespace'<sup>4</sup> both at home and abroad.

In such a context, Western security and military doctrine is being rapidly reimagined in ways that dramatically blur the juridical and operational separation between policing, intelligence and the military; distinctions between war and peace; and those between local, national and global operations. Increasingly, wars and associated mobilizations cease to be constrained by time and space and instead become both boundless and more or less permanent. At the same time, state power centres increasingly expend resources trying to separate bodies deemed malign and threatening from those deemed valuable and threatened within the everyday spaces of cities and the infrastructures that lace them together. Instead of legal or human rights and legal systems based on universal citizenship, these emerging security politics are founded on the profiling of individuals, places, behaviours, associations, and groups. Such practices assign these subjects risk categories based on their perceived association with violence, disruption or resistance against the dominant geographical orders sustaining global, neoliberal capitalism.

In the West, this shift threatens to re-engineer ideas of citizenship and national boundaries central to the concept of the Western nation-state since the mid-seventeenth century. An increasing obsession with risk profiling may use the tools of national security to unbundle ideas that feed into the conception of universal national citizenship. For example, the United States is already pressuring Britain to bring in a special visa system for UK citizens who want to visit America with close links to Pakistan. In other words, such developments threaten to establish border practices *within* the spaces of nation-states – challenging the definition of the geographical and social 'insides' and 'outsides' of political communities. This process parallels, in turn, the eruption of national border points within the territorial limits of nations at airports, cargo ports, Internet terminals and the railway stations of express trains.

<sup>4</sup> See Tim Blackmore, *War X: Human Extensions in Battlespace*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.



Meanwhile, the policing, security and intelligence arms of governments are also reaching out beyond national territorial limits as global surveillance systems are created to monitor the world's airline, port, trade, finance and communications systems. Electronic border programmes, for example – like Raytheon's in the UK – are being integrated into transnational systems so that passengers' behaviour and associations can be data-mined before they attempt to board planes bound for Europe and the US. Policing powers are also extending beyond the borders of nation-states. The New York Police Department, for example, has recently established a chain of ten overseas offices as part of its burgeoning anti-terror efforts. Extra-national policing proliferates around international political summits and sporting events. In a parallel move, refugee and asylum camps are increasingly being 'offshored' to keep them beyond the territorial limits of rich capitalist nations so that human bodies deemed malign, unworthy or threatening can be stored and dealt with invisibly and at a distance.<sup>5</sup>

The expansion of police powers beyond national borders occurs just as military forces are being deployed more regularly within Western nations. The United States recently established a military command for North America for the first time: the Northern Command.<sup>6</sup> Previously, this was the only part of the world not covered in this way. The US Government has also gradually reduced long-standing legal barriers to military deployment within US cities. Urban warfare training exercises now regularly take place in American cities, geared towards simulations of 'homeland security' crises as well as the challenges of pacifying insurgencies in the cities of the colonial peripheries in the global south. In addition, in a dramatic convergence of doctrine and technology, high-tech satellites and drones developed to monitor far-off Cold War or insurgent enemies are increasingly being used within Western cities.

#### FOUCAULT'S BOOMERANG

The new military urbanism feeds on experiments with styles of targeting and technology in colonial war-zones, such as Gaza or Baghdad, or security operations at international sports events or political summits. These operations act as testing grounds for technology and techniques to be sold on through the world's burgeoning homeland security markets. Through such processes of imitation, explicitly colonial models of pacification, militarization and control, honed on the streets of the global South, are spread to the cities of capitalist

heartlands in the North. This synergy, between foreign and homeland security operations, is the second key feature of the new military urbanism.

International studies scholar Lorenzo Veracini has diagnosed a dramatic contemporary resurgence in the importation of typically colonial tropes and techniques into the management and development of cities in the metropolitan cores of Europe and North America. Such a process, he argues, is working to gradually unravel a 'classic and long-lasting distinction between an outer face and an inner face of the colonial condition.'<sup>8</sup>

It is important to stress, then, that the resurgence of explicitly colonial strategies and techniques amongst nation-states such as the US, UK and Israel in the contemporary 'post-colonial' period<sup>9</sup> involves not just the deployment of the techniques of the new military urbanism in foreign war-zones but their diffusion and imitation through the securitization of Western urban life. As in the nineteenth century, when European colonial nations imported fingerprinting, panoptic prisons and Haussmannian boulevard-building through neighbourhoods of insurrection to domestic cities<sup>10</sup> after first experimenting with them on colonized frontiers,<sup>11</sup> colonial techniques today operate through what Michel Foucault termed 'boomerang effects'.<sup>12</sup> It should never be forgotten, Foucault wrote,

that while colonization, with its techniques and its political and juridical weapons, obviously transported European models to other continents, it also had a considerable boomerang effect on the mechanisms of power in the West, and on the apparatuses, institutions, and techniques of power. A whole series of colonial models was brought back to the West, and the result was that the West could practise something resembling colonization, or an internal colonialism, on itself.<sup>13</sup>

In the contemporary period, the new military urbanism is marked by – and, indeed, comprises – a myriad of startling Foucauldian boomerang

<sup>5</sup> Lorenzo Veracini, 'Colonialism Brought Home: On the Colonization of the Metropolitan Space', *Borderlands*, 4.1, 2005, available at [www.borderlands.net.au](http://www.borderlands.net.au).

<sup>7</sup> See Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004; David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–6*, London: Allen Lane, 2003, 103. On the panopticon, see Tim Mitchell, 'The stage of modernity', in Tim Mitchell (ed.), *Questions of Modernity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000, 1–34. On Haussmannian planning, see Eyal Weizman, interview with Phil Misselwitz, 'Military Operations as Urban Planning', *Mute Magazine*, August 2003 at [www.muteamute.org](http://www.muteamute.org). And, on fingerprinting, see Chandak Senjoopta, *Imprint of the Raj: How Fingerprinting Was Born in Colonial India*, London: Pan Books, 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, *ibid*.



effects, which this book spends much of its length elaborating in detail. For example, Israeli drones designed to vertically subjugate and target Palestinians are now routinely deployed by police forces in North America, Europe and East Asia. Private operators of US 'supermax' prisons are heavily involved in running the global archipelago organizing incarceration and torture that has burgeoned since the start of the 'war on terror'. Private military corporations heavily colonize reconstruction contracts in both Iraq and New Orleans. Israeli expertise in population control is sought by those planning security operations for international events in the West. And shoot-to-kill policies developed to combat suicide bombings in Tel Aviv and Haifa have been adopted by police forces in Europe and America – a process which directly led to the state killing of Jean Charles de Menezes by London anti-terrorist police on 22 July 2005.

Meanwhile, aggressive and militarized policing at public demonstrations and social mobilizations in London, Toronto, Paris and New York are now starting to utilize the same 'non-lethal weapons' as Israel's army in Gaza or Lenin. The construction of 'security zones' around the strategic financial cores and government districts of London and New York directly import the techniques used at overseas bases and green zones. Finally, many of the techniques used to fortify enclaves in Baghdad or permanently lockdown civilians in Gaza and the West Bank are being sold around the world as cutting-edge and combat-proven 'security solutions' by corporate coalitions linking Israeli, US and other companies and states.

Crucially, such boomerang effects that meld security and military doctrines in the cities of the West with those on colonial peripheries is backed up by the cultural geographies which underpin the political right and far-right, along with hawkish commentators within Western militaries themselves. These tend to deem cities *per se* to be intrinsically problematic spaces – the main sites concentrating acts of subversion, resistance, mobilization, dissent and protest challenging national security states both at home and abroad.

Bastions of ethno-nationalist politics, the burgeoning movements of the far right are often heavily represented within the police and the state military. They tend to see rural or exurban areas as the authentic and pure spaces of white nationalism, associated with Christian and traditional values. Examples here range from US Christian fundamentalists, through the British National Party to Austria's Freedom Party, the French National Front and Italy's Forza Italia. The fast-growing and sprawling cosmopolitan neighbourhoods of the West's cities, meanwhile, are often cast by such groups in the same Orientalist terms as the mega-cities of the Global South, as places radically external to the vulnerable nation – territories every bit as foreign as Baghdad or Gaza.

Paradoxically, however, the geographical imagination which underpins the new military urbanism tends to treat colonial frontiers and Western 'homelands' as fundamentally separate domains – two sides in a clash of civilizations, in Samuel Huntington's incendiary and highly controversial hypothesis.<sup>10</sup> This imaginative separation coexists uneasily with the ways in which the security, military and intelligence doctrines addressing both increasingly fuse together into a seamless whole. Such conceptions work to deny the ways in which the cities in both domains are increasingly linked by migration and investment.

The rendering of *all* such cities as problematic spaces beyond the rural or exurban heartlands of authentic national communities creates a peculiar consonance between the colonial peripheries and the capitalist heartlands. The construction of sectarian enclaves modelled on Israeli practice by US forces in Baghdad from 2003, for example, was widely described by US security personnel as the development of US-style gated communities in Iraq. In the aftermath of the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina in late 2005, US Army Officers talked of the need to 'take back the city from Iraqi-style 'insurgents'.

As ever, then, the way in which urban life in colonized zones is imagined reverberates powerfully in the cities of the colonizers. Indeed, the projection of colonial tropes and security exemplars into postcolonial metropolises in capitalist heartlands is fuelled by a new 'inner city Orientalism'.<sup>11</sup> This relies on the widespread depiction amongst rightist security, military, and political commentators of immigrant districts within the West's cities as 'backward' zones threatening the body politic of western cities or nations. In France, for example, post-war state planning worked to conceptualize the mass, peripheral housing projects of the *banlieues* as 'near peripheral' reservations attached to, but distant from, the country's metropolitan centres.<sup>12</sup> Bitter memories of the Algerian and other anti-colonial wars saturate the French far-right's discourse about waning 'white' power and the 'insecurity' caused by the banlieues – a process that has led to a dramatic mobilization of state security forces in and around the main immigrant housing complexes following the *banlieues* riots in 2005.

Discussing the shift from external to internal colonization in France, Kristin

<sup>10</sup> See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1998.

<sup>11</sup> See Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock, 'Cracking Down on Diaspora: Arab Detroit and America's "War on Terror"', *Anthropological Quarterly* 76, 443–62.

<sup>12</sup> Stefan Kipfer and with Kamisha Goonewardena, 'Colonization and the New Imperialism: On the Meaning of Urbicide Today', *Theory and Event* 10, 2, 2007, 1–39.



Ross points to the way in which France now 'distances itself from its (former) colonies, both within and without'. This functions, she continues, through a 'great cordoning off of the immigrants, their removal to the suburbs in a massive reworking of the social boundaries of Paris and other French cities'.<sup>13</sup> The 2005 riots were only the latest in a long line of reactions to the increasing militarization and securitization of this form of internal colonization and enforced peripherality within what Mustafa Dikeç has called the 'badlands' of the contemporary French Republic.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, such is the contemporary rights conflation of terrorism and immigration that simple acts of migration are now often being deemed little more than acts of warfare. This discursive shift has been termed the 'weaponization' of migration,<sup>15</sup> – shifting the emphasis from moral obligations to offer hospitality and asylum towards criminalizing or dehumanizing migrants as weapons against purportedly homogeneous and ethno-nationalist bases of national power.

Here the latest debates about asymmetric, irregular or low-intensity war – where nothing can be defined outside of boundless and never-ending definitions of political violence – blur uncomfortably into the growing clamour of demonization by right and far-right commentators of the West's diasporic and increasingly cosmopolitan cities. Samuel Huntington, taking his clash of civilizations thesis further, now argues that the very fabric of US power and national identity is under threat not just because of global Islamist terrorism but because non-white and especially Latino groups are colonizing, and dominating, US metropolitan areas.<sup>16</sup>

Adopting such Manichaean visions of the world, US 'military theorist William Lind has argued that prosaic acts of immigration from the global South to the North's cities must now be understood as acts 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 argues that migrants within Western nations can now launch 'a homegrown variety of Fourth Generation war, which is by far the most dangerous kind'.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Kristin Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Mustafa Dikeç, *Badlands of the Republic: Space, Politics and Urban Policy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007. See also Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies*.

<sup>15</sup> See Cato, 'The Weaponization of Immigration', Center for Immigration Studies, February 2008, at [www.cis.org](http://www.cis.org).

<sup>16</sup> See Samuel Huntington, *Who Are We: The Challenges to America's National Identity*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2005; and Huntington, *Clash of Civilizations*.

<sup>17</sup> William Lind, 'Understanding Fourth Generation War', *Military Review*, Sept–Oct 2004, 16, available at [www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/mileview/lind.pdf](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/mileview/lind.pdf).

Given the two-way movement of the exemplars of the new military urbanism between Western cities and those on colonial frontiers, fuelled by the instinctive anti-urbanism of national security states, it is no surprise that cities in both domains are starting to display startling similarities. In both, hard, military-style borders, fences and checkpoints around defended enclaves and security zones, superimposed on the wider and more open city, are proliferating. Jersey-barrier blast walls, identity check-points, computerized CCTV, biometric surveillance and military styles of access control protect archipelagos of fortified social, economic, political or military centres from an outside deemed unruly, impoverished or dangerous. In the most extreme examples, these encompass green zones, military prisons, ethnic and sectarian neighbourhoods and military bases; they are growing around strategic financial districts, embassies, tourist and consumption spaces, airport and port complexes, sports arenas, gated communities and export processing zones.

In both domains, efforts to profile urban populations are linked with similar systems which observe, track, and target dangerous bodies amid the mass of urban life. We thus see parallel deployments of high-tech satellites, drones, 'intelligent' CCTV, 'non-lethal' weaponry, data mining and biometric surveillance in the very different contexts of cities at home and abroad. And in both domains, finally, there is a similar sense that new doctrines of perpetual war are being used to treat all urban residents as perpetual targets whose benign nature, rather than being assumed, now needs to be continually demonstrated to complex architectures of surveillance or data-mining technology as the subject moves around the city. Such developments are backed by parallel legal suspensions targeting groups deemed threatening with special restrictions, pre-emptive arrests, or a priori incarceration within globe-straddling extra-legal torture camps and gulags. *See also the previous section.*

While these various archipelagos function in a wide variety of ways, they all superimpose on urban traditions of open access security systems that force people to prove their legitimacy if they want to move freely. Urban theorists and philosophers now wonder whether the city as a key space for dissent and collective mobilization within civil society is being replaced by complex geographies made up of various systems of enclaves and camps which are linked together and withdrawn from the urban outside beyond the walls or access-control systems.<sup>18</sup> In such a context one wonders whether urban securitization might reach a level in the future which would effectively decouple the strategic

<sup>18</sup> See Bülent Diken and Carsten Bagge Laustsen, *The Culture of Exception: Sociology Facing the Camp*, London: Routledge, 2005, 64; Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*, London: Routledge, 2001.



economic role of cities as the key drivers of capital accumulation from their historic role as centres for the mobilization of democratic dissent.

#### SURVEILLANT ECONOMY

Turning to our third key starting point – the new military urbanism's political economy – it is important to stress that the colonization of urban thinking and practice by militarized ideas of 'security' does not have a single source. In fact, it emanates from a complex range of sources. These encompass sprawling, transnational industrial complexes that stretch beyond the military and security sectors to span the technology, surveillance and entertainment industries; a wide range of consultants, research labs and corporate universities who sell security solutions as silver bullets to solve complex social problems; and a complex mass of security and military thinkers who now argue that war and political violence centre overwhelmingly on the everyday spaces and circuits of urban life.

Though vague and all-encompassing, ideas about security infect virtually all aspects of public policy and social life,<sup>19</sup> so these emerging industrial-security complexes work together on the highly lucrative challenges of perpetually targeting everyday activities, spaces and behaviours in cities, as well as the conduits that link conurbations. Amid global economic collapse, markets for security services and technologies are booming like never before.

Crucially, as the Raytheon example again demonstrates, the same constellations of security companies are often involved in selling, establishing and overseeing the techniques and practices of the new military urbanism in both war-zone and homeland cities. Often, as with the EU's new Europe-wide security policies, states or supranational blocks are not necessarily bringing in high-tech and militarized means of tracking illegal immigrants because they are the best means to address their security concerns. Rather, many such policies are intended to help build local industrial champions by developing their own defence, security or technology companies so they can compete in booming global markets for security technology.

In this lucrative export market, the Israeli experience of locking down cities and turning the Occupied Territories into permanent, urban prison camps is proving especially influential. It is the ultimate source of 'combat-proven' techniques and technology. The new high-tech border fence between the United States and Mexico, for example, is being built by a consortium linking

Boeing to the Israeli company Elbit, whose radar and targeting technologies have been developed in the permanent lockdown of Palestinian urban life. It is also startling how much US counterinsurgency strategies in Iraq have explicitly been based on efforts to emulate the Israeli treatment of the Palestinians during the Second Intifada.

The political economies sustaining the new military urbanism inevitably focus on the role of an elite group of so-called 'global' cities as the centres of neoliberal capitalism as well as the main arenas and markets for rolling out the new security solutions. The world's major financial centres, in particular, orchestrate global processes of militarization and securitization. They house the headquarters of global security, technology and military corporations, provide the locations for the world's biggest corporate universities – which dominate research and development in new security technologies – and support the global network of financial institutions which so often work to erase or appropriate cities and resources in colonized lands in the name of neoliberal economics and 'free trade'.

The network of global cities through which neoliberal capitalism is primarily orchestrated – London, New York, Paris, Frankfurt, and so on – thus helps to produce new logics of aggressive colonial acquisition and dispossession by multinational capital, which works closely with state militaries and private military contractors.

With the easing of state monopolies on violence and the proliferation of acquisitive private military and mercenary corporations, the brutal 'urbicidal' violence and dispossession that so often helps bolster the parasitic aspects of Western city economies, as well as feeding contemporary corporate capitalism, is more apparent than ever.<sup>20</sup> In a world increasingly haunted by the spectre of imminent resource exhaustion, the new military urbanism is thus linked intimately with the neocolonial exploitation of distant resources in an effort to sustain the richer cities and wealthy urban lifestyles. New York and London provide the financial and corporate power through which Iraqi oil reserves have been appropriated by Western oil companies since the 2003 invasion. Neocolonial land-grabs to grow biofuels for cars or food for increasingly precarious urban populations of the rich North are also organized through global commodity markets centred on the world's big financial cities. Finally, the rapid global growth in markets for high-tech security is itself providing a major boost to these cities in a time of global economic meltdown.

19 See Giorgio Agamben, 'Security and Terror', *Theory and Event*, 5: 4, 2002, 1–2.

20 See Kipfer and Goonewardena, 'Colonization and the New Imperialism'.



## URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, URBAN WAR

The very nature of the modern city – its reliance on dense webs of infrastructure, its density and anonymity, its dependence on imported water, food and energy – create the possibility of violence against it, and *through* it. Thus, the city is increasingly conceived of as the primary means of waging war by both state and non-state fighters alike.

Many recent examples demonstrate how non-state actors gain much of their power by appropriating the technical infrastructure necessary to sustain modern, globalized urban life in order to project, and massively amplify, the power of their political violence. Insurgents use the city's infrastructure to attack New York, London, Madrid or Mumbai. They disrupt electricity networks, oil pipelines, or mobile phone systems in Iraq, Nigeria and elsewhere. Somalis systematically hijacking global shipping routes have even used spies in London's shipping brokers to provide intelligence for their attacks. In doing so, such actors can get by with the most basic of weapons, transforming airliners, metro trains, cars, mobile phones, electricity and communications grids, or small boats, into deadly devices.

However, such threats of infrastructural terrorism, while very real, pale beside the much less visible efforts of state militaries to target essential city infrastructures. The US and Israeli forces, for example, have worked systematically to 'demodernize' entire urban societies through the destruction of the infrastructure of Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, and Iraq since 1991. States have replaced total war against cities with the systematic destruction of water and electricity supplies with weapons – such as bombs which rain down millions of graphite spoils to short-circuit electricity stations – designed specially for this task.

Though sold to the media as a way to bring inexorable political pressure on adversary regimes, such purportedly humanitarian modes of war end up killing the most vulnerable members of society as effectively as carpet bombing, but beyond the capricious gaze of the cameras. Such assaults are engineered through the deliberate generation of public health crises in highly urbanized societies where no alternatives to modern water, sewerage, power, or medical and food supplies exist.

The devastating Israeli siege of Gaza since Hamas was elected in 2006 is a powerful example. This has transformed a dense urban corridor, with 1.5 million people squeezed into an area the size of the Isle of Wight, into a vast prison camp. Within these confines, the deaths of the weak, old, young and sick are invisible to the outside world. The stronger individuals are forced to live something approaching what Giorgio Agamben has called 'bare life' – a biological existence that can be sacrificed at any time by a colonial power that

maintains the right to kill with impunity but has withdrawn all moral, political or human responsibilities from the population.<sup>21</sup>

Increasingly, the goals of such formal infrastructural war, as a means of political coercion, blur seamlessly into the structure of economic competition and energy geopolitics. A resurgent Russia, for example, gains much of its strategic power these days not through formal military deployments but through its continued threats to switch off the energy supplies of Europe's cities at a stroke.

## CITIZEN SOLDIERS

The fifth key trait of the new military urbanism is the way its claims to legitimacy are fused with militarized veins of popular, urban, electronic and material culture. Very often, for example, the military tasks of tracking, surveillance and targeting do not require completely new technological systems. Instead, they simply appropriate the systems that operate in cities to sustain the latest means of digitally organized travel and consumption. Thus, as in central London, congestion-charging zones quickly morph into security zones. Internet interactions and transactions provide the basis for data-mining in efforts to root out supposedly threatening behaviours. Dreams of smart cars help bring into being robotic weapons systems. Satellite imagery and GPS support new styles of civilian urban life based on the use of the very US Air Force structures that facilitate 'precision' urban bombing. And, as in the new security initiative in Lower Manhattan, CCTV cameras designed to make shoppers feel secure are transformed into 'anti-terrorist' surveillance systems.

Perhaps the most powerful series of civilian-military crossovers at the heart of the new military urbanism are being forged within cultures of virtual and electronic entertainment and corporate news. Here, to tempt the nimble-fingered recruits best able to control the latest high-tech drones and weaponry, the US military produces some of the most popular urban warfare video games. Highly successful games like the US Army's *America's Army* or US Marines' *Full Spectrum Warrior*<sup>22</sup> allow players to slay terrorists in fictionalized and Orientalized cities in frameworks based directly on those of the US military's own training systems. To close the circle between virtual entertainment and remote killing, control panels for the latest US weapons systems – such as the latest control stations for the pilots of armed Predator drones, manufactured by

<sup>21</sup> See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

<sup>22</sup> See for example, [www.americasarmy.com](http://www.americasarmy.com).



our old friends Raytheon – now imitate the consoles of PlayStation, which are, after all, very familiar to recruits.

A final vital circuit of militarization linking urban and popular culture in domestic cities to colonial violence in occupied ones centres on the well-established but intensifying militarization of *car-culture*. The most powerful symbol of this is the popularity of the explicitly military Sports Utility Vehicle, a phenomenon most notable in the United States. The rise and fall of the Hummer is an especially pivotal example. Here, as we shall see, US military vehicles for urban warfare have been converted into hyper-aggressive civilian vehicles marketed as the patriotic embodiment of the War on Terror. Modified civilian SUVs, in turn, have been the vehicle of choice for Blackwater's mercenaries on the streets of Iraq, as well as the recent focus of US recruitment drives targeting urban ethnic minorities. In addition, tentative shifts towards computerized civilian cars crossover heavily with the US military's impatient efforts to build fully robotic ground vehicles geared towards urban warfare. Embracing all these connections, of course, are the insecurities and violence perpetuated by US oil profligacy, which is forcing US military forces into a tawdry scramble to access and control rapidly diminishing reserves and supplies.

#### AIMS

This is the context in which *Cities Under Siege* aims to present a wide-ranging exploration and critique of the contours of the new military urbanism. Contrary to conventional debates within international politics, political science, and history, *Cities Under Siege* does not view the spaces, infrastructures and cultural aspects of city life as a mere passive backdrop to the imagination and propagation of violence or the construction of 'security'. Rather, the way cities and urban spaces are produced and restructured are seen actually to help constitute these strategies and fantasies, as well as their effects (and vice versa).

To achieve this, *Cities Under Siege* deliberately works across an unusually wide range of geographical scales. The book emphasizes how the new military urbanism works by constituting urban life in both metropolitan cores of the West, and the burgeoning cities on the global South's colonial frontiers. It reveals, moreover, how this is done through processes and connections which demand that transnational, national, urban and bodily scales be kept in view at the same time.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> See Michael Peter Smith, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization*, New York: Blackwell, 2001.

The book aims in particular to unite two very different, and usually separate, discourses on cities and urban life: the growing debate within security studies and international politics on the urbanization of security; and the generally more critical debates within urban studies, geography, architecture, anthropology and cultural studies as to how these changes are challenging the politics of cities and urban life in a time of rapid urbanization.

The writing of this book is partly motivated by the absence of an accessible and critical analysis exploring how resurgent imperialism and colonial geographies characteristic of the contemporary era umbilically connect cities within metropolitan cores and colonial peripheries.<sup>24</sup> Such neglect is the result of the stark division of labour within the academy. This has meant that, broadly speaking, foreign policy, military, legal and international relations scholars have had the task of addressing the new imperial wars at the international scale. At the same time, an almost completely separate body of urban, legal and social scholars has worked to explore the new politics of Western cities which have surrounded the homeland security drive at the urban and national scales within Western nations. But these debates have remained stubbornly separated by their different theoretical traditions, and the geographical and scalar orientations, of the two.

This analytical failure is in part explicable in terms of the way dominant, conservative, and realist investigations into the link between globalization and security split contemporary reality into the 'home' civilization of the rich, modern North and a separate civilization in the global South, characterized largely by backwardness, danger, pathology and anarchy.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, as we shall see, such Manichaean views of the world are themselves a driving force behind the new military urbanism. Such perspectives tend to demonize an Orientalized South as the source of all contemporary insecurity. They also actively work to deny the ways in which urban and economic life in the global North – fundamentally relies on, and is constituted through, links to the postcolonial – and in some cases, newly colonial – South. In the process such discourses play a key role in producing the symbolic violence necessary to allow states to launch real violence and war.

By obsessing about the geopolitical rivalries of nation-states or transnational non-state movements, moreover, such realist, conservative perspectives completely ignore how cities and urbanization processes also provide crucial

<sup>24</sup> See Gregory, *The Colonial Present*.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Kaplan's writings are key examples here. See Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy', *Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994; Kaplan *The Coming Anarchy: Shattering the Dreams of the Post-Cold War World*, New York: Random House, 2000.



territorial forms of domination, hyper-inequality, and insecurity and help to propagate violence. 'One of the fundamental determinants of the modern experience,' cultural theorist Fredric Jameson wrote in 2003, 'can be found in the way imperialism masks and conceals the nature of the system. For one thing, the imperial powers of the older system do not want to know about their colonies or about the violence and exploitation on which their prosperity is founded.'<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, academic disciplines which purportedly deal with urban issues are themselves struggling to overcome the legacies of their own colonial histories. This dramatically inhibits their ability to understand the new military urbanism. The Manichaean vision that characterizes conservative writings about globalization are also perceptible in the work of many urban theorists. In particular, the concept of a world partitioned into two hermetically sealed zones – 'developed' cities addressed through urban geography or sociology, and 'developing' cities addressed through 'development studies' – remains remarkably pervasive.

This means that, too often, cities in the West and the so-called developing world remain artificially separated, with theoretical attention centring overwhelmingly on the former. This leaves the burgeoning and pivotal cities of the South categorized as a mere Other, outside of Western culture, a status which makes it all but impossible for theorists to grasp how both sets of cities mutually constitute each other within imperial, neo-colonial or postcolonial geographies.<sup>27</sup>

The field of urban studies has been particularly slow to address the central role of cities within the new imperialism – the resurgence of aggressive, colonial militarism focusing on the violent appropriation of land and resources in the South.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, the prosperous cities of the North are today often idealized by liberal commentators and theorists as centres of migration and laboratories of cosmopolitan integration, characteristics construed as vital to their high-tech economic futures as the key nodes of the 'global knowledge economy'. Such integration is deemed by influential urban policy gurus, such as Richard Florida, to be a key engine of economic creativity within technologically advanced capitalism.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Fredric Jameson, 'The End of Temporality,' *Critical Inquiry*, 29(4), 2003, 700, cited in Kipfer and Goonewardena 'Colonization and the New Imperialism'.

<sup>27</sup> Jenny Robinson, 'Cities Between Modernity and Development,' paper presented to the annual meeting of the Association of American Geographers, 2003, New Orleans, unpublished paper. See also her *Ordinary Cities*, London: Routledge, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> See Kanishk Goonewardena and Stefan Kipfer, 'Postcolonial Urbicide: New Imperialism, Global Cities and the Damned of the Earth,' *New Formations*, 59, Autumn 2006, 23–33.

<sup>29</sup> See Richard Florida, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, New York: Basic Books, 2002.

These perspectives, however, systematically ignore the way the North's global cities often act as economic or ecological parasites, preying on the South, violently appropriating energy, water, land and mineral resources, relying on exploitative labour conditions in offshore manufacturing, driving damaging processes of climate change, and generating an often highly damaging flow of tourism and waste. Even less recognized are the ways in which the North's global cities act as the main sites for financing and orchestrating the control of the developing world that is at the heart of the extension of neoliberal capitalism.<sup>30</sup> The ways in which the rich cities of the advanced capitalist world profit from 'urbicidal' violence, which deliberately targets the city geographies of the Global South to sustain capital accumulation, have barely been acknowledged.<sup>31</sup> *Cities Under Siege* is an attempt to rectify this situation.

#### OUTLINE

*Cities Under Siege* comprises three broad, thematic chapters, followed by seven extended case studies. The first of the thematic chapters looks at how warfare, political violence and military and security imaginaries are now re-entering cities. This development follows a long period when Western military thought was preoccupied with planning globe-straddling nuclear exchanges between superpowers or massed tank engagements across rural plains. It examines, too, the ways in which the latest military and security doctrine is working to colonize the everyday environments of modern conurbations.

Chapter 2 moves on to look at how the various bastions of the political right increasingly work to demonize cities as intrinsically threatening or problematic places necessitating political violence, militarized control, or radical securitization. In Chapter 3, I detail the particular characteristics of the new military urbanism, and use some of the latest research in the social sciences to highlight key features of the deepening crossover between urbanism and militarism.

The next six case studies address the circuits through which the new military urbanism connects urban life in the West to existence on colonial frontiers. The first three look at, respectively, the proliferation of borders and surveillance systems within the fabric of urban life; the US military's ambitions for urban

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, (2nd Edition) 2002; Peter Taylor, *World City Networks: A Global Urban Analysis*, London: Routledge, 2003.

<sup>31</sup> For an excellent discussion of this, see Kipfer and Goonewardena 'Colonization and the New Imperialism'; and Goonewardena and Kipfer, 'Postcolonial Urbicide'.



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> Dhaka, 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>

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

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

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