
POSTMORTEM CITY: TOWARDS AN URBAN GEOPOLITICS¹

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Introduction: Confronting Place Annihilation in Urban Research

«As long as people have lived in cities, they have been haunted by fears of urban ruin [...]. Every city on earth is ground zero is somebody's doomsday book» (BERMAN, 1996, pp. 175-184).

«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 11th 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, p. 5).

«Today, wars are fought not in trenches and fields, but in living rooms, schools and supermarkets» (BARAKAT, 1998, p. 11).

1. The term «postmortem city» was first coined by Chris Hables Gray in his book *Postmodern War*. He coined the term to describe an aerial «damage assessment» map of Tokyo after the US fire bombing devastated the city on March 9th/10th, 1945. This raid – the most murderous act of war in human history – killed over 130,000 civilians in a few hours (see GRAY, 1997, p. 86).

Cities, warfare, and organised, 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, p. 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 thorough-going or consciously prosecuted occasion of collective violence that destroys places» (1983, p. 258).

The widespread survival of massive urban fortifications – especially in Asia, North Africa, Europe and parts of Latin America – are a living testament to the fact that in pre-modern and pre nation-state civilisations, city-states were the actual agents, as well as the main targets, of war. In pre-modern times cities were built for defence as well as dominant centres 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, p. 44).

The sacking and killing of fortified cities and their inhabitants was the central event in pre-modern war (WEBER, 1958). Indeed (often allegorical) stories of such acts make up a good part of the Bible – especially *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, 1985). «The states caught up with the forward gallop of the towns» (BRAUDEL, 1973, p. 398). The expanding imperial and metropolitan cities that lay at the core of nation-states were no longer organisers of their own armies and defences. But they maintained political power and reach. Military, political, and economic elites within such cities directed violence, control, repression, and the colonial acquisition of territory, raw materials, wealth, and labour 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 wars on the twentieth century. At the same time their (often female-staffed) industries and neighbourhoods emerged as the prime targets for total war. The industrial city thus became «in its entirety a space for war. Within

a few years [...] bombing moved from the selective destruction of key sites within cities to extensive attacks on urban areas and, finally, to instantaneous annihilation of entire urban spaces and populations» (SHAW, 2003, p. 131). Right up to the present day, the capture of strategic and politically important cities has «remained the ultimate symbol, of conquest and national survival» (SHAW, 2001, p. 1).

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, p. 3). It is no longer feasible to contain cities within defensive walls or effective cordons which protect their citizens from military force (VIRILIO, 1987). But the deliberate destruction and targeting of cities and their support systems in times of war and crisis is a constant throughout the eight thousand years or so of urban history on our planet. «Destruction of places», Hewitt continues, writing in 1987:

«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» (p. 469).

Cities, then, provide much more than just the *backdrop* or *environment* for war and terror. Rather, their buildings, assets, institutions, industries, infrastructures, cultural diversities, and symbolic meanings have long actually *themselves* been the explicit target for a wide range of deliberate, orchestrated, attacks. This essential, urban, spatiality of organised, political violence is rarely recognised in the obsessively chronological and temporal gaze of the historians who dominate the study of the urban violence of the twentieth century. Thus, the architectures, urbanisms, and spatial planning strategies that sustain, reflect, and are intrinsic to strategies of informal and state terror all too often get overlooked (COLE, 2003, chapter 2).

For this explicit concentration on the (attempted) killing of cities in modern war, the geographer Ken Hewitt has coined the term «place annihilation» (1983). «For a social scientist», he stresses that «it is actually imperative to ask just *who* dies and *whose* places are destroyed by violence» within such wars of place annihilation (1987, p. 464, original

emphasis). This is because such strategies are usually far from indiscriminate. Commonly, they involve a great deal of planning so that the violence and destruction achieves the political, social, economic, ecological and cultural effects, on the target population and their places, that are desired by the attackers.

Since the end of the Cold War, this dominance of war casualties by civilians, rather than enlisted military personnel, has only accelerated further. Between 1989 and 1998, for example, four million people were killed in violent conflicts across the world. An estimated 90% of these were civilians – primarily women and children (PIETERSE, 2002, p. 1). In short, since the end of the Cold War – with its global threat of instant urban-nuclear annihilation – «we have gone from fearing the death of the city to fearing the city of death» (LANG, 1995, p. 71). As traditional state-vs-state wars in open terrain have become objects of curiosity, so the informal, «asymmetric» or «new» wars which tend to centre on localised struggles over strategic urban sites have become the norm (KALDOR, 1999). As Misselwitz and Weizman suggest:

«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» (2003, p. 272).

Far from going away, then, strategies of deliberately attacking the systems and places that support civilian urban life have only become more sophisticated since World War II. The deliberate devastation of urban living spaces continues apace. Fuelling it is a powerful cocktail of intermeshing factors. Here we must consider the collapse of the Cold War equilibrium; the unleashing of previously constrained ethnic hatreds; the proliferation of fundamentalist religious and political groups; and the militarisation of gangs, drug cartels, militia, corrupt political regimes, and law enforcement agencies. We must address the failure of many national and local states; the urbanisation of populations and terrain; and the growing accessibility to heavy weapons. Finally, the growing crisis of social polarisation at all geographical scales and the increasing scarcity of many essential resources must be considered (CASTELLS, 1997, 1998).

To this cocktail we must add the destabilising effects of the United States' increasingly aggressive and violent interventions in a widening range of nations, and the deleterious impacts of neoliberal restructuring and «structural adjustment» programmes, imposed on many nations by the IMF and WTO. Such programmes have added to the sense of crisis in many cities because they have resulted in the erosion of social and economic secu-

rity and the further immiseration of the urban poor (and, increasingly, the middle classes, too).

All this has happened at a time when the scale of urbanisation is at an unprecedented global level. During the nineties alone the world's urban population grew by 36%. By 2003, 900 million people lived in slums. And the deepening polarisation of cities, caused by neoliberal globalisation, is providing many conditions that are ripe for extremes of civil, and militarised, violence (VIDAL, 2003, CASTELLS, 1997, 1998). In fact, neoliberal globalisation itself operates through a vast scale of violence, exploitation and criminality which works in similarly «rhizomatic» ways to transnational terrorism. «Our own politicians and businesses sail a strikingly similar pirate sea [to the al-Qaeda network]», suggests 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, p. 189).

In many cases some or all of these factors have combined in the post-Cold War to force nothing less than the «implosion of global and national politics into the urban world» (APPADURAI, 1996, p. 152). This has led to a proliferation of bloody, largely urban, wars. Many of these, in turn, stimulate vast migrations and the construction of city-scale refugee camps to accommodate the displaced populations (which stood at a global figure of 50 million by 2002) (AGIER, 2002; DIKEN and LAUSTSEN, 2003).

Appadurai argues that such «new» urban wars «take their energy from macroevents and processes [...] that link global politics to the micropolitics of streets and neighbourhoods» (1996, pp. 152-153). He observes that:

«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 [...]. [These cases] represent 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, pp. 152-193, original emphasis).

All of which means that contemporary warfare and terror now largely boil down to contests over the spaces, symbols, meanings, support systems or power structures of cities and urban regions. 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).

Given all of this, it is curious, then, that warfare and organised political violence targeting the spaces, inhabitants, and support systems of cities have been persistently neglected in critical social scientific debates about cities and urbanisation since World War II (MENDIETA, 2001). By contrast, this period has seen vast libraries filled with theoretical, empirical and policy books addressing urban *de*-velopment, *con*-struction, *re*-generation, modernisation and growth (BISHOP and CLANCEY, 2003). In 1983 the geographer Ken Hewitt argued that, from the perspective of urban social science, the «destruction of cities, as of much else, remains *terra incognita*» (HEWITT, 1983, p. 258).

Another cocktail of factors can be diagnosed to help explain this neglect. Three are particularly important. First, a simple, and understandable, desire to forget the scale and barbarity of urban slaughter in the last century can be diagnosed. For example, many wider cultural taboos have inhibited dispassionate, social scientific analyses of the aerial annihilations of German and Japanese cities in World War II (although these are now slowly being overcome – see SEBALD, 2003). In the Anglo-Saxon world, whilst the «air war» that killed perhaps 1.6 million urbanites in those two countries is widely glorified and fetishised – what Chris Hables Gray calls «bomber glorioso» (1997, p. 87) – equally powerful taboos, and the instinct to self-censor, have meant that the perspective here has been overwhelmingly *aerial*. The annihilated cities, and the hundreds of thousands of carbonised dead on the ground, barely exist at all in these popular narratives. When they are represented, huge controversy still ensues. The victims of more recent US bombings in Kabul and Baghdad have been rendered equally invisible and uncounted by the ferocious power of Western propaganda and self-censorship. An «information operations» campaign has also emerged that leads US forces to bomb any independent TV station that has the temerity to show the civilian carnage that results, on the ground, even with so-called «precision strikes» – the inevitable reality behind the repulsive euphemisms of «collateral damage» in urban bombing.

Second, Ryan Bishop and Gregory Clancey (2003, p. 64), have recently suggested that modern urban social science in general has shown marked tendencies since World War II to directly avoid tropes of catastrophism (especially in the west). They argue that this is because the complete annihilation of urban places conflicted with its underlying, enlightenment-tinged notions of progress, order and modernisation. In the post-war, Cold War period, especially, «The City», they write, had a «heroic status in both capitalist and socialist storytelling» (ibid., p. 66). This worked against an analysis of the city as a scene of catastrophic death. «The city-as-target» remained, therefore, «a reading long buried under layers of academic Modernism» (ibid., p. 67).

Bishop and Clancey also believe that this «absence of death within The City also reflected the larger economy of death within the academy: its studied absence from some disciplines [urban social science] and compensatory over-compensation in others [history]» (ibid.). In disciplinary terms, the result of this was that the «urban» tended to remain hermetically separated from the «strategic». «Military» issues were carefully demarcated from «civil» ones. And the overwhelmingly «local» concerns of modern urban social science were kept rigidly apart from (inter)national ones. This left urban social science to address the local, civil, and domestic rather than the (inter)national, the military or the strategic. Such concerns were the preserve of history, as well as the fast-emerging disciplines of international politics and international relations. In the dominant hubs of English-speaking urban social science – North America and the UK – these two intellectual worlds virtually never crossed, separated as they were by disciplinary boundaries, scalar orientations, and theoretical traditions.

The final factor stems from the fact that urban social science finished sedimenting into modern intellectual disciplines during the Cold War. During this time, urban annihilation, always minutes away, was simply a step on the way to a broader, species-wide, *exterminism* (MUMFORD, 1959, THOMPSON et al, 1982). This also seems to have inhibited critical urban research on place annihilation. Waves of secrecy and paranoia about the urban-targeting strategies of the super powers further worked to undermine critical analysis of what nuclear Armageddon would actually mean for an urbanising planet (VANDERBILT, 2002). And the inevitable vulnerabilities of cities to nuclear attack were exploited by a wide range of interests seeking to radically decentralise, and de-urbanise, advanced industrial societies (FARISH, 2003; LIGHT, 2003). As Herbert Muschamp has argued, cities were, in many ways, «among the casualties» of the Cold War years (1995, p. 106).

Encouragingly, the persistent neglect of place annihilation in urban research has been slowly overcome since Hewitt wrote the above words. A broadening range of promising work has emerged in critical and interdisciplinary urban research, particularly in the pages of *City*.² Unfortunately, however, such work has yet to gain the momentum necessary to bring the critical analysis of place annihilation into the heart of urban social science. It is still the case, for example, that only a small number of volumes have systematically delved into the dark terrain which emerges where the city becomes a pre-eminent site for political violence, warfare, «terrorism»; where urban *de*-struction, devastation, *de*-generation, *de*-modernisation, and annihilation haunt dreams of urban modernity and development; and where the promise of the city reveals its Janus-face in orgies of hatred, killing, murder, bombing and violence (see PICON, 1996; LANG, 1995; ASHWORTH, 1991; VANDERBILT, 2002; DAVIS, 2002; COLE, 2003; SCHNEIDER and SUSSER, 2003).

The starting point for this essay is that, in our post-Cold War and post 9/11 world, both the informal («terrorist») and the formal («state») violence, war and terror that are engulfing our planet are actually constituted by the *systematic and planned targeting of cities and urban places*. This extended essay seeks to place such attacks – and the wider «state of emergency» within which they are embedded – within their theoretical and historical context. In so doing, I aim to help urban social research to further confront the taboos which have, over the last 50 years, tended to inhibit research on, and recognition for, organised political violence against cities within critical social science.

In particular, my purpose in this extended essay, drawing on Paul Virilio's (1996) term, is to start mapping out what a specifically *urban* geopolitics might amount to. I take «geopolitics» here to mean a concern with understanding the discourses, strategies and structures which emerge at the intersections of territory, spatiality, and political power and violence (AGNEW and CORBRIDGE, 1995). This essay's central concern is to argue that the parallel transformations of urbanism and political violence in the post-Cold War period, and the increasing constitution of war and terror by acts of violence carefully targeted against urban, local sites, makes the development of such a specifically urban geopolitics an urgent imperative. As states, wars, empires, resistance movements, terror networks and economic, social and cultural formations

2. See, for example, Catterall (2001), Mendieta (2001), Safier, (2001), Prodanovic (2002), Coward (2002), Berman (1996), Diken and Laustsen (2002), Lang (1995), Farish (2003), Vanderbilt (2002), Davis (2002), Schneider and Susser (2003), Cole (2003), Bishop and Clancey (2003), Gregory, (2003), Bollens (2001), Graham (2003, 2004 a, b, c).

are reconstituted, in parallel, into stretched, transnational webs which intersect, and constitute, the same sets of strategic urban sites, so this imperative will only gain more momentum.

It follows that there is an urgent, parallel, need for the real recent progress in developing a critical geopolitics. (Ó TUATHAIL, 1999) to move beyond an exclusive concern for nation-states, international relations, and international terror networks. Critical geopolitics must also become sub-national. This is necessary so that the increasingly crucial roles of strategic urban places as geopolitical sites can be profitably analysed. A blizzard of questions provides fuel here. For example, on our rapidly urbanising planet, how do the control, targeting, destruction, and reconstruction of urban sites intersect with changing geopolitical structures and discourses? How are cities, and urban everyday life, being affected both by the umbilically connected interplay of terror and counter-terror? What roles do constructions, and imaginations, of «homeland» and «non-homeland» cities play within the emerging US «Empire», a hegemonic neoliberalism, and a proliferation of sites and sources of resistance (HARDT and NEGRI, 2000)? What place do the systems of mobility, communication, infrastructure and logistics that are so central to contemporary urban life play, as targets and weapons, within the emerging crisis? How does the urbanisation of terrain influence the «asymmetric wars» that are emerging which pitch high-tech Western and U.S. forces against both poorly equipped local fighters and anti-globalisation movements? Finally, what are the prospects for creatively blending critical urban and geopolitical theory to match the parallel rescaling of political violence and urbanism in today's world?

In sum, this essay has been written in the belief that both a specifically geopolitical urbanism, and a specifically urban geopolitics, are now urgently required. A constructive dialogue between such usually separated research communities would, I believe, open up many extremely promising avenues for theory, analysis and activism. What follows is designed to help such a dialogue along. To achieve this, my simple aim is to help illustrate the inseparability of war, terror and modern urbanism. I do this by revealing a range of «hidden histories» of what I call the «dark side» of urban modernity – the propensity for urban life to be attacked, destroyed or annihilated in acts of organised violence.

Ten Tales of Urban Geopolitics: On the «Dark» Side of Urban Modernity

«Biologists have prepared 'red books' of extinct or endangered species; ecologists have their 'green books' of threatened habitats. Perhaps we need our 'black book' of the places

destroyed or nearly destroyed by human agencies. Actually it would take many books and street maps packed with remembrances to record the settlements, neighbourhoods, and buildings in those places destroyed in recent wars» (HEWITT, 1987, p. 275).

Arguably, humankind has expended almost as much energy, effort and thought to the annihilation and killing of cities as it has on their growth, planning and construction. Such city annihilation or urban warfare requires purposive work. It needs detailed analysis. Often, it involves «scientific» planning and operational strategy-making of extraordinary complexity and sophistication. Thus, it is necessary to assume that a continuum exists connecting acts of building and physical restructuring, on the one hand, and acts of all-out, organised war on the other. By way of mapping the diverse ways in which place annihilation is utterly intrinsic to both urban modernity, and modern urbanism and planning, I offer below a range of ten illustrative «tales».

Architectures of Annihilation: The «War Ideology of the Plan»

First, civilian urban planning, development, modernisation and restructuring often actually involve levels of devastation of cities, ruination, and forced resettlement that match that which occurs in all-out war. Even in supposedly democratic societies, planned urban restructuring often involves autocratic state violence, massive urban destruction, the devastation of livelihoods, and even mass death. In both authoritarian and democratic societies, ideologies of urban planning have often actually *invoked* metaphors of war and militarism. This has been wisely practised as a means of comparing the purported need for violent restructuring in cities to achieve desired effects with the mass violence of states. Anthony Vidler (2001, p. 38) calls this «the war ideology of the plan».

Thus, place annihilation can be thought of as a kind of hidden – and sometimes not so hidden – planning history (SANDERCOCK, 1998). The planned devastation and killing of cities is a dark side of the discipline of urban planning that is rarely acknowledged, let alone analysed. It is rarely realised, for example, that the analytical and statistical methods so often used in post-WWII civilian planning have also been used – sometimes by the same demographic, economic, and planning «experts» – to spatially organise the Apartheid regime in South Africa; to plan the systematic fire-bombing of German and Japanese cities; to organise the house-by-house demolition of Warsaw in 1945; to set up the giant urban-regional process of the Holocaust; or to starve many Eastern

European cities and regions into submission in the mid-forties. The latter work even involved the founder of Central Place Theory, that seminal economic geographer, Walter Christaller – star of any school human geography course. He was employed by the Nazis to rethink the economic geography of an «Aryanised» Eastern Europe, a process linked directly to the planned starvation and forced migration of millions of people (ALY and HEIM, 2002; RÖSSLER, 1989).

Mock German and Japanese housing units, complete with authentic roofing materials, furniture, and clothing, were erected in Nevada to allow the incendiaries that would later burn Dresden and Tokyo to be carefully customised for their intended targets (DAVIS, 2002, pp. 65-84). «The combustibility of Japanese dwellings was well illustrated by tests made in this country», recalled the US Strategic Bombing Survey in 1947 (a, p. 72):

«Four buildings were constructed: two in “typical Japanese fashion” {and} the other two to comply with the latest Tokyo fire regulations [...]. The four structures were set on fire to determine the time necessary for their destruction. Those constructed in “typical Japanese fashion” burned to the ground in 12 minutes; those constructed in accordance to Tokyo fire regulations were consumed in 32 minutes.»

The USSBS was the apogee of the systematic evaluation of the «success» of urban planning for mass death. In it, thousands of operation scientists, architects, engineers and urban statisticians pored over every urban bomb blast in Japan and Germany in an effort to improve the «efficiency» of the city-killing process. To predict the effects of the «A»-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, a «Japanese village» was even constructed – again in Nevada – complete with all sorts of realistic Japanese-style buildings and infrastructures (VANDERBILT, 2002).

Similarly grim work goes on and on. More recently, the US and Israeli militaries have co-operated to construct and run a kind of shadow *urban system* of complete cities, replete with authentic «Islamic» features, in order to train the marines and soldiers who invaded Baghdad, Basra and Jenin (GRAHAM, 2003).

It is also scarcely realised that demographers, statisticians, geographers, architects and planners have been central to Israel's efforts to deepen its control over the three-dimensional spaces of the Occupied Territories. Their analyses and prescriptions have helped to shape the annexing of Palestinian land, the construction of walls and «buffer zones», the mass bulldozing of houses, the ethnic cleansing of selected areas, the con-

struction of carefully located Jewish settlements and access roads, or the appropriation of water and airspace (WEIZMAN, 2004; GRAHAM, 2003).

«Planning» and Occupation as War on the Colonised City

«One of the achievements of the great wave of modernization that began in the late eighteenth century was to incorporate urbicide into the process of urban development [...]. Its victims, along with their neighbourhoods and towns vanish without a trace» (BERMAN, 1996, p. 181).

In our second illustration, many strategies of occupation and colonisation have been based explicitly on the planned destruction and devastation of cities. Urban «planning» in many colonised cities often amounted to little but the planned devastation and bulldozing of indigenous cities to underpin the strategic control of the occupiers of settlers (SAID, 1993; MALDONADO-TORRES, 2004). Here the «orderly» imprints of Western-style urban planning and property law have long been used as a form of urban warfare (BLOMLEY, 2003). First, this was done to quell local insurgencies in non-Western, colonised cities. Later, such militarised planning strategies were often imported back to the homeland to reshape the great imperial capitals for similar purposes (MISSELWITZ and WEIZMAN, 2003).

The first special manual on «urban warfare» was produced in 1847 by the French army to show how troops could ruthlessly put down insurrections in Algiers which were then erupting, led by Abdel Kager. This book, *La Guerre des Rues et des Maisons*, was authored by the leader of the French Forces, Bugeaud (1997). After a bloody, seven-year struggle in a classic «asymmetric» urban war – with 100,000 French troops pitched against 10,000 local resistance fighters – Bugeaud simply destroyed entire neighbourhoods in the dense Algiers Casbah. In the process he committed many atrocities against civilians and fighters alike and imprinted massive avenues through the City to sustain military surveillance and movement. This broke the resistance (for a time, at least) (MISSELWITZ and WEIZMAN, 2003).

In a process that would be paralleled many times later, these techniques were then used to inform urban planning strategies to quell civil and social unrest in the «homeland», imperial centres of the colonising powers. Bugeaud's doctrines, for example, had a major influence on Baron Haussmann in the 1870s, as he violently imprinted a strategy of massive boulevards and canon firing-arcs on Paris, partly for the sake of improving the strategic control of the State on the volatile capital (MISSELWITZ and

WEIZMAN, 2003). In the process «Haussmann draped a façade of theatres, cafes and shops over boulevards laid out for the benefits of the troops who might be called upon to quell civil disturbance» (MUSCHAMP, 1995, p. 105).

Thus, the anti-urban rhetoric of ruling élites tended to see both colonised and «home» cities as morally toxic hotbeds of unrest that needed to be «regularised» and disciplined through similar, violent, urban restructuring efforts. «If strategic urban design previously focused on strengthening the city's peripheral walls and fortifications to keep out the enemy», write Misselwitz and Weizman:

«here, since the enemy was already inside the city, the city had to be controlled from within. The city fabric itself, its streets and houses, that had to be adapted accordingly [...]. Military control was exercised on the drawing board, according to the rules of design, fashion and speculative interests» (2003, p. 272).

Here there are sometimes striking continuities between the colonial and supposedly «postcolonial» city. In an episode that sadly would be repeated in the same city 56 years later by the Israelis, in 1936, the British took 4,200 kilos of explosives to the refugee camp in Jenin and destroyed a whole quarter of the town. This was an act of collective punishment at the continuing resistance to their occupation of Palestine (CORERA, 2002). A similar process of urban remodelling by demolition, aimed at undermining resistance, occurred in Jaffa in the same year.

Modernism and Urban War I: Aerial Living as Response to Aerial War

Our third illustration centres on the first of two deep connections that run between modernist urbanism and aerial bombing. For Le Corbusier's famous obsession with loosely-spaced modern towers set in parkland – most famously elaborated in his *Ville Radieuse* or «Radiant City» (1935) – were not just a celebration of light, air, sunlight and the modern house as a «machine for living in». They were also a reaction to a widespread obsession in thirties Europe with the need to completely re-plan cities so that they presented the smallest possible targets to the massed ranks of heavy bombers then being fielded by the major powers. Le Corbusier's towers – variants of which had hardened «anti-aircraft» bomb-proof roofs – were also designed to lift residents above expected gas attacks (MARKOU, 2002).

Like the Italian futurists before him, Le Corbusier celebrated the modernism of the aircraft machine and its vertical destructive power. «What a gift to be able

to sow death with bombs upon sleeping towns», he wrote (1935, pp. 8-9). His response to the «sinister apotheosis» of death and destruction heralded by aerial warfare was the total demolition of the old city, and its replacement by a modern utopia specifically designed to be «capable of emerging victorious from the air war» (1935, pp. 60-61).

Post 9/11 – an event which seemed to underline the extreme *vulnerability* of skyscrapers – it seems painfully ironic that the dreams of that arch celebrator of skyscrapers were, in fact, partly intended to *reduce* the city's exposure to aerial annihilation. The famous modernist architectural theorist Sigfried Gideon – who was strongly influenced by Le Corbusier's views – argued in 1941 that:

«the threat of attack from the air demands urban changes. Great cities sprawling open to the sky, their congested areas at the mercy of bombs hurtling down out of space, are invitations to destruction. They are practically indefensible as now constituted, and it is now becoming clear that the best means of defending them is by the construction, on the one hand, of great vertical concentrations which offer a minimum surface to the bomber and, on the other hand, by the laying out of extensive, free, open spaces» (1941, p. 543).

Modernism and Urban War II: Aerial Bombing as a «New Chance»

Following the war, as the scale and scope of devastation became clear, preservationists achieved some limited success in rebuilding parts of some cities along old lines. Many ruined buildings – churches especially – were also preserved as war memorials. The British War Artist Kenneth Clark even argued that «bomb damage itself is picturesque» (WOODWARD, 2001, p. 212).

Our fourth illustration centres on the way in which devout modernists saw the unimaginable devastation as an unparalleled opportunity to reconstruct entire cities according to the principles of Le Corbusier and other modernist architects. As part of the «brave new world» of post-war reconstruction, modernist planners and architects seemed in many cases to be almost grateful that the deadly work of the bombers had laid waste to urban landscapes of traditional, closely built streets and buildings (TIRATSOO et al, 2002).

For example, one pamphlet, published in the UK by John Mansbridge during World War II, expressed gratitude to that modernist icon, the aeroplane. Not only had it «given us a new vision» but it had offered Britain «a new chance by blasting away the centres of cities». Thus, it continued, modernist reconstruction would now

be delivered to sustain «the swift flow of modern traffic for the play of light and air».

Meanwhile, in Germany, the closing stages of World War II saw Third Reich planners preparing to totally disperse the City of Hamburg – which had been so devastated by the fire storm raids of 1943 – as a test case in the wholesale «deurbanisation» of German society. When the founder of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius, returned to Germany in 1947, to advise on post-war reconstruction, he argued that the urban devastation in Germany meant that it was «the best place to start breaking up cities into home towns and to establish small-scale communities, in which the essential importance of the individual could be realised» (KOSTOF, 1992, p. 261).

Thus, in a way, the total bombing of total war – a massive act of *planned* urban devastation in its own right – served as a massive accelerator of modernist urban planning, architecture and urbanism. The *tabula rasa* that every devoted modernist craved suddenly became the norm rather than the exception, particularly in the city centres of post-war Europe. As a result, to use the words of Ken Hewitt (1983, p. 278), «the ghosts of the architects of urban bombing – (Guilo) Douhet, (Billy) Mitchell, (Sir Hugh) Trenchard, (Frederick) Lindemann – and the praxis of airmen like (“Bomber”) Harris and (Curtis) LeMay, still stalk the streets of our cities.»

Cold War Urban Geopolitics

In our fifth illustration, Cold War cities were often deliberately remodelled as a function of them resting at the centre of the nuclear cross-hairs. As Matthew Farish (2003) and Jennifer Light (2003) show, the familiar story of deconcentration and sprawl in post-war US cities, for example, was not just fuelled by Federal subsidies, the Interstate highway program, a deepening anti-urbanism, and «White Flight». It was also actively encouraged by military strategists to reduce the United States’ strategic vulnerability to a massive first nuclear strike by the Soviet Union.

As well as burrowing underground (McCAMELY, 1998; VANDERBILT, 2002), massive efforts were made to make city’s sprawl. In the United States, especially, vast new suburban tracts were projected as domesticated citadels, populated by perfect nuclear families living the «American dream» yet also shaped to be resilient in the face of atomic Armageddon (ZARLENGO, 1999; MCENANEY, 2000). Core cities, meanwhile, were widely portrayed by popular media and planners as inherently risky and unsafe, a politics of fear that mixed tragically with the wider racialisation of urban centrality in post-war America and further fuelled central city decline (GALISON, 2001).

Planning as «Urbicide»: Post-War Urban «Renewal» and the Military-Industrial Complex in the USA

A sixth illustration is the critical influence of such quasi-military urban planning on the huge effort at urban «renewal» in the post-war United States. One of its arch proponents, Robert Moses – who was mayor of New York City for much of this period – believed that, in modernising New York, «when you operate in an overbuilt metropolis you have to hack your way through with a meat ax» (quoted in BERMAN, 1982, p. 307). Following the displacement of 50,000 as a highway was carved through the Bronx, for example, Moses helped set in train a war-like process of disintegration which by the seventies «had become spectacular, devouring house after house and block after block, driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homes» (BERMAN, 1996, p. 172). Marshal Berman argues that the scale of devastation – if not the human lives lost – in such programmes, means that the Bronx needs to be seen in the same light as the all-out, or guerilla wars of Berlin, Belfast and Beirut. Along with several other authors he even coins the word «urbicide» – or «the murder of the city» – to describe all these, and many other cases (1996, p. 175).

Robert Goodman, writing in his 1972 book *After the Planners*, argued that a US-wide drive for such «urban renewal» actually amounted to little but an exercise in racist (anti-black) state violence on a par with the genocidal attacks on the indigenous North Americans that drove them to the edge of extinction (PORTEOUS and SMITH, 2001, chapter 4).

Importantly, major military research and development bodies like RAND, STC and MITRE had major inputs into the statistical analyses, operations research strategies, and «rational» planning doctrines that fuelled the huge scale of Cold War «urban renewal» and comprehensive redevelopment in the US (LIGHT, 2002, 2003). Thus, in many cases, the «sciences» of urban and military strategy became extremely blurred and interwoven during this period. On the one hand, city governments pledged «war» against the «urban crisis» (FARISH, 2003). On the other, the military industrial complex sought to gain finance and power by reshaping civil strategic spaces in cities (BEAUREGARD, 2003). The result was that, «by 1970, the military-industrial complex had successfully done what it had set out to do at the start of the decade – expand its market to city planning and management» (LIGHT, 2002).

Whilst rarely discussed, such planning-based urbicide is still extremely widespread around the world. For example, countless informal settlements continue to be bulldozed around the planet in the name of modernisation, freeway-construction, eco-

conomic development, «hygiene», and the improvement of a city's image (see, for example, PATEL et al., 2002).

Urban Ruination and the Politics of «Unbuilding»

It is crucial to stress – in our seventh illustration – that, after decades of urban crises of various sorts and an entrenchment of global, neoliberal restructuring, the discipline of urban planning is now confronting «the radical contingency of the metropolis» in many guises and many places. The world is littered with failed utopian, modernist urban landscapes. Many of these now resemble dystopian sites of ethnic battles, economic and social collapse, financial meltdown, or physical decay (OLALQUIAGA, 1995; BUCKMORSS, 2000).

The continuum of organized, urban violence is thus complicated by the fact that much «planned» urban change even in times of «peace» *itself* involves war-like levels of violence, destabilisation, rupture, forced expulsion, and place annihilation (BERMAN, 1996). Particularly within the dizzying peaks and troughs of capitalist urbanism state-led planning often boils down to the legitimised clearance of vast tracts of cities in the name of the removal of decay, modernisation, improvement, ordering, economic competition, or facilitating technological change and capital accumulation and speculation. «The economically, politically and socially driven processes of creative-destruction through abandonment and redevelopment», suggests David Harvey, «are often every bit as destructive as arbitrary acts of war. Much of contemporary Baltimore, with its 40,000 abandoned houses, looks like a war zone to rival Sarajevo» (HARVEY, 2003, p. 26).

As a result, in paradigmatic modern cities like, Detroit, for example, much urban planning doctrine and effort now centres on the politics of «unbuilding» rather than building (DASKALAKIS et al., 2001). As in many other US core cities, old industrial European cities, and Asian and Latin American megacities confronting recent financial collapses, the challenge here is to «plan» not for growth, prosperity and modernisation. Rather, it is to try and overcome obsolescent structures, abandoned neighbourhoods, half-built or half-ruined cityscapes, decayed infrastructures and war-like levels of gang, ethnic, and drug-related violence and arson (VERGARA, 1997, 1999). Often, such «enclaves of disinvestment reverse normal codes of controlled development; they are pockets of free-fall urban implosion, partaking of a frenzied violence [...]. Here the police plead for their own automatic weapons, pleading to be outgunned by teenage gangs» (SHANE, 1995, p. 65).

Terror vs. «War on Terror»: City-Targeting, Orbital Power, and New Wars

«While at one time war elsewhere guaranteed peace at the centre of the empire, now the enemy strikes precisely and more easily at the centre [...]. War abroad no longer guarantees peace at home» (ECO, 2003, p. 7).

«Cities are especially vulnerable to the stresses of conflict [...]. City-dwellers are particularly at risk when their complex and sophisticated infrastructure systems are destroyed and rendered inoperable, or when they become isolated from external contacts» (BARAKAT, 1998, p. 12).

All of which leads neatly to our eighth vignette: a brief analysis of the central role of cities and urban spaces within the current «third world war» pitching «super terrorism» against counter terrorism. Five brief points need to be stressed here.

Everyday Infrastructures as Weapons of War

First, the potential for catastrophic violence against cities and urban life has changed in parallel with the shift of urban life towards ever-more distantiated, transnational, and flows-based systems and networks. The result of this is that the everyday technics, spaces and infrastructures of urban life – airliners, metro trains, computer networks, water systems, electricity grids, trade networks, food systems, medical systems, scientific research grids – may be easily assaulted and turned into agents either of instantaneous terror or debilitating demodernisation. (LUKE, 2004; GRAHAM and MARVIN, 2001). In a «24/7», «always-on» and intensively networked society, urbanites become so reliant on taken-for-granted infrastructural and computerised systems that they creep ever closer to the point where, as Bill Joy puts it, «turning off becomes suicide» (2000, p. 239). In particular, given that all the «Big Systems» that sustain advanced, urban societies are profoundly electrical, we become «hostages to electricity» (LESLIE, 1999). All this means that «tremendous lethal capabilities can be created simply by contra-functioning the everyday applications of many technics» (LUKE, 2004).

Most obviously, this applies to the airline suicide attacks of 9/11 (GRAHAM, 2002), Palestinian bus bombers, or the Moscow metro attacks of February 2004. But it also applies to the much less well-known efforts of US and Israeli militaries to systematically demodernise entire urban societies in the past few decades. It is striking that the «innovations» underpinning both informal and state terror, to use the words of Timothy Luke, «mobilize assets for attacks that destructively activate the embedded threats of large technical systems, everyday logistics, and civil offensive capabilities» (2004).

Thus, the murderous 9/11 attacks simply turned banal capsules of everyday, inter-urban mobility into anti-urban cruise missiles. A massive perversion of everyday mobility systems orchestrated for saturation real-time coverage, these attacks brought an overwhelmingly symbolic and mediated act of urban mass murder to a devastating conclusion (GRAHAM and MARVIN, 2001; LUKE 2004).

Similarly, the deliberate US bombing of electrical systems in Kosovo in 1999, and Iraq in 2001 – often using graphite «soft» bombs designed to generate massive short circuits and fires – led to a vast pressure on those societies by effectively de-electrifying, and de-modernising, them (GRAHAM, 2004a). Between 1991 and 2003, for example, as a result of the bombing and the following sanctions, Iraq was a modern, highly urban society forcibly «relegated to a pre-industrial age» by state violence (UNITED NATIONS, 1999, cited in BLAKELEY, 2001, p. 32). Even a leading US Air Force planner had to concede that this direct targeting of so-called «dual-use» (military/civilian) electrical infrastructure in 1991 «shut down water purification and sewage treatment plants. As a result, epidemics of gastroenteritis, cholera, and typhoid broke out, leading to as many as 100,000 civilian deaths and the doubling infant mortality rates» (RIZER, 2001). Over the next decade, over 500,000 Iraqi civilians were to die because the war and the sanctions forced a modern, urban society to live without the basic, life-sustaining systems that are needed to keep it alive. This was a classic case, as Ruth Blakeley (2001) has put it, of «bomb now, die later.»

As US forces move into the new terrain of «cyber war» or «computer network attack» so they have developed detailed knowledge of the software systems that sustain basic, everyday infrastructure in potentially adversarial cities and states. In 2002, Major General Bruce Wright, Deputy Director of Information Operations at the Joint Warfare Analysis Center at Dahlgren (Va.), revealed that his team «can tell you not just how a power plant or rail system [within an adversary’s country] is built, but what exactly is involved in keeping that software system up and making that system efficient» (cited in CHURCH, 2002).

The Urbanisation of War: Cities as Refuge from Orbital and Aerial Hegemony

«Some people say to me that the Iraqis are not the Vietnamese! They have no jungles or swamps to hide in. I reply, “let our cities be our swamps and our buildings our jungles”» (then Iraqi foreign minister, Tariq Aziz, October 2002, quoted in BELLAMY, 2003, p. 3).

Second, the relative anonymity of urban life renders cities as the last sites of refuge from the globe-spanning, high-tech military omnipotence of US surveillance and killing. The

complex, congested and contested terrain below, within, and above cities is seen by many within the US military as a set of physical spaces which limit the effectiveness of high-tech space-targeted bombs, surveillance systems, and automated, «network-centric» weapons. These derive their power from the United States' massive dominance in space-based satellite targeting, navigation and surveillance (GRAHAM, 2004b). Such weapons and information systems have been deliberately developed in the last 30 years, under the auspices of the so-called «Revolution in Military Affairs», to ensure that the US remains a pre-eminent global military power with «full spectrum dominance» over its potential challengers (GRAY, 1997). The widespread urbanisation of potential «battlespace» is therefore seen to reduce the ability of U.S. forces to fight and kill at a distance (always the preferred way because of their «casualty dread» and technological supremacy). And, as is being revealed in the Iraqi guerrilla war, urban warfare is also seen to necessitate a much more labour-, and casualty-intensive way of fighting than the US is used to these days.

«The long term trend in open-area combat is toward overhead dominance by US forces», writes Ralph Peters (1996, p. 6), an influential US observer of what might be termed the urbanisation of war. «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 that the United States' «enemies will be forced into cities and other complex terrain, such as industrial developments and inter-city sprawl» (1997, p. 4).

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, p. 2). Here cities and urbanisation 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, p. 3).

To Peters, the pivotal geo-strategic role of urban regions within the post-Cold War period is stark and clear. «Who cares about Upper Egypt if Cairo is calm?», he writes. «We do not deal with Indonesia – we deal with Jakarta. In our [then] recent evacuation of Sierra Leone Freetown was all that mattered» (1997, p. 5). Peters also

candidly characterises 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) (HARDT and NEGRI, 2000). «Our future military expeditions will increasingly defend our foreign investments», he writes, «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.»

Such urban warfare «expeditions» have been central to the United States' post-Cold War strategy. In a parallel process of what might be termed the «urbanisation of war» (GRAHAM, 2004c, Part II), they are also the basis for the intensifying efforts of Israeli forces to systematically demodernise Palestinian cities. All these aggressions have devastated, and immiserated, the fragile systems that allow urban societies to function. Arguably – at least in the case – the attacks have been so comprehensive and complete that we have witnessed a case of «urbicide» – the denial, or killing, of the city (GRAHAM, 2003, 2004d; SAFIER, 2001; BERMAN, 1996). Thousands of dwellings have been demolished. Infrastructure systems have been systematically ripped up by the claws of bulldozers. And whole refugee camps deemed to be the symbolic or actual centres of resistance to occupation – both through the horrific programme of suicide bombing in Israeli cities, and other means – have been bulldozed in the culmination of brutal urban battles. Urban areas have had the life literally strangled out of them by extending arrays of checkpoints, curfews and barriers, combined with the progressive annexation of water resources and the destruction and annexation of agricultural land. The Palestinian population has been brutalised like never before, with 2,194 civilians killed between September 2000 and October 21st 2003 alone (GRAHAM, 2004d).

The Language and Legitimation of War

Thirdly, as always, these urban wars are being made and legitimised through language. Both Sharon's assaults on Palestinian cities, and Bush's assaults on Iraqi and Afghan ones, have been justified through indiscriminate, Orientalist, categorisations. This language – what has been termed the «new barbarism» – does huge political work. It does this by separating «the civilised world» [Israel or the U.S.] – whose «home-land» cities must be «defended» – from the «dark forces» which are alleged to threaten the health, prosperity, and democracy of both these spaces and the «free» world (TUASTAD, 2003; TISDALL, 2003; KAPLAN, 2003).

Thus, such rhetoric conveniently lumps together the residents of whole nations as sources of «terrorism». As Derek Gregory (2003, p. 311) has shown, such language sustains the demodernisation, as well as demonisation, of whole Islamic or Arab urban societies. By «casting out» the subject civilians of those cities, these people, crucially, are «placed beyond the privileges and protections of the law so that their lives (and deaths) [are] rendered of no account.» In then forcibly creating a kind of chaotic urban hell, through state terror, violence, and the deliberated destruction of modern urban infrastructures, this violence, perversely, produces what the discourses depict: an urban world «outside of the modern, figuratively as well as physically» (ibid., p. 313).

Urban War and «Accumulation by Dispossession»

Fourth, such destruction, and the new strategy of *pre-emptive* war also, of course, create opportunities for predatory, imperial gain. This is especially so as they are located within a globalising, neoliberal, political economy centred on the rapacious accumulative appetite of politically favoured transnationals for both urban and infrastructural assets and strategic raw materials (KIRSCH, 2003; HARVEY, 2003b).

Certainly, the US invasions of key parts of the strategic zones of central Eurasia and the Middle East have paved the way for what David Harvey (2003a, chapter 4) has called «accumulation by dispossession». This has operated through the privatisation of assets and infrastructures in conquered lands and the handing over of these assets, and natural resource rights, to the massive corporations that are almost inseparably woven into the Bush regime. Even moderate commentators like Michael Ignatieff now admit that the high-tech «war on terror» is, essentially, a classic, imperialistic strategy adjusted to the demands of a US-centred, network-based, neoliberal «empire» based on commercial control backed up by military dominance (IGNATIEFF, 2003; HARDT and NEGRI, 2000; KLEIN, 2003). «This war, like most of the wars that preceded it, is firmly rooted in geopolitical competition» (KLARE, 2001, p. 4). As Dyer-Witheford has argued, it remains the case that, «at its cutting edge, capitalist globalization means war» (1999, p. 157).

Urban Cosmopolitanism and Competing Fundamentalisms

Finally, cities constitute the front line of the «war on terror» in another crucial way. As the critical sites of diasporic mixing, and the destination points for global migration, cities provide the multicultural environments which are being stretched across

the resurgent «them» and «us» boundaries that are (re)emerging in the wake of 9/11, the «war on terror», and the drive for «homeland security» (SASSEN, 1999). What future for urban multiculturalism, or for the global-local flows of migration and diaspora formation, in a world where «the rhetoric of ‘inside’ needing protection from external threats in the form of international organizations is pervasive» (DALBY, 2000, p. 5)?

Ironically, 9/11 itself symbolised 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, p. 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 organisations needs to be considered as one of a large number of social movements against what Castells calls the «new global order» (2004, p. 108). 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, p. 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 very 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 11th 2001 was that it took such an extraordinary event to reveal the everyday reality of life at the heart of the global city» (2003, p. 109).

On the other hand, Bush’s neoconservative and neoimperial «war on terror» also problematises 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 civilised 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» (PASSAVANT and DEAN, 2002, cited in GREGORY, 2003). It has also «activate[d] a policing of points of vulnerability against an enemy who inheres within the space of the US» (ibid.).

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 harbour «terrorist threats», combined with a radically increased effort to ensure the filtering power of national borders (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, p. 1).

Once again, then, nations, as well as strategic cities, are being (re)imagined as bounded, organised spaces with closely controlled, and filtered, relationships with the supposed terrors of the outside world. Global geopolitical tensions, and attempts to bolster «homeland security», have telescoped into policies shaping immigration controls, social policies addressing asylum seekers, and local policies towards multicultural and diasporic communities in cities. In the US, for example, national immigration, border control, and social policy strategies have been dramatically remodelled 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 New York City and Washington DC; rather, it is increasingly defined by a “security perimeter” and the strict surveillance of borders» (HYNDMAN, 2003, p. 2; ANDERSON, 2002).

The «hybrid», transnational identities of many neighbourhoods and communities in cities, shaped by generations of migration and diasporic mixing, are thus becoming problematised. 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).

Homeland/Globe: War, «Security», and the Geopolitics of Production and Consumption

«Every generation has a taboo and ours is this: that the resources upon which our lives have been built are running out» (MONBIOT, 2003, p. 25).

Which brings us neatly to our penultimate example of the inseparability of contemporary war and urbanism. This centres on the ways in which the reconstruction of landscapes and consumption habits in the wealthy cities of the advanced industrial world, with their profound implications for geopolitical competition, impact on security, terror and urbanising war elsewhere (LE BILLON, 2001). A powerful case of these important but poorly researched connections comes with the growing fashion for large, 4-wheel drive «Sports Utility Vehicles» in Western, and particularly, US cities.

Given the very high degree of influence of major US oil companies on the Bush regime, there is growing evidence of direct connections between the fashion for more and more profligate use of oil in sprawling US cityscapes; the geopolitical remodelling of US defence forces; and the so-called «War on terror» through which the US government is achieving a high level of geopolitical control of the world's largest untapped oil reserves, in and around the Caspian Basin (KLEVEMAN, 2003). 9/11 has thus been ruthlessly exploited. In particular the 9/11 attacks provided the «catastrophic and catalysing event» that was identified by the influential 1997 report *Project for a New American Century* – including Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz – as necessary to allow the U.S. to justify the invasion of Iraq with any hope of legitimacy (Harvey, 2003b, p. 15).

Whilst the US strategy is not necessarily about directly controlling oil resources *per se*, there is little doubt that «it is about ensuring that whoever controls it buys and sells it in U.S. dollars through the New York commodities market» that lies a few hundred meters from «ground zero» (HALEVI and VAROUFAKIS, 2003, p. 66). There is little doubt that a key objective of the US attack on Iraq was to install a US-friendly oil producing regime there that would eventually displace the Saudis as the main «swing producer», allowing the United States (and not OPEC) to regulate the international price of oil (GREGORY, 2004a; HARVEY, 2003).

Three key points are crucial here. First, SUVs were fashioned and marketed after the first Gulf War as quasi-militarised «urban assault luxury vehicles» (RAMPTON and STAUBER, 2003). Clotaire Rapaille, a psychological consultant to major U.S. SUV manufacturers, reveals that his research suggests that Americans want «aggressive cars» that

can be thought of as «weapons» or «armored cars for the urban battlefield». The design and marketing of such vehicles, he argues – with their names like «Stealth» and «Warrior» – needs to tap into, and address, their consumers' fears about contemporary urban life (cited in RAMPTON and STAUBER, 2003, p. 138).

Post 9/11, it is now clear that advertisers have been deliberately exploiting widespread fears of catastrophic terrorism to further increase sales of highly-profitable SUVs. Rapaille has recently been urging the main auto manufacturers to address the fact that «the Homeland is at war» by appealing to buyers' most primitive emotions (ibid., p. 139).

Second, the SUV is being enrolled into urban everyday life as a defensive capsule or «portable civilization» – a signifier of safety that, like the gated communities into which they so often drive, is portrayed in advertisements as being immune to the risky and unpredictable urban life outside (GARNER, 2000). Such vehicles seem to assuage the fear that the urban middle classes feel when moving – or queuing in traffic – in their «homeland» city.

Subliminal processes of urban and cultural militarisation are going on here. This was most powerfully illustrated by the transformation of the US army's «Humvee» assault vehicle into the civilian «Hummer» just after the first Iraq war – an idea that came from the *Terminator* film star (and now California Governor) Arnold Schwarzenegger (who promptly received the first one off the production line). Andrew Garner writes that:

«For the middle classes, the SUV is interpreted culturally as strong and invincible, yet civilised. In the case of the middle class alienation from the inner city, the SUV is an urban assault vehicle. The driver is transformed into a trooper, combating an increasingly dangerous world. This sense of security felt when driving the SUV continues when it is not being driven. The SUV's symbols of strength, power, command and security becomes an important part of the self-sign [...]. With the identification of enemies within our borders, this vehicle has become a way of protecting members of the middle class from any threat to their lifestyle» (2000, p. 6).

Finally, the fact that SUVs account for over 25% of US car sales has very real impacts on the global geopolitics of oil. With their consumption rates of double or triple normal cars, this highly lucrative sector clearly adds directly to the power of the neo-conservative and ex-oil executive «hawks» in the Bush regime to drive forward the above-mentioned strategy of colonisation by dispossession. This is especially so as they have operationalised their perpetual «war on Terror» in ways that are helping the

USA to secure access to the huge, low-priced, oil reserves that the United States argues it needs to fuel its ever-growing level of consumption. (Currently these stand at 25.5% of global consumption to sustain a country with less than 5% of the world's population).

Clearly, then, the profligate oil consumption and militarised design of SUVs «takes on additional significance in the light of the role that dependency on foreign oil has played in shaping U.S. relations with countries in the Middle East» (RAMPTON and STAUBER, 2003, p. 139).

«The economic, cultural and military infrastructure that undergrids US Middle East policy will not be so easily undone», writes Tim Watson, «and without its wholesale reform or dismantling, Islamic terrorists will not so easily disappear» (2003, p. 110). As with the cosmopolitan nationalities of the dead, then, so the events of 9/11, in their own way, reflect and symbolise the deep connections between urban everyday life and city form and the violence spawned by geopolitical conflict and imperialist aggression. Watson writes that he has been haunted since 9/11 by images of the hundreds of vehicles abandoned, never to be recovered, at rail stations by commuters to the twin towers in the states of New York, Connecticut and New Jersey. «These symbols of mobility» became, instead:

«images of immobility and death. But these forlorn, expensive cars and SUVs also represent a nodal point between the US-domestic economy and a global oil market in which Saudi, Kuwaiti, and Iraqi production is still so important» (WATSON, 2003, pp. 110-111).

«A Geopolitics of Urban Decay and Cybernetic Play»: Popular Culture Blurs with Military Strategy

«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, 2003, p. 16).

Our final vignette centres on the ways in which the neglect of place annihilation in urban social science has left the connections between today's cities, and the curious obsession with ruined cities and post-apocalyptic urban landscapes in contemporary popular culture, largely unexplored. This is important because cities are unmade and annihilated *discursively* as well as through bombs, planes and terrorist acts. As vari-

ous electronic media become ever-more dominant in shaping the tenor of urban culture, so their depictions of cities crucially affect collective notions of what cities actually are, of what they might actually become.

Increasingly, in these post-modern times, cities are depicted as sites of ruination, fear and decay, rather than ones of development, order or «progress». As long ago as the mid-sixties, Susan Sontag observed that most sci-fi films, for example, are about the «aesthetic of destruction, the peculiar beauties to be found in wreaking havoc, making a mess» (1966, p. 213). Crucially, this means that millennia-old «link between civilization and barbarism is reversed: City life turns into a state of nature characterised by the rule of terror, accompanied by omnipresent fear» (DIKEN and LAUSTSEN 2002, p. 291).

This shift taps into a century or more of apocalyptic, anti-urban, literature and films – from H.G. Wells's *War in the Air* to vast ranges of atomic-age and cyberpunk fiction. All of this predicts, in its own way, the final victory of weapons of annihilation over the very possibility of a conventional urban life (FRANKLIN, 1988). Adding to this, a swathe of recent post-apocalyptic films have so shaped the collective culture of urbanism that the stock response to the 9/11 catastrophe was that «it was just like a scene in a movie!» Whilst their output paused after 9/11 they are now back in full flow (MAHER, 2002). Mike Davis has argued that the 9/11 attacks:

«were organised as epic horror cinema with meticulous attention to the *mise-en-scène*. The hijacked planes were aimed precisely at the vulnerable border between fantasy and reality [...]. Thousands of people who turned on their televisions on 9/11 were convinced that the cataclysm was just a broadcast, a hoax. They thought they were watching rushes from the latest Bruce Willis film [...]. The «Attack on America», and its sequels, «America Fights Back» and «America Freaks Out», have continued to unspool as a succession of celluloid hallucinations, each of which can be rented from the video shop: *The Siege*, *Independence Day*, *Executive Action*, *Outbreak*, *The Sum of All Fears*, and so on» (2002, p. 5).

Indeed, the complex links between virtual, filmic, and televisual representations of city-killing, and actual acts of urban war, are becoming so blurred as to be almost indistinguishable. At least amongst US forces, the real targeting of cities is being remodelled as a «joy stick war». This operates through «virtual» simulations, computerised killing systems, and a growing distantiation of the operator from the sites of the killing and the killed. In the process, the realities of urban war – at least for some – start to

blur seamlessly with the wider cultures of sci-fi, film, video games and popular entertainment (THUSSU and FREEDMAN, 2003).

As war is increasingly consumed by a voyeuristic public, so digital technologies bring the vicarious thrills of urban war direct to the homes of news-hungry consumers. Consumption of the Iraq war by people in the US, for example, offered a wide range of satellite image-based maps of the City as little more than an array of targets, to be destroyed from the air, in newspapers or on media websites. Thus:

«The *New York Times* provided a daily satellite map of Baghdad as a city of targets. On the web, *USA Today's* interactive map of "Downtown Baghdad" invited its users: "Get a satellite-eye view of Baghdad. Strategic sites and bombing targets are marked, but you can click on any quadrant for a close up". The site also included images of targets "before" and "after" air strikes. The *Washington Post's* interactives invited the viewer to 'roll over the numbers to see what targets were hit on which day; click to read more about the targets» (GREGORY, 2004b, p. 29).

In a perverse twist, corporate media and entertainment industries increasingly provide *both* computer games and films which virtually simulate recent urban wars to mass participants, *and* the virtual and physical simulations of cities that US forces use to hone their warfare skills for fighting in Kabul, Baghdad, or Freetown. Take, for example, the unmanned, low altitude «Predator» aircraft that are already being used for extra-judicial assassinations of alleged «terrorists» (and whoever happens to be close by) in the Yemen, Afghanistan and Iraq whilst being «piloted» from a Florida air base 8 or 10,000 miles away. For the US military personnel doing the piloting, this «virtual» work is almost indistinguishable from a «shoot-em-up» video game (except that the people who die are real). «At the end of the work day», one Predator operator recently boasted during Gulf War II, «you walk back into the rest of life in America» (quoted in NEWMAN, 2003).

This is one example of the ways in which the actual prosecution of wars is merging more and more with electronic entertainment industries. «The US military is preparing for wars that will be fought in the same manner as they are electronically represented, on real-time networks and by live feed videos, on the PC and the TC actually and virtually» (DER DERIAN, 2002, p. 61). The «military now mobilizes science fiction writers and other futurologists to plan for the wars of tomorrow just as they consciously recruit video-game-playing adolescents to fight the same conflict» (GRAY, 1997, p. 190).

James Der Derian (2001) coins the term the «military-industrial-media-entertainment network» to capture the deepening and increasingly insidious connections between the military, defence industries, popular culture and electronic entertainment. Here, huge software simulations are constructed to recreate any possible urban warfare scenario, complete with vast forces, casualties, the gaze of the media and three dimensional, real-time participation by thousands. Hollywood specialists of computer-generated films provide extra «realism» in these simulations; their theme park designers, meanwhile, help in the construction of the «real» urban warfare training cities that are dotted across the USA. Major «invasions» – such as the «Urban Warrior» exercise in March – are even undertaken on major US cities from air, land and sea to further improve training both for foreign incursions and the control of major domestic urban unrest. Civilians are employed in these exercises to play various parts (WILLIS, 2003). Such mock invasions have even been proposed as local economic development initiatives for declining city cores.

Finally, the US military are deepening their connections with corporate news media, so that the «information warfare» side of their operations – i.e. propaganda – can be more successful. Just as Al Qaeda timed the second plane's impact on 9/11 so that the world's news media could beam it live to billions of astonished onlookers, so the «Shock and Awe» strategy at the start of the US bombing of Baghdad was a carefully orchestrated media spectacle (with the world's TV journalists lined up in a major hotel a short, but safe, distance away from the carefully selected – and empty – buildings that were pin-pointed for GPS-base destruction). Thus, both formal and informal attacks against cities emerge as rhizomatic, internationally networked operations orchestrated with global media representation in mind. Both Al Qaeda and the U.S. Military are transnational organisations concerned as much with symbolic effects as with the real devastation of local sites (ZIZEK, 2003). «This war takes place in the invisible space of the terror imaginary of the U.S. (attacks on buildings and government, germ infection, etc.) and in the visibly impoverished landscape of Afghanistan» (ARETXAGA, 2003, p. 144).

James Lukaszewski, a US public relations counsellor who advises the US military, admits that the links between terrorist organisations and the global media are equally insidious:

«media coverage and terrorism are soul mates – virtually inseparable. They feed off each other. They together create a dance of death – the one for political or ideological motives,

the other for commercial success. Terrorist activities are high profile, ratings-building events. The news media need to prolong these stories because they build viewership and readership» (cited in RAMPTON and STAUBER, 2003, p. 134).

Claire Sponster terms the particular obsession with decayed cityscapes within cyberpunk depictions on urban futures a «geopolitics of urban decay and cybernetic play». Whilst these have moved beyond the common sci-fi obsession with post-nuclear cities during the Cold War:

«the physical settings of [such] cyberpunk stories look strikingly like the setting of any post-holocaust story: blighted, rubble-strewn, broken-down cityspaces; vast terrains of decay, bleakness, and the detritus of civilization; and the near complete absence of a benign and beautiful nature» (ibid. 253).

The vast array of «virtual reality» and simulation games, where players can be masters of urban annihilation, further demonstrate the blurring of the actual and virtual killing of urban places (and their inhabitants). Three ranges of games are relevant here.

First, there are simulated urban construction games – like the SimCities™ series. In these participants endlessly construct, and destroy, cityscapes in repeated cycles of virtual urban cataclysms (SPONSTER, 1992; BLEECKER, 1994). One SimCity™ introduction and guide available on the Web describes the fascination with virtual urban destruction amongst players thus:

«My name is Dr Wright and I will be your guide and teacher as you set out to create bustling cities of sprawling urban wastelands. As Mayor, the choice is yours. Let's start off by destroying Tokyo! Studies show that nine out of ten mayors begin their careers with a frenzy of destruction [...]. Another curious fact about SimCity™ mayors is that one disaster is never enough. The reasoning goes something like this: 'gee, that monster was great, but there must be half a dozen buildings still standing. I wonder what it would take to destroy *EVERYTHING!*' [...] Simply point at the disaster(s) of your choice and push B to activate it» (original emphasis).

Second, there are virtual combat games designed to allow western users to «fight» enemies in far-off cities. These provide omnipotent players with «realistic» – and often devastated – (usually Middle Eastern) cities in which to annihilate racialised and dehumanised enemies again and again. The rhetoric and marketing of such games, echoing George Bush's nationalistic discourses of «protecting freedom» and «ensuring

democracy», imply that the task of the player is to infiltrate these cities to rid the world of «terrorists» and so «fight for freedom».

The urban war of your choice – *Black Hawk Down* (Mogadishu), *Gulf War I*, *Gulf War II*, the LA Riots, a myriad of urban «anti-terrorist operations» – can thus be electronically simulated and consumed as entertainment. The comments of participants are very telling here. For example, a *Black Hawk Down* player admits that «those graphics are so sweet you can almost feel the bullets whiz past your head and ricochet off walls around you. The scenery is good although if you are spending time admiring it then you're already dead!» Another gushes:

«when you're trapped in the middle of a hostile situation and completely surrounded, it really does get the heart pumping [...].When I first jumped into a helicopter, took off, saw the enemy in the city streets below and then activated the helicopter's mini-gun it was such a rush! I also enjoyed being able to use gun emplacements and firing massive mini-guns from the choppers and watching the empty shell casings bouncing off the tin roofs [of "Mogadishu"] below!»

A third range of games brings urban war to the «homeland». Here the challenge is to destroy terrorists who are in the process of unleashing instant and unknown catastrophes on Western cities. One user of the «Tom Clancy Rainbow Six Rogue Spear Platinum» urban warfare game describes its challenges. «Urban Operations really add to the gameplay», he says, «with missions in *live* public areas (London Underground, open-top markets, etc.). You can even shoot out the lights! [The spaces are] full of public people. And if a stray shot should kill any member of the public... Game Over!» (comments taken from amazon.co.uk; original emphasis).

Conclusion: Looking at Ruins

«The human race is, and has always been, ruin-minded» (MACAULAY, 1964, p. 264).

«The ruins are painful to look at, but will hurt more in the long run if we try not to see» (BERMAN, 1996, p. 185).

«Wounded cities, like all cities, are dynamic entities, replete with the potential to recuperate loss and reconstruct anew for the future» (SCHNEIDER and SUSSER, 2003, p. 1).

To conclude this extended essay, it is strikingly clear that urbanists and urban researchers can no longer neglect either attempts to deny, destroy or annihilate cities,

or the «dark» side of urban modernity which links cities intimately to organised, political violence. In this «post 9/11» and «post-war on terror» world, urban researchers and social scientists – like everyone else – are being forced to begin addressing their taboos about attempted city-killing, place annihilation, «urbicide», and the urbanisation of war. In a parallel process, international relations theorists, geopolitical researchers, and sociologists of war, are being forced to consider urban and sub-national spaces as crucial geopolitical sites, often for the first time.

As a result, researchers in both traditions are now, once again, starting to explore, and excavate, the spaces and practices that emerge at the intersections of urbanism, terrorism and warfare. There is a growing acknowledgement that violent catastrophe, crafted by humans, is part and parcel of modern urban life. A much needed, specifically *urban*, geopolitics is thus slowly (re)emerging which addresses the telescoping connections between transnational geopolitical transformations and very local acts of violence against urban sites. This emerging body of work is trying to unearth, as Diken and Laustsen put it, «the way in which discipline, control, and terror coexist in today's imaginary and real urban geographies» (2002, p. 291).

As an exploratory synthesis, this essay has developed a particularly broad perspective of the ways in which the purposive destruction and annihilation of cities, in war, terror, planning and virtual play, are utterly interwoven with urban modernity. Two conclusions are apparent from this wide-ranging discussion:

First, as the gaze of critical urban social science starts to fall on the purposive ruination and annihilation of place, so this synthesis underlines five, related, urban research challenges. First, the research and professional taboos that cloak the geopolitical and strategic archaeologies, and spatialities, of modern urbanism must be undermined, and understood. Second, the «hidden», militarised histories and spatialities of modern urban planning and state terror must be excavated and relentlessly exposed. Third, the characteristics of city spaces and infrastructures that make them the choicest par excellence of those seeking to commit terrorist acts require detailed analysis, as do the impacts of these acts on the shape, condition, and imagining of cities and urban life. Fourth, the telescoping, transnational connections between the geopolitics of war and «empire», and political economies of production, consumption, migration, the media, and resistance require rigorous theorisation and analysis. And finally, the fast-growing, and usually hidden, worlds of «shadow» urban research, through which the world's military perceive, reconstruct, and target urban spaces must be actively uncovered.

Our second conclusion, of course, must be politically, rather than analytically, normative. This reflects the palpable risk that a global polarisation will emerge around the two alternative fundamentalisms that currently so threaten to destabilise, and devastate, our world. The clear imperative here is to forcibly reject *both* of the racist, masculinist fundamentalisms which are currently locked in a globe-spanning circle of intensifying atrocity and counter-atrocity. As Rosalind Petchesky has argued, these offer a choice between «the permanent war machine (or permanent security state) and the reign of holy terror» (cited in JOSEPH and SHARMA, 2003, p. XXI). Untrammelled, the self-perpetuating cycles of atrocity between urban terror and state counter-terror, that these discourses legitimise and sustain, offer up an extremely bleak urban future indeed. This, perhaps, is the ultimate urban dystopia? For it is crucial to realise, as the Israeli-Palestinian quagmire demonstrates, that informal terror and state counter-terror tend to be umbilically connected. In the end, they tend, tragically, to be self-perpetuating in an endless circle of intensifying atrocity (GRAHAM, 2004d). As Zulaika argues:

«the ultimate catastrophe is that [...] a categorically ill-defined, perpetually deferred, simple minded Good-versus-Evil war [“against terror”] echoes and re-creates 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, p. 198).

As a global polarisation threatens to occur between those who are pro-«Western» and those who are pro-«radical Islam» – stoked by sickening and self-fulfilling circles of informal and state terror and fundamentalist propaganda – one thing is sure. Normatively, cities must be seen as key sites, perhaps *the* key sites, for nurturing the tolerances, diasporic mixings, and multicultural spaces that are needed to push fundamentalist fantasies of all sorts to the lunatic fringes where they belong (SAFIER, 2001; SANDERCOCK, 2003). Arguably, our planet currently faces no greater challenge.³

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