

# Introduction: Cities, Warfare, and States of Emergency

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Across the world people who live in, have abandoned or been expelled from cities can testify to the mounting crises of contemporary urban life. (Schneider and Susser, 2003: 1)

Baghdad burns in real time. The global population accelerates towards the seven billion mark. Protestors rally in the streets – from Karachi to São Paulo to Lagos. The Third World is ravaged by an incurable epidemic. Information is constant. Distance is negligible. Sprawl continues its slow march across vast territories, as the world gets hotter by the day. (Johnson, 2003: 7)

To be sure, a cityscape is not made of flesh. Still, sheared-off buildings are almost as eloquent as body parts (Kabul, Sarajevo, East Mostar, Grozny, 16 acres of lower Manhattan after September 11, 2001, the refugee camp in Jenin). Look, the photographs say, this is what it's like. This is what war does. War tears, war rends. War rips open, eviscerates. War scorches. War dismembers. War ruins. (Sontag, 2003: 5)

Being chiefly human, cities can be killed. (Spiller, 2000: 6)

Each new conflagration pushes at the limits of the humanly tolerable... All too often, the city's survival hangs in a precious balance. (Lang, 1996: 5)

## **The Mutuality of War and the City**

Cities, warfare, and organized political violence have always been mutual constructions. "The city, the polis, is constitutive of the form of conflict called *war*, just as war is itself constitutive of the political form called the *city*" (Virilio, 2002: 5; original emphasis). War and the city have intimately shaped each

other throughout urban and military history. “There is . . . a direct reciprocity between war and cities,” writes the geographer Ken Hewitt. “The latter are the more thoroughgoing constructs of collective life, containing the definitive human places. War is the most thoroughgoing or consciously prosecuted occasion of collective violence that destroys places” (1983: 258).

The widespread survival of massive urban fortifications – especially in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe – are a living testament to the fact that, in premodern and pre-nation-state civilizations, city-states were the actual agents, as well as the main targets, of war. In premodern times cities were built for defense as well as being dominant sites of commerce, exchange, and political, religious, and social power. “The city, with its buttressed walls, its ramparts and moats, stood as an outstanding display of ever-threatening aggression” (Mumford, 1961: 44).

The sacking and killing of fortified cities and their inhabitants was the central event in premodern war (Weber, 1958; Gravett, 1990; Corfis and Wolfe, 1995; Kern, 1990). Indeed (often allegorical) stories of such acts make up a good part of the Bible – especially the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations – and other ancient and classical religious and philosophical texts. “Myths of urban ruin grow at our culture’s root” (Berman, 1996).

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as modern nation-states started to emerge in Europe as “bordered power containers,” they began seeking a monopoly on political violence (Giddens, 1985b). “The states caught up with the forward gallop of the towns” (Braudel, 1973: 398). The expanding imperial and metropolitan cities that lay at the core of nation-states were no longer organizers of their own armies and defenses, but they maintained political power and reach. Such cities directed violence, control, repression, and the colonial acquisition of territory, raw materials, wealth, and labor power from afar (Driver and Gilbert, 2003).

By the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, industrial cities in the global North had grown in synchrony with the killing powers of technology. They provided the men and material to sustain the massive industrial or “total” wars of the twentieth century. At the same time, their (often female-staffed) industries and neighborhoods 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” (Shaw, 2003: 131). Right up to the start of the twenty-first century, then, the capture of strategic and politically important cities remains “the ultimate symbol of conquest and national survival” (Shaw, 2001: 1).

In fact, the deliberate destruction and targeting of cities and their support systems in times of war and crisis is a constant throughout the 8,000 years or so of urban history on our planet. Hewitt, speaking in 1987, pointed out:

Destruction of places, driven by fear and hatred, runs through the whole history of wars, from ancient Troy or Carthage, to Warsaw and Hiroshima in our own century. The miseries, uprootings, and deaths of civilians in besieged cities, especially after defeat, stand amongst the most terrible indictments of the powerful and victorious. In that sense, there is, despite the progress of weapons of devastation, a continuity in the experience of civilians from Euripides' *Trojan Women* or the Lamentations of Jeremiah, to the cries of widowed women and orphaned children in Beirut, Belfast, the villages of Afghanistan, and those of El Salvador. (Hewitt, 1987: 469)

Given the centrality of both urbanization and the prosecution of political violence to modernity, this subtle interpenetration of cities and warfare should be no surprise. "After all, modernity, through most of its career, has been modernity at war" (Pieterse, 2002: 3).

While far from new, acts of war and terror against cities and their inhabitants are saturating our world. For centuries, it has not been feasible to contain cities within defensive walls or effective cordons which protect their citizens from military force (Virilio, 1987). Just as it is no longer adequate to theorize cities as local, bounded sites that are separated off from the rest of the world, so, similarly, political violence is now fueled and sustained by transnational networks that can be global and local at the same time.

### **"Security" and the Urbanization of War**

Security and fear have become the dominant chords in the politics of liberal democracies. (Jayasuriya, 2002: 131)

While they remain major sites of military, economic, and regulatory power, nation-states are becoming increasingly "decentered." Within a context of neoliberal globalization, transnational flows between cities and metropolitan regions, and the growth of transnational governance, are undermining their coherence and meaning. In some cases, modern, developmentalist nation-states have collapsed or "failed" altogether since the end of the Cold War.

As a result, "with regard to violence, as with production, the state no longer holds the preeminent position it used to" (Pieterse 2002: 2). Traditional state vs. state wars, driven by imperial or geopolitical imperatives of maintaining, or expanding, national territories, are now rare events deserving special historical scrutiny. In their place, non-traditional, "asymmetric," "informal," or "new" wars are proliferating (Kaldor, 1999).

Such wars have not reduced the military and security efforts of nation-states. Rather, the risks thrown up by such wars, which tend to transcend

national boundaries and territories, now mean that “security” “imposes itself as the basic principle of state activity” (Agamben, 2002: 1). Some even argue that the imperative of “security” is beginning to overwhelm the other, historic functions of nation-states that were built up over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (such as social welfare, education, health, infrastructure development, economic regulation, and planning). “What used to be one among several decisive measures of public administration until the first half of the twentieth century,” writes Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, “now becomes the sole criterion of political legitimation” (2002: 1).

In the “new” wars of the post-Cold War era – which increasingly straddle the “technology gaps” separating advanced industrial nations from informal fighters – cities are the key sites. Indeed, urban areas are now the “lightning conductors” for the world’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 reregulation and liberalization; of militarization, informatization, resource exploitation, and ecological change are, to a growing extent, boiling down to often violent conflicts in the key strategic sites of our age: contemporary cities (Sassen, 2002b).

As a result, war, “terrorism,” and cities are redefining each other in complex, but poorly explored, ways. Such redefinitions are, in turn, bound up with deeper shifts in the ways in which time, space, technology, mobility, and power are constructed and experienced in our societies as a whole (Virilio, 1986).

### **Warfare Re-Enters the City: The Parallel “Rescaling” of Urbanism and Political Violence**

As the bipolar world fades away, we are moving from a world of enemies to one of dangers and risks. (Beck, 1999: 3)

It is now clear that the days of the classical Clausewitzian definition of warfare as a symmetrical engagement between state armies in the open field are over. War has entered the city again – the sphere of the everyday, the private realm of the house. . . We find ourselves nervous when we use public transport systems or mingle in crowds, due to frequent bomb scares. (Misselwitz and Weizman, 2003: 272)

The last two decades have seen a geopolitical and strategic reshaping of our world based heavily on a proliferation of organized, extremely violent acts against cities, those who live in them, and the support systems that make them work.

The events of September 11, 2001 are, of course, the best known and extensively reported case (see Calhoun, Price, and Timmer, 2002; Booth and Dunne, 2002). But there are many, many others. Catastrophic urban terrorist attacks – fueled by religious or political radicalism, anti-modernism, or resistance to brutal occupation, repression, or perceived biases of globalization – have also targeted urban sites in Madrid, Kitay (Bali), Moscow, Mumbai (Bombay), and Karachi; Jakarta, Casablanca, Delhi, and Islamabad; Riyadh, Mombassa, Kabul, Istanbul, and Nairobi.

Since 9/11, George Bush’s “war on terror” – a purported response to those attacks – has inflicted massive onslaughts by US and British forces on Basra, Baghdad, Fallujah, Kandahar, Kabul, and surrounding areas. In the case of Iraq, this has happened despite the fact there was not a shred of evidence to link Saddam Hussein’s regime to Al-Qaeda. Far from being routes to simple “regime change” and peaceful reconstruction, however, these attacks have been followed by complex, uneven, guerrilla-style resistance campaigns against occupying ground forces. Such forces have to move down from their GPS targeting from 40,000 ft, or out from behind armored plate, to occupy urban sites, and have thus become immensely more vulnerable to political opponents and bitter local civilians alike.

Nor should we forget the leveling of Groznyy by the Russians in 1996; the sieges of Sarajevo and Mostar in the Balkan wars of the early 1990s; the LA riots of 1992; the US’s bloody incursion into Mogadishu in 1993; the continuing suicide bombings in Israeli bars, buses, and malls; Israel’s bulldozing of Jenin and Nablus in spring 2002 and its continuing policies of strangulation, immiseration, and demolition against Palestinian cities; or the resource- or drug-fueled guerrilla wars in Freetown, Bogotá, and Monrovia.

Finally, we must not ignore the increasingly violent, temporary urban sieges that now regularly occur around the planet (Warren, this volume; Cockburn and St. Clair, 2000; Negri, 2002). Anti-globalization or anti-state movements “swarm” together around the fortified urban summits of the IMF, the G8, and the WTO, to protest against the inequities of neoliberal globalization. In postmodern, high-tech replays of medieval sieges, temporary walls, battlements, and massive armed force work – often with extreme violence – to try to separate the “inside” from the “outside” on the other side of the street. This happens even though both sets of protagonists are global organizations temporarily settled in local space for ritualized, bloody combat.

More and more, civilian and domestic spaces of urban civil societies emerge, or in many cases *reemerge*, as *geopolitically* charged spaces (Luke, this volume). Both cities and organized violence are “rescaling” together as they are remade through transnational connections, technologies, diasporas, and flows, which tend to transcend and undermine the (always

fleeting and violently enforced) stabilities of Cold War blocs or modern nation-states (Dalby, 2000; Giddens, 1985b).

As a result, the world's geopolitical struggles increasingly articulate around violent conflicts over very local, urban, strategic sites (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois, 2003; Sassen, 2002b). This process parallels, and is closely bound up with, the wider processes of neoliberal globalization. For these, too, are unleashing powerful processes of "creative destruction" which tend to intensify the roles of strategic, subnational spaces and city regions in economic governance and social, cultural, and political change (Brenner and Theodore, 2002).

### **The "Implosion of Global and National Politics into the Urban World"**

The [9/11] attacks on the US and the war against organized terrorism should not keep us from seeing and remembering all the other struggles going on and the larger landscape of rage and hopelessness engulfing more and more people. (Sassen, 2002b: 313)

Far from going away, then, strategies of deliberately attacking the systems and places that support civilian urban life have only become more sophisticated since the mass, total, urban annihilation that characterized the twentieth century. The deliberate devastation of urban living spaces continues apace. Fueling it are multiple, parallel transformations which together characterize the postcolonial, 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 Cold War bipolar system; the proliferation of fundamentalist religious and political groups; the militarization of gangs, drug cartels, militia, corrupt political regimes, and law enforcement agencies; the failure of many national and local states; the urbanization of populations and terrain; the growing accessibility of heavy weapons; a crisis of increasing social polarization at all geographical scales; and the growing scarcity of many essential resources (see Turton, 2002; Castells, 1997, 1998).

To this cocktail we must add the destabilizing effects of the US's increasingly aggressive and violent interventions in a widening range of nations and its long-term support for many a repressive, brutal regime; plus the deleterious impacts of neoliberal restructuring and "structural adjustment" programs imposed on many nations by the IMF, WTO, and World Bank in the past two decades (Hoogvelt, 1997). Such programs have added to the sense of crisis in many cities. This is because they have directly resulted in the erosion of social and economic security and the further immiseration of the urban poor (and, increasingly, the urban middle

classes) (see Falk, 1999; Lomnitz, 2003; Humphrey, 2003; Schneider and Susser, 2003).

These complex processes of change are interweaving at a time when the scale of urbanization is at an unprecedented global level. During the 1990s the world's urban population grew by 36 percent. By 2003, 900 million people lived in slums. The increasing polarization of cities caused by neo-liberal globalization is providing many conditions that are ripe for extremes of civil and militarized violence (Vidal, 2003; Castells, 1997, 1998).

Neoliberal globalization *itself* operates through a vast scale of violence, exploitation, and criminality (Brennan, 2003; Hardt and Negri, 2000). In fact, in many ways its operation is similar to the "rhizomatic" dynamics of transnational terrorism. "Our own politicians and businesses sail a strikingly similar pirate sea [to the al-Qaeda network]," suggests the architectural writer Keller Easterling, "slipping between legal jurisdictions, leveraging advantages in the differential value of labor and currency, brandishing national identity one moment and laundering it the next, using lies and disguises to neutralize cultural or political differences" (2002: 189).

Put together, these factors are forcing what the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has called an "implosion of global and national politics into the urban world" (1996: 152). This has led to a proliferation of bloody, largely urban, wars. Many of these, in turn, have stimulated vast migrations and the construction of city-scale refugee camps to accommodate displaced populations (which stood at a global figure of 50 million by 2002) (see Agier, 2002; Diken and Laustsen, 2003).

Such "new" urban wars "take their energy from macro events and processes . . . that link global politics to the micro politics of streets and neighborhoods" (Appadurai, 1996: 152–3):

In the conditions of ethnic unrest and urban warfare that characterize cities such as Belfast and Los Angeles, Ahmedabad and Sarajevo, Mogadishu and Johannesburg, urban war zones are becoming armed camps, driven wholly by *implosive* forces that fold into neighborhoods the most violent and problematic repercussions of wider regional, national, and global processes. (Appadurai, 1996: 152–3; original emphasis)

To Appadurai, these new urban wars thus represent little less than:

a new phase in the life of cities, where the concentration of ethnic populations, the availability of heavy weaponry, and the crowded conditions of civic life create futurist forms of warfare . . . and where a general desolation of the national and global landscape has transposed many bizarre racial, religious, and linguistic enmities into scenarios of unrelieved urban terror. (Appadurai, 1996: 152–3)

## **Dialectics of Place Attachment: The City as Site and Symbol for Violent Struggle**

Contemporary cities are the battlegrounds on which global powers and stubbornly local meanings and identities meet. (Bauman, 2001: 20)

Cities are often located on the fault-lines between cultures – between modernizing societies and traditional cultures; between individual-based and community based economies; between democracy and more authoritarian regimes; between colonial governments and native populations. (Bollens, 2001: 170)

Appadurai helps us understand why contemporary warfare and terror now largely boil down to contests over the spaces, symbols, meanings, support systems, or power structures of cities and urban places. As throughout the history of war, such struggles are fueled by dichotomized constructions of “us” and an “othered” *them* – the target... the enemy... the hated. “War... mobilizes the highly charged and dangerous dialectic of place attachment,” writes Ken Hewitt. This involves “the perceived antithesis of ‘our’ places or homeland and ‘theirs,’ an unbridled sentimentalizing of one’s own while dehumanizing the enemy’s people and land” (1983: 258).

Such binaried views of the world as a “black-and-white” split of territories, ethnicities, religions, political or religious orientations, and identities – of “us” and “them” – are essential to make and sustain political violence. The latest Western rhetoric of a “clash of civilizations” (Huntingdon, 1993), or Al-Qaeda’s assertion of the need for “pure,” “Islamic” transnational spaces and states, are only two among many of such incendiary propositions.

### **“Cracking Down on Diaspora”: The “Domestic Front” in the “War on Terror”**

National borders have ceased being continuous lines on the earth’s surface and [have] become non-related sets of lines and points situated within each country. (Andreu, 1997: 58)

The rhetoric of “insides” needing protection from external threats in the form of international organizations is pervasive. (Dalby, 2000: 5)

The reconstruction of national boundaries rel[ies] on linguistic work. (Kaplan, 2003: 85)

In attempting to split an intrinsically mobile, heterogeneous, and urbanizing world into jigsaw-like pieces of territory – which are assumed to have



essential and “pure” identities – such views fundamentally and violently challenge the reality of cities and urban life on our planet (Laguerre, 2003). As throughout urban history, in these times of intensifying globalization urban areas are crucial centers of heterogeneous mixing. Increasingly, the differences, tolerances, and hatreds of the globe are inseparably related to, and constituted through, day-to-day encounters, and cosmopolitan accommodations (and frictions) in the streetscapes, schools, city halls, and neighborhoods of cities.

Ironically, 9/11 itself symbolized that this telescoping of the world’s political violence into the city (and vice versa) was now inescapable. “If it existed, any comfortable distinction between domestic and international, here and there, us and them, ceased to have meaning after that day” (Hyndman, 2003: 1).

On the one hand, then, the 9/11 attacks can be seen as part of a fundamentalist, transnational war, or Jihad, by radical Islamic movements against pluralistic and heterogeneous mixing in (capitalist) cities (Buck-Morss, 2003). This loosely affiliated network of radical Islamic terror organizations needs to be considered as one of a large number of social movements against what Castells calls the “new global order.” Heterogeneous mixing of ethnicities and religious groups holds no place within *umma*, the transnational fundamentalist Islamic space that these movements are struggling to establish (Castells, 2004: 111). Thus, it is notable that cities that have long sustained complex heterogeneities, religious pluralism, and multiple diasporas – New York and Istanbul, for example – have been prime targets for catastrophic terror attacks. Indeed, in their own horrible way, the grim lists of casualties on that bright New York day in September 2001 revealed the multiple diasporas and cosmopolitanisms that now constitute the often hidden social fabric of “global” cities like New York. As Watson writes:

Global labor migration patterns have . . . brought the world to lower Manhattan to service the corporate office blocks: the dishwashers, messengers, coffee-cart vendors, and office cleaners were Mexican, Bangladeshi, Jamaican, and Palestinian. One of the tragedies of September 11, 2001 was that it took such an extraordinary event to reveal the everyday reality of life at the heart of the global city. (Watson, 2003: 109)

On the other hand, Bush’s neoconservative and neo-imperial “war on terror” also problematizes such urban cosmopolitanism. It, too, undermines both the possibility and the legitimacy of city-based democratic pluralism and dissent against the “new global order.” In asserting a binaried split between “the civilized and savage throughout the social circuitry,” the war on terror rhetoric of the Bush regime, and the policies based on it,

have produced a “constant scrutiny of those who bear the sign of ‘dormant’ terrorist.” It has also “activated a policing of points of vulnerability against an enemy who inheres within the space of the US” (Passavant and Dean, 2002; cited in Gregory, 2003).

Mainstream media in the West now talk endlessly of “the enemy within” Western cities (Klaidman et al., 2002). “Terrorism experts” warn “of the ‘Islamic threat’ in the American underclass, and alerting the public that the ghetto and the prison system could well supply a ‘fifth column’ to Osama bin Laden and his ilk” (Aidi, 2002: 36).

I would not dispute that small numbers of Western-born Muslims have volunteered for terrorist action on behalf of radical Islamic organizations – the brutal and dehumanizing impacts of Bush’s war on terror are perfect recruitment agents for al-Qaeda and Jihad (MacAskill, 2003). Nor would I question the need to take every possible step to prevent those planning terrorist atrocities from carrying out their plans (Molotch and McClain, 2003). The problem is that the polemical, sensationalist, and nationalistic accounts of much mainstream media coverage unhelpfully resort to the simplistic, racist generalizations of whole communities because it makes good copy. These are fueled by a lack of real knowledge of the complex histories and cultures of both the Middle East and the West (and the relations between them). Above all, such discourses “recycle the same unverifiable fictions and vast generalizations to stir up ‘America’ against the foreign devil” (Said, 2003: 6).

A “domestic front” has thus been drawn in Bush’s war on terror. Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock (2003) call this a “cracking down on diaspora.” This process involves deepening state surveillance against those seen to harbor “terrorist threats,” combined with a radically increased effort to ensure the filtering power of national borders (see Molotch and McLain, 2003; Andreas and Biersteker, 2003). After decades when the business press triumphantly celebrated the “death of distance,” or the imperative of opening borders to the “free” movements of neoliberal globalization, post 9/11, “in both political debates and policy practice, borders are very much back in style” (Andreas, 2003: 1). Once again, nations are being (re)imagined as bounded, organized spaces with closely controlled, and filtered, relationships with the supposed terrors of the outside world. In the US, for example, national immigration, border control, and social policy strategies have been remodeled since 9/11 in an:

attempt to reconstitute the [United States] as a bounded area that can be fortified against outsiders and other global influences. In this imagining of nation, the US ceases to be a constellation of local, national, international, and global relations, experiences, and meanings that coalesce in places like

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New York City and Washington, DC; rather, it is increasingly defined by a “security perimeter” and the strict surveillance of borders. (Hyndman, 2003: 2; see Anderson, 2002)

In the process, systematic state repression and mass incarceration have been brought to bear on Arab-American neighborhoods like Dearbon in Detroit. In the UK, meanwhile, 529 Muslims have been arrested and interrogated since 9/11 – with considerable racist and physical abuse – but only five have been convicted of any “terrorist” crime (Barnett and Bright, 2003; Muir, 2003). This sense of Western Muslim communities being “under siege on all sides” has emerged even though both US and British Muslim communities have overwhelmingly expressed their collective revulsion at the 9/11 attacks (Bright, 2003, Howell and Shryock, 2003). It must be said that this clampdown has generated much collective resistance, from Arab-Americans and British Muslims and others alike.

The “hybrid,” transnational identities of many neighborhoods and communities in cities, shaped by generations of transnational migration and diasporic mixing, are thus becoming problematized. Inevitably, such places and groups are being “stretched” across the resurgent “them and us” or “home and foreign” binaries that are being imposed. Many people, spaces, and communities in Western cities are thus becoming “‘othered’ simply because they are perceived to be associated with ‘Arab’ or ‘Muslim terrorists’” (Hall, 2003).

### **Fear, Insecurity, and the Militarization of Urban Life**

Are fear and urbanism at war? (Swanstrom, 2002)

Notions of community are now organized not only around flag-waving displays of patriotism, but also around collective fears and the ongoing militarization of visual culture and public space. (Giroux, 2003: ix)

As global violence telescopes within and through local places, so new physical, social, and psychological barriers are being constructed and enacted. In many contexts, militarized discourses of “homeland security” are infiltrating, and starting to reshape, previously civil societies, spaces, and policy debates (Kaplan, 2003; Rainham, 2003). In the wake of 9/11, and the other catastrophic terrorist acts of the last few years, the design of buildings, the management of traffic, the physical planning of cities, migration policy, or the design of social policies for ethnically diverse cities and neighborhoods, are being brought within the widening umbrella of “national security.”

As globe-spanning, geostrategic concerns blur into very local, urban spaces, all of a sudden it seems normal for Western cities to face a palpable militarization previously more common in cities of the global South. Tanks protect airports. Troops guard rail stations. Surface-to-air missiles sit around office blocks housing meetings of international leaders. Combat air patrols buzz around Manhattan and London. New York street police now carry pocket-size radiation detectors in the hope that they might detect any nuclear “dirty bombs” smuggled into the metropolitan area. US postal sorting depots now have automatic anthrax sniffers. New York’s Grand Central Station now has automatic bio-weapons detectors. And in a curious replay of earlier debates about strategic bombing and nuclear war, some commentators in the United States have even argued that the risks of terrorism – and particularly the risk that such attacks will utilize nuclear, chemical, and biological “Weapons of Mass Destruction” – mean that large, central cities should be actively decentralized (Swanstrom, 2002; see Glaeser and Shapiro, 2002; Coaffee, 2003b).

The danger, of course, is that this sense of a proliferating risk of violence against cities is adding to a vicious circle of fear and insecurity that already surrounded crime and social violence in many cities (Friedmann, 2002; Furedi, 1997; Davis, 1990, 1992, 1998; Soja, 2000, ch. 10; Body-Gendrot, 2000). Certainly, this powerful combination means that a particularly anxious state of perpetual fear and emergency now pertains in many cities (Agamben, 1998; Dillon, 2002; Savitch and Ardashev, 2001).

Rather than being completely new, however, the demonization of Islamic groups and neighborhoods is being added to the long-standing demonization of other ethnic minorities in many Western cities (see Soja, 2000). The similarities with earlier xenophobic discourses of urban fear, risk, and disorder are, indeed, striking. The disorder of the Los Angeles riots in 1992, for example, produced a sense of urban emergency and restructuring that seems powerfully resonant in post-9/11 times. Barbara Hooper argues the result was:

a heightened concern over borders; a situation of struggle over spaces and meanings; a milieu of fear that manifests itself as a ferocious racism and xenophobia, as a concern for the pathology of bodes and cities which are produced as dangerous carriers of the disorder, incubators and contagions in the global epidemic of shrinking Western power. (Hooper, 2000: 368)

In many cases, of course, the risks of war or terror – and terror produced by the war on terror – are palpable and real. The proliferating bombs and dismembered bodies cannot be ignored. But such cultures of fear are, in many cases, being exaggerated and exploited by politicians. Take an example: George Bush’s first TV ad for the 2004 US election, in November

2003. This included a clip of the president looking sincerely into the camera and uttering in a low, somber, voice: “It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known” (quoted in Dows, 2003).

Such rhetoric, and the deliberate fabrication of scares about uranium from Niger and Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, demonstrate that post-9/11 cultures of fear are being ruthlessly manipulated, even manufactured, for political ends – largely to try to boost politicians’ standings. (We should remember that “the tragic events of September 11 transformed a president whose election was the most questioned ever into a president with the highest popularity ever”: Zulaika, 2003: 194.) It is also happening to legitimize massive state violence targeting the supposed sources of these risks (so, in the process, realizing the long-standing geopolitical ambitions of nation-states).

Sensationalist local and national media, meanwhile, also stoke and satisfy the demands of an increasingly voyeuristic public to be “drawn into the action” of transnational urban war and terror. In many cases, their coverage is being reduced to little more than nationalistic, jingoistic “24/7” infotainment which continually invokes binaried notions of a “clash of civilizations” (Abrahamian, 2003). This blurs more and more with the fictional depictions of urban disasters and warfare that have long been the staple of Hollywood (Gregory, 2004b).

### **Urban Dimensions of the “State of Emergency”**

Because they require constant reference to a state of exception, measures of security work towards the growing depoliticization of society. In the long run, they are irreconcilable with democracy. (Agamben, 2002: 2)

At what point does [the West’s] behavior become as bad in consequence as the thing [Western nation-states] desire to prevent? (Aaronovitch, 2003: 27)

War is the new psychotropic. War precludes our doubts. War preserves our right to pursue overabundance. War closes the circle. It creates anxiety; it cures anxiety. It defines our alienation; it resolves our alienation. (Hart, 2004: 16)

In this “state of emergency” the normal rules of civilian, democratic law are being supplanted or replaced (Agamben, 1998, 2002). In their place come emergency, executive powers, and covert state actions which are justified – when discussed at all – because of the “temporary” imperatives of “national security,” the post-9/11 “crisis,” or the demands of a globe-spanning “war on terror.” At the same time, the laws of war are being reshaped to

accommodate routine, state-backed, high-tech violence against cities and essential urban infrastructures (Smith, 2002, Naumann, 2003).

The wars within the war on terror are, in turn, being widely justified through indiscriminate Orientalist categorizations. This language of the “new barbarism” works by separating “the civilized world” – which must be “defended” – from the “dark forces” and the “axis of evil” which are alleged to threaten the health, prosperity, and democracy of the whole “free” world (Tuastad, 2003; Tisdall, 2003). Such dualisms are used to justify the recolonization of the Middle East by Western powers because of the supposedly innate inabilities of the “Arab mind” to support development and stability (El-Affendi, 2003). Thus, such rhetoric conveniently lumps together the residents of whole nations as sources of “terrorism.” It legitimizes the use of massive, overwhelming, and often indiscriminate state violence against them and the fragile systems that sustain the lives of the people who live there (Gregory, 2003). This results in “a wild zone of power, barbaric and violent, operating without democratic oversight” (Gregory, 2003: 321).

As the obsessive concern with “security” and preemptive war gathers pace, so any thought of using *non-military* means to address the root causes of instability and informal, terrorist violence – mass poverty, injustice, an all-powerful neoliberal globalism, the gross abuse of power, quasi-imperial and colonial efforts to secure oil and other resources – are pushed further away (Zunes, 2002; Dower, 2002; Thornton, 2003; Mephram, 2002). “Simply put, brutal, hegemonic actions will sooner or later evoke hostile reactions . . . Secure pipelines are obviously more important than human rights in the globalist scheme of things” (Thornton, 2003: 209). Giorgio Agamben wonders whether “the time has come to work towards the *prevention* of disorder and catastrophe, and not merely towards their control” (2002, 2; emphasis added).

Thus, a global vicious circle is now established along the lines so familiar in the Palestinian–Israeli conflict. State-backed terror, atrocity, and crimes against humanity breed informal terrorist atrocity and crimes against humanity. States respond with more of the same while invoking states of emergency and cultures of fear. These, in turn, allow legal restraints to be dispensed with and more state-backed terror. Such state violence goes on to deepen resentment, recruit more volunteers, and exacerbate the intransigence, or the ethic of martyrdom, that sustains the growing ranks of willing suicide bombers (Hage, 2003). Religious fundamentalism and essentialized racism on both sides – Bush’s Orientalist, evangelical Christianity; Osama bin Laden’s radical Islam – fuel and legitimize further violence.

Such a circle of atrocity actually allows fundamentalist terror organizations to grow, prosper, and bring in ever-larger cohorts of recruits. Bush’s war on terror and his unflinching support for Israel’s assaults on Palestinian cities could not have been designed by Osama bin Laden himself as a better

agent of global polarization, splitting the world in two (MacAskill, 2003). Thus, the rhetoric of the war on terror “not only mirrors bin Laden’s ideology. It also ultimately serves the interests of al-Qaeda” (Gregory, 2003: 319). And so the cycle continues . . .

In a way, then, terrorism and counter-terrorism are umbilically connected. In the end, they tend, tragically, to be self-perpetuating. As Zulaika argues:

The ultimate catastrophe is that such a categorically ill-defined, perpetually deferred, simple minded Good-versus-Evil war [“against terror”] echoes and recreates the very absolutist mentality and exceptionalist tactics of the insurgent terrorists. By formally adopting the terrorists’ own game – one that by definition lacks rules of engagement, definite endings, clear alignments between enemies and friends, or formal arrangements of any sort, military, political, legal, or ethical – the inevitable danger lies in reproducing it endlessly. (Zulaika, 2003: 198)

### **“A Welcome Blanket of Geopolitical Disguise”**

The post-9/11 United States is a classic example of the construction of a “state of emergency.” Here, the Bush administration has carefully “invoked a global state of emergency to wage infinite war on an indefinite enemy” (Dillon, 2002: 77). In the process, preexisting legal norms on human rights, civil liberties, the right to trial, assumptions of innocence before the proof of evidence, due process, or the Geneva Convention are now being systematically pushed aside (Giroux, 2003).

This state of emergency is used to justify mass detentions without trial. It legitimizes extra-territorial, city-size detention centers, where those rounded up and accused as “terrorists” – many of whom were simply bystanders in the Afghanistan war – may fall into legal black holes with no rights whatsoever (potentially for the rest of their lives) (An Architektur, 2003; Meek, 2003).<sup>1</sup> And it is used to justify unprovoked military attacks against impoverished, weak nations (in Iraq’s case, with no evidence whatsoever linking the regime there with Al-Qaeda).

All these are part and parcel of the construction of a “permawar” against a loosely defined notion of informal violence (i.e., “terrorism”) that has been abstracted from any discussion of the geopolitical tensions and processes that fuel it. This “permawar” is being developed in order to pursue US geopolitical priorities that were identified well before 9/11 (Vidal, 2002; see Project for the New American Century, 2000). It is also happening without any notion of when, if ever, this war may be completed or what the signifiers of “victory” might actually be.

All this means that, to many, “the ‘war on terror’ becomes a war of terror” (Gregory, 2004a: 1). Richard Falk writes that Bush’s war on terror is little but a “welcome blanket of geopolitical disguise,” which uses the instruments and techniques of the state of emergency to ruthlessly pursue what Bush’s neoconservative regime sees as United States’ global geopolitical interests (2003, 16; Harvey, 2003a).

### **Capsularization vs. “Crisis Conviviality”**

Crucially, from the point of view of this book, such constructions of states of emergency and fear are changing the very tenor of urban culture and society (Molotch and McClain, 2003). Many urban societies which are already experiencing widespread fragmentation and fortressing are seeing these processes amplified further as people seek to “capsularize” themselves away from people, experiences, and spaces that they perceive as risky, vulnerable, or unpredictable (De Caeter, 2004; see Graham and Marvin, 2001; Ellin, 1997; Gold and Revill, 2000).

As a result, urban public life is being saturated by “intelligent” surveillance systems, checkpoints, “defensive” urban design, and intensifying security (see Lyon, Coaffee, Marcuse, this volume). Such strategies will not completely undermine the role of cities as dense sites of heterogeneous, unpredictable mixing. Cities are far too complex, porous, and multi-dimensional to be somehow “programmed” by computers and surveillance systems (Graham and Marvin, 2001). But, together, these purported anti-terrorist strategies can “creep,” to have a chilling effect on urban and democratic public culture. Very often, anti-terror policies and technologies are used to regulate and undermine wider public dissent and activism. In the UK, for example, anti-terror laws are being used to arrest people protesting peacefully against arms fairs and neoliberal globalization. They have been used since 9/11 to undermine and criminalize legitimate public protest on city streets.

We should also note, however, that in cities such as New York, a counter to this process has been evident. Here it has been possible to observe what Michael Sorkin (this volume) calls a “crisis conviviality.” In Manhattan the collective spirit of urban adversity has worked to engender *more* street life, solidarity, and social interaction than was common during the 1980s and 1990s. Strikingly, after the Darwinistic frenzy of the 1990s dot.com boom and the hardline intolerances of the Guiliani era, after the attack, for a while at least, “New Yorkers . . . for the most part rallied around ideals of community, togetherness, solidarity and altruism, as opposed to beggar-thy-neighbor individualism” (Harvey, 2003: 39b).



The current state of emergency is combining with preexisting processes of urban militarization. As part of the growth of neoliberal policy, many states have been militarizing their systems of criminal justice, law enforcement, and public space regulation, bringing the weapons, doctrines, and technologies of war to the streets of cities and the borders of nations (Nunn, 2001; Kraska, 2001; Garland, 2001; Young, 1999). Paradoxically, “amidst privatization and deregulation, one of the few aspects of the capitalist state generally reinforced is the security apparatus” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 141).

The massive growth of civilian markets for “security” technologies and services is thus blurring into military–industrial ones (Flusty, 1997; Kraska, 2001; Marcuse, this volume). With the widening debates about “Homeland security” it is even more the case that “conflict and security have become growth industries – the erstwhile war economy [has been] reborn as part of the post-Cold War economy.” Instead of the “military–industrial complex,” Pieterse talks of an emerging “criminal–industrial complex” or “security–industrial complex,” which straddles home-domestic and international-foreign scales (Pieterse, 2002: 3).

## The Collective Terror of Banal Events

Everything and everywhere is perceived as a border from which a potentially threatening other can leap. (Hage, 2003: 86)

Permanent anxiety means that the everyday events, malfunctions, or acts of violence in the city – which would previously have been seen as the results of local social problems, individual pathologies, accidents, or bureaucratic failings – are now instinctively assumed to be the results of global acts of unknown, hidden, and “othered” “terrorists” (Sorkin, this volume). The banal sites and events of everyday urban life – especially parked vans, mobility systems, envelopes with white powder, people with packages – are now sources of mass anxiety. As with the Cold War paranoia that so powerfully shaped Western urban culture between the 1950s and 1970s, reminders of terror, or the potential for terror, are all around, linguistically as well as materially (Farish, this volume).

Geographer Cindi Katz calls this the “routinization of terror talk and the increasing ordinariness of its physical markers.” She argues that such a process is what she calls “ontological insecurity” – a sociological concept that captures the pervasive crisis in feelings of safety in everyday urban life. Katz also believes the manipulation of these processes by states and the media “smuggle with them an acquiescence to state violence” as part of the war on terror (2004: 1).

Thus, every sign of a breakdown in the ordinary technologized flows of contemporary urban life – electricity cuts, subway accidents, computer collapses – now switches quickly into an immediate search for “terrorist” attackers. A wheel falling off a London tube train prompts immediate speculation about Al-Qaeda adopting new tactics. A few ill subway workers prompts a frantic search for biological or chemical “WMD” in the tunnels beneath city streets. In the US since 9/11, exploitations of the postal system to deliver anthrax, or of the day-to-day street spaces of Washington DC to murder civilians, have instinctively been assumed to be the work of Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda, or even Saddam Hussein (Katz, 2004).

### **Cities as Refuge From High-Tech US Hegemony**

Geopolitics is a flat discourse. It largely ignores the vertical dimension and tends to look across rather than to cut through the landscape. This was the cartographic imagination inherited from the military and political spatialities of the modern state. (Weizman, 2002: 3)

The orbital weapons currently in play possess the traditional attributes of the divine: omnivoyance and omnipresence. (Virilio, 2002: 53)

Some people say to me that the Iraqis are not the Vietnamese! They have no jungles of swamps to hide in. I reply, “Let our cities be our swamps and our buildings our jungles.” (Tariq Aziz, Iraqi foreign minister, October 2002; quoted in Bellamy, 2003)

As military treatments of “home” and “foreign” cities blur together, so there is increasing evidence that high-tech war is being constructed as “the ultimate disciplinary instrument of the world market” (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 140; see Sharma and Kumar, 2003). By paving the way for what David Harvey (2003a: ch. 4) calls “accumulation by dispossession” (especially through the privatization of assets in conquered lands), even moderate commentators like Michael Ignatieff admit that the high-tech war on terror is, essentially, a classic, imperialistic strategy at the heart of the United States’ drive for a globe-spanning empire (Ignatieff, 2003; see Klein, 2003).

As key instruments of this strategy, US military forces are being redesigned to “fight and decisively win multiple, simultaneous major theatre wars” (Project for the New American Century, 2000; see Harris, 2003). Because both the “homeland” and most colonized and invaded spaces are becoming more and more urban, urban terrain increasingly provides the “battlespace” for the US military in both spheres.

As a result, the war on terror is being supported by a vast military research and development exercise that focuses overwhelmingly on cities

(Gregory, 2004b). This is being undertaken to adapt US and “coalition” forces to the three-dimensional urban terrain that they are having to fight in as part of their globe-spanning humanitarian and military interventions (known as “MOUT” or “Military Operations in Urban Terrain” in the military jargon). As a result, resources devoted to “urban research” in the world’s military are starting to match those devoted to “civilian” research about cities. This creates a kind of “shadow” urban research world that remains almost completely ignored by urban social science proper (see [www.urbanoperations.org](http://www.urbanoperations.org); Hills, Warren, Graham, this volume; Rosenau, 1997; Peters, 1996, 1997; Kitfield, 1998).

The product of all this effort is a profoundly anti-urban military discourse in which urban terrain – particularly the urban terrain in poor, Islamic countries – is portrayed as a great leveler between high-tech US forces and their low-tech adversaries (Gregory, 2004b; Graham, 2004). The complex, congested, and contested terrain below, within, and above cities is seen as a set of physical spaces which limit the effectiveness of high-tech space-targeted bombs, surveillance systems, and automated, “network-centric” weapons. These have been deliberately developed in the last thirty years, under the auspices of the so-called “Revolution in Military Affairs,” to ensure that the US remains a preeminent global military power with “full spectrum dominance” over its potential challengers (Gray, 1997). The urbanization of battlespace is therefore seen to reduce the ability of US forces to fight and kill at a distance (always the preferred way because of their “casualty dread” and technological supremacy). As is being revealed in the Iraqi insurgency, urban warfare is also seen to necessitate a much more labor- and casualty-intensive way of fighting than the US is used to these days.

Echoing these points, a leading US military commentator on urban warfare, Ralph Peters, argues that: “in fully urbanized terrain warfare becomes profoundly vertical, reaching up to towers of steel and cement, and downward into sewers, subway lines, road tunnels, communication tunnels, and the like” (1996: 2). This verticality is seen to break down communication. It leads to an increasing problem in distinguishing civilians from combatants. And it undermines the awareness and killing power that high-tech sensors give to US combatants in the urban battlefield.

Like many of his colleagues, Peters’ military mind recoils in horror at the prospect of US forces habitually fighting in the majority world’s burgeoning megacities and urbanizing corridors (see also Rosenau, 1997; Spiller, 2000). To him, these are spaces where “human waste goes undisposed, the air is appalling, and mankind is rotting” (1996: 2). Here, cities and urbanization represent decay, anarchy, disorder, and the post-Cold War collapse of “failed” nation-states. “Boom cities pay for failed states, post-modern dispersed cities pay for failed states, and failed cities turn into

killing grounds and reservoirs for humanity's surplus and discards (guess where we will fight)" (1996: 3).

Peters starkly highlights the key geostrategic role of urban regions within the post-Cold War period: "Who cares about Upper Egypt if Cairo is calm? We do not deal with Indonesia – we deal with Jakarta. In our recent evacuation of Sierra Leone Freetown was all that mattered" (1997: 5). Peters also candidly characterizes the role of the US military within the emerging neoliberal "empire" with the USA as the central military enforcer (although he obviously doesn't use these words) (see Hardt and Negri, 2000): "Our future military expeditions will increasingly defend our foreign investments," continues Peters, "rather than defending [the home nation] against foreign invasions. And we will fight to subdue anarchy and violent 'isms' because disorder is bad for business. All of this activity will focus on cities."

Again in synchrony with his colleagues, Peters sees the deliberate exploitation of urban terrain by opponents of US hegemony to be a likely key feature of future war. Here high-tech military dominance is assumed to directly fuel the urbanization of resistance. "The long-term trend in open-area combat is toward overhead dominance by US forces," observes Peters (1996: 6). "Battlefield awareness may prove so complete, and 'precision' weapons so widely available and effective, that enemy ground-based combat systems will not be able to survive in the deserts, plains, and fields that have seen so many of history's main battles." As a result, he argues the United States' "enemies will be forced into cities and other complex terrain, such as industrial developments and intercity sprawl" (1997: 4).

For Peters and many other US military commentators, it is as though global urbanization is a dastardly plan to thwart the US military gaining the full benefit from the complex, expensive, high-tech weapons that the military-industrial complex has spent so many decades piecing together. Annoyingly, cities, as physical objects, simply *get in the way* of the US military's technophilic fantasies of trans-global, real-time omnipotence. The fact that "urbanized terrain" is the product of complex economic, demographic, social, and cultural shifts that involve the transformation of whole societies seems to have escaped their gaze (see Graham, this volume).

### **“Terrorism” and the “War on Terror”: Negotiating Bias, Ideology, and Language**

“Terrorism” has been made polymorphous. (Gregory, 2003: 319)

Definitions of terrorism are fungible and change according to political necessity. (Brennan, 2003: 174)

From “civilization” to “WMD,” words are weapons in the global crusade. (Tisdall, 2003)

Essential to the current war on terror is an extraordinary discourse about “terrorism” (Collins and Glover, 2002). The very word “terrorism” itself – always a byword for vagueness and political bias – is now so ubiquitous and over-used that it has ceased to have much meaning. This reflects the fact that in parts of the Western media and polity, the word has been carefully marshaled to brand all those who commit political violence against the USA and its allies. “Without defined shape, or determinate roots,” Derek Gregory writes, the mantle of “terrorism” can thus “be cast over *any* form of resistance to sovereign power” (2003: 219; original emphasis).

Furthermore, in many states the branding of indigenous people or non-violent dissidents as “terrorists” has allowed violent state colonialism and repression to continue and, in many cases, deepen (often with the implicit or explicit support of Western nation-states). The recent war on terror has provided many dubious regimes around the world with a *carte blanche* to escalate state repression of minority or dissident opinion (New Internationalist, 2002b). In addition, as part of the “cracking down on diaspora” discussed above, many nations have brought repressive legislation against asylum seekers directly into their “anti-terror” strategies.

Meanwhile, a long litany of atrocities, human rights abuses, and politically inspired violence against civilians, committed by the Western nations and their allies, has tended to escape definition as “terrorist” – at least in dominant Western discourses. As a result, it is strikingly clear that “what we think we ‘know’ about ‘terrorism’,” as John Collins suggests:

is the product of specific efforts by specific people to define certain examples of political violence (especially violence committed by those who are opposed to US policies around the world) as illegitimate. In other words, when someone uses the word “terrorism,” they are describing the world in a way that works to the advantage of the powerful . . . words and ideas that masquerade as neutral and objective “reality,” while actually expressing the narrow interests of a dominant group, are called *ideology*.” (2002: 157)

“Terrorist” branding is therefore nothing if not flexible. For example, dominant Western depictions of the French resisters against the Nazis, or the Jewish fighters who struggled against the British for the establishment of the State of Israel – both of whom committed acts of violence against civilians and military alike – romanticize these groups as freedom fighters. At the same time, Palestinian resisters against the Israeli occupation of *their* homeland are overwhelmingly vilified as “terrorists” – even on the occasions when their attacks have concentrated entirely on military targets.

Take another example. When Iraqi civilians and insurgents attacked US occupying forces after “peace” was declared there in May 2003, George Bush quickly branded such guerrilla-style attacks a “terrorist” problem.

This occurred even though a large number of those attacks carefully targeted *military* occupiers (“terrorist” violence against military occupiers of one’s nation is, by definition, impossible). Such a branding also ignored the fact that many of the Iraqi fighters – whether loyal to the Ba’athist regime or not – were clearly attacking what they saw as unprovoked aggression, occupation, dispossession, and a willful neglect of the need to maintain order and basic services in Iraq after the fall of the Hussein regime (Medact, 2003). As Derek Gregory (2004b) suggests, it is therefore necessary to speak of a *variety* of wars of resistance against the US–UK occupation of Iraq.

Clearly, some radical Islamic fighters, from both within and outside Iraq, were involved in suicide and bombing attacks. But there is also no doubt that many ordinary Iraqi civilians – even those grateful for the fall of a murderous dictator – were persuaded to take up arms in a less organized way against the occupiers. This was because of the mass slaughter and incarceration of their compatriots in the invasion, and the continuing carnage of everyday urban life that followed. For example, between May 1 and September 30, 2003 in Baghdad alone at least 94 Iraqi civilians were unlawfully killed simply going about their daily lives because of the hyper-aggressive stance of the US military occupiers (Graham, 2004; Human Rights Watch, 2003). In April 2004, at least 300 women and children were killed by US Marines as they laid siege to the city of Fallujah. Tellingly, the US military was *deliberately not even keeping count* of these deaths.

In the same breath, Bush and Blair maintain that the killing (June 2004) of between 15,000 and 25,000 innocent Afghan and Iraqi civilians – not to mention tens of thousands of soldiers and fighters – was necessary to larger acts of national “liberation.” Given the above, it is difficult to disagree with Lummis when he argues “air bombardment is the terrorism of the rich” (1994: 304; cited in Herold, this volume).

Such outrageous hypocrisy is fueled and legitimized through language. Fueled by Orientalist depictions of Arab people and their cities, and simple oppositions between “civilization” and “barbarism,” these wars “on terror” work by projecting entire countries and cities as “*beyond* the pale of civilization.” Such “casting out” of Islamic cities and societies as a whole from any notion of civilization, in turn, allows Arab civilians in these areas to be “placed beyond the privileges and protections of the law so that their lives (and deaths) [are] rendered of no account” (Gregory, 2003: 313).

Thus, ongoing Iraqi and Afghan civilian casualties remain curiously invisible, unworthy, and uncounted (Herold, 2002b; Gregory, 2004a). Meanwhile, the Western media obsessively document the lives, deaths, and even the final words of the people who died on 9/11, or the Western soldiers who have died during the invasion and occupation of the two countries.

## **Towards an Urban Geopolitics: Introducing *Cities, War, and Terrorism***

Of course, all nationalistic and fundamentalist discourses, and appeals to knee-jerk reaction, tend to obfuscate the complex geopolitical nature of the current post-9/11 and post-Cold War world. Such discourses also work to obscure the complex and crucial links that are emerging between cities, warfare, and “terrorism” that are the focus of this book.

While the contributors to this book do use the words “terrorism” and “terror,” the overall approach is to strive for balance and equivalence. By “terrorism” we mean “deliberately targeted surprise attacks on arbitrarily chosen civilians, designed to frighten other people” (Keohane, 2002: 77). In other words, “terror is armed or brutal force against those who can be terrorized – i.e., who cannot fight back” (Hewitt, 2003: 9).

This book engages in detail with the urban impacts of such violence. But it also addresses the more formal (and neglected) violence and terror that nation-states pursue when they attack cities and their inhabitants. Thus, the starting point of this book is not to see “terror” in and against cities and their inhabitants as the product solely of informal, non-state violence. Such a biased and limiting view has, unfortunately, dominated much recent urban research on “terrorism” (see, for example, Cutter, Richardson, and Wilbanks, 2003; Savitch and Ardashev, 2001).

Instead, *Cities, War, and Terrorism* adopts a comprehensive approach to organized, political violence in and against cities. It strives to address what Derek Gregory and Alan Pred have called “a multiplicity of terrorisms”: state-backed and non-state backed, formal and informal (2003). Such a comprehensive perspective is vital. This is because, even in the contemporary period, from a global point of view, state terror in and against cities and their populations – while often ignored – continues to be even more significant and devastating than informal terror. From the perspective of geography, for example, Ken Hewitt has argued that, while “very few geographers have had anything to say about state terror,” the indiscriminate violence of nation-states remains by far “the largest source of harm to people in most countries and worldwide” (2003, 6; see Rummel, 1997).

In fact, as Eduardo Galeano (2001) has stressed, there is actually “much common ground between low- and high-tech terrorism, between the terrorism of religious fanatics and that of market fanatics, that of the hopeless and that of the powerful, that of the psychopath on the loose and that of the cold-blooded uniformed professional” (quoted in Mendieta, 2001). Moreover, it is crucial to see the circular relationships that bind state terror to informal terror; to analyze the umbilical connections which link state-backed terror, in the name of “counter-terrorism,” and the

terrorism of Al-Qaeda and its ilk. This is crucial because, “usually, where irregular terror is present, so is state terror” (Hewitt, 2003; see Chomsky, 2003).

*Cities, War, and Terrorism* is the first interdisciplinary, international, critical, and comprehensive analysis of the intersections of war, terrorism, and cities. Its purpose is to demonstrate that both the informal (“terrorist”) and the formal (state) violence, war, and terror that characterize the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods largely *entail systematic and planned targeting of cities and urban places*. To achieve this the book draws on a range of cutting-edge social, urban, cultural, architectural, and military theories and case studies.

While it focuses overwhelmingly on the post-Cold War and post-9/11 periods, the book also addresses the ways in which attacks against cities, urban wars, and atrocities against urban civilians of the last few years are intimately connected – and often strikingly similar – to those that occurred before. As cities emerge as targets, there is also much continuity in the ways in which cultures of urban fear are constructed to impact on debates about urban planning, governance, and social policy. Thus, while the book provides an unrivaled analysis of how cities, warfare, and terrorism are currently remaking each other, it also places the tumultuous events of the early twenty-first century into a broader historical and theoretical context.

*Cities, War, and Terrorism* is motivated by a response to two parallel failings in social science as a whole: the virtual invisibility of political violence against cities and their inhabitants within critical urban social science, and the almost complete dominance of *national*, rather than *subnational*, spaces and politics within International Relations and Political Science. The purpose of the book is thus to force an interdisciplinary opening in the spaces between these disciplines. To succeed, such an opening will need to place the intersections of war, terrorism, and subnational – specifically urban – spaces at the center, rather than the periphery, of analysis. As documented above, the development of such an “urban geopolitics” is made necessary, indeed imperative, by the parallel rescalings of political violence in today’s rapidly urbanizing world. Without it, the analytical domains of both urban studies and international relations will inevitably fail to address the crises of urban terrorism, and the proliferating scope of urban war and state urban terror, that are reshaping the contemporary world.

To achieve this “opening,” *Cities, War, and Terrorism* brings together the work of an unprecedented array of thinkers, theorists, writers, and commentators. These are deliberately drawn from an unusually wide range of disciplines. Included here are political science, international relations and sociology; geography, urban planning and architecture; and critical theory, history, and military studies. From their wide variety of perspectives all the writers in this book address one key question: how do urban areas and



organized, military conflict shape each other in these post-Cold War, post-9/11 times?

*Cities, War, and Terrorism* has three parts, each of which begins with a brief introduction by the editor. Part I – Cities, War, and Terrorism in History and Theory – sets the context for the rest of the book. It includes six chapters which together map out in unprecedented detail the conceptual and historical transformations in the strategic and geopolitical dimensions of urbanism that have been such an intrinsic element of the transition from Cold War to post-Cold War contexts.

Part II – Urbicide and the Urbanization of Warfare – includes a range of seven chapters which together analyze the implications of the urbanization of our planet for the prosecution of war and violent struggle. Here, authors present detailed analyses of the ways in which cities and urban areas are increasingly being directly targeted in war; their roles as strategic sites for increasingly militarized anti-globalization battles; and the critical importance of architecture, urbanism, and planning in shaping particular urban military struggles (such as the Balkan wars of the 1990s and the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian war).

A key concept which runs through this second part of the book is that of “urbicide”: the deliberate denial, or killing, of the city. While much less recognized than the more familiar “cides” – genocide, homicide, ecocide, domicide, democide – the chapters in Part II together suggest that the deliberate denial or killing of the city, through war or terrorism, is such a common element of contemporary conflict that urbicide is a theoretical and legal concept whose time has come.

Part III – Exposed Cities: Urban Impacts of Terrorism and the “War on Terror” – includes five chapters that delve into the urban impacts of acts of catastrophic terrorism (such as the iconic 9/11 attacks) and the devastating human and urban consequences of the US “coalition’s” “war on terrorism” that has followed.

## Note

- 1 This process is also underway with much more stealth in the UK, where 14 foreign men have are being held in Belmarsh Prison in southeast London under emergency anti-terrorist legislation which permits their incarceration until death without trial (see Cohen, 2003).

