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The Terror City Hypothesis[1]

Mitchell Gray and Elvin Wyly

Introduction

Wolf Blitzer:"While terrorists may be eying targets across America, the government may be leaving some places more vulnerable instead of helping them get ready. A city that literally attracts tens of millions of visitors each year is one surprising example. Our homeland security correspondent Jeanne Meserve is here with details. Jeanne?"

Jeanne Meserve: "Wolf, brain dead. That's the phrase that Congressman Ric Keller was using to describe the funding formula for the Department of Homeland Security's Urban Area Security Initiative grants. Keller is upset because Orlando, Florida, in his district, got no money this year while cities like Omaha, Nebraska did."

Ric Keller [video clip]: "Orlando, Florida should get the money because we protect forty-three million tourists every year and so when we go to orange level, our sheriff doesn't say, hey, we're only going to protect our residents. We have to protect everybody and we need significant resources to do that."[2]

September 11, 2001 was simultaneously global and local: the day's victims left behind grieving families not only in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, but also in dozens of countries around the globe. Almost immediately, however, a "glocal" catastrophe was nationalized and the American response began to reconfigure key elements of the urban scale. Shanksville, Pennsylvania was soon forgotten as the event became a world-city catastrophe. New York City's tragedy was aggressively nationalized and drafted to provide symbolic flag-draped support for ongoing and new military campaigns and murder in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other settings where cities were invariably portrayed as mysterious terrorist havens appearing as brightly-lit targets on the Pentagon's real-time digital maps.[3] Capital as well as political, legal, and cultural resources were invested in the ideological construction of a suddenly vulnerable American Homeland for which all things have changed. American urbanism entered a new and paradoxical era, at once familiar and uncertain: cold war anxieties of the middle twentieth century were revived and revised in accordance with the elusive spatiality of today's terror. In this new and yet familiar American urbanism, the

imaginative construction of risk assumes a central role in the material and discursive dualities of local and global, here and there, us and them. These politics of constructed risk were seized immediately by the Vulcans, the self-named team of neoconservative foreign policy advisers who gave credibility to a presidential candidate who once quipped that he thought the Taliban was a rock band. The Vulcans' prior experience and inspiration came not from the traditional urban laboratories of Presidential power (Wall Street, Capitol Hill, state capitals, and Cambridge, Massachusetts), but from the Pentagon and other fortified nodes in America's gunbelt.[4] At the heart of a powerful neoconservative alliance, the Vulcans mobilized the specter of terrorism to justify an ambitious geopolitical agenda, while their allies in the domestic policy infrastructure quickly learned to exploit the terrorist threat to suppress dissent and to accelerate attacks on the tattered remains of the American welfare state.

In American cities, more and more aspects of everyday life and death now *take place* in the shadow of horror and fear, sustained by the manufactured certainty of uncertainty in an endless American war on terror. A culture of intensified (yet routine and almost mundane) militarization now pervades daily life in America's roster of world cities (see Figure 17.1). In turn, the militarization of urban life helps to reinforce the widespread perception of a new urban vulnerability, providing popular support in America for the expansion of old and new campaigns of horror and war elsewhere in the global urban system.

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In this chapter, we develop a conceptual framework to guide research on this new and yet somehow historically comforting variant on the traditional American fear in and of the city. Although our perspective on urban spaces of terror is certainly shaped by the growing body of post-September 11 urban research,[5] our manner of presentation is inspired by an earlier attempt to sort out the urban dimensions of a contested and supposedly new destabilizing process. In the spirit of John Friedmann's 1986

Figure 17.1. New York steps up security over terror warnings. Photograph: Spencer Platt/Getty Images.

"World City Hypothesis," we propose seven interrelated theses "as a framework for research." As with economic globalization in the 1980s and 1990s, the urbanization of today's wars of and on terror may be too fluid and unstable to fit into what Hank Savitch proposes as a "new paradigm" for cities.[6] Yet the terrorist specter does have similarities with the global investment networks that have inspired so much research: both help us to "understand what happens in the major global cities ... and what much political conflict in these cities is about."[7] It is essential, therefore, to negotiate what Friedmann offered as "a starting point for political enquiry" in the spirit of the original Greek *hupothesis*, a *foundation*. We offer a terror city hypothesis as a proposition not derived from direct experience, but formed and used to explain certain facts. And facts matter in these days of everyday violence and war: Bruno Latour recoils in horror from the social-constructionist language games of the Republican consultant Frank Luntz—the wordsmith who gave us "death tax" to replace "estate tax," and who emphasizes the lack of scientific certainty to undermine efforts to respond to global warming, because, after all, "climate change" can be good or bad, depending on your position. Latour is deeply concerned:

> Do you see why I am worried? ... Have things changed so fast? In which case the danger would no longer be coming from an excessive confidence in ideological arguments posturing as matters of fact—as we have learned to combat so efficiently in the past—but from an excessive distrust of good matters of fact disguised as bad ideological biases![8]

We suggest that the aggressive and entrepreneurial moves of prominent and powerful actors in the American neoconservative movement—in partnership with allies in the defense, technology, and producer services sectors—are reconfiguring ideological arguments and matters of fact by creating a genuinely new urban narrative object.[9] The terror city is a construct that redefines the urban by portraying all cities in terms of their *vulnerability to* terrorism or their *propensity to breed and harbor* terrorists. More than simply the urbanization of post-nine eleven politics, the terror city is a fundamental reconstruction (and co-optation) of theories and methods at the heart of urban studies. It is constructed by strategic planning and political communication, but it is also sustained by the consent of many urbanites who do sincerely believe that everything is different now, and that the war on terror must inform even the most local concerns about crime, property taxes, or the security of visitors to Disneyworld.

In this chapter, our primary concern is with the particular terror city that refracts the view of urbanites in the United States. Urban terror is by no means new, and it is most assuredly not at its worst in the United States. And yet the explicit urbanization and nationalization of 9/11 have come to represent a singular violation of a sacred American exceptionalism[10]—and thus it is the U.S.-centric construct stripped of so many local conjunctures and contingencies that is so potent in underwriting state-sanctioned horror and violence in cities across the globe. The danger is that the terror city is a matter of concern that is well on its way to becoming a matter of fact. Urbanity is being redefined just as "The Americans and British created facts where there were no facts at all,"[11] and as a senior aide to Bush put it a few weeks before the 2004 election, "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality —as you will—we'll act again, creating other new

realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."[12]

The terror city is constructed by carefully managed perceptions and imaginations of risk.

A single day reinvigorated a unifying, modernist narrative of risk and fear for residents of America's global cities, redeeming the short-attention-span ennui of an ambiguous, disorienting post-cold war political climate. Recall the vertigo of confusion and paralysis apparent in the once-confident sense of American geopolitical purpose that appeared a little more than a decade ago:

> It is the 1990s, and everything is changing. The Cold War order of superpower rivalry, East/West bloc formation, ideological competition, and North/South economic friction has imploded, giving way to that which President Bush once prematurely and optimistically labeled "the New World Order." In this new world order, strange tendencies are emerging. Previously stable territorial formations ... are devolving into unsettling convulsive chaos, while typically unstable extraterritorial flows...are evolving into new coherent tensions.[13]

If Francis Fukuyama was right and history ended after the cold war,[14] it seemed to have crashed to a halt in a particularly confusing landscape of recurrent famines, regional wars, and scattered, escalating atrocities. To be sure, the plight of distant strangers embroiled in horrendous violence (invariably presented as an outgrowth of irrational ethnic or tribal tensions) did provoke deep fears whenever the American media lens transmitted suitably graphic images back home. But the recurrence of collectively disorganized menaces failed to create any sort of shared, coherent, or directed insecurity. Fear was unfocused. When no single source of insecurity could be privileged among the overwhelming barrage of macabre infotainment, fears were manifest as the equivalent of a white noise of unease. Mike Davis reminds us of the "inexplicable anxiety" in the United States in the late 1990s, culminating in the absurdity of the pre-Y2K techno-millennial panic: "There was a diagnostic consensus among social scientists and culture theorists that Americans were suffering from acute hypochondria."[15]

In common parlance, September 11, 2001 changed everything. Everyone from Paul Wolfowitz to Peter Marcuse, Donald Rumsfeld to Norman Mailer, Dick Cheney to Noam Chomsky, agrees that things are different now.[16] Ambiguous, unspecified angst now has an iconographic and material expression in the urban landscape. Two theories are essential in understanding this shift. First, Ericson and Haggerty suggest that Canada and the United States have in recent years become "risk societies" marked by a "focus on danger, and the perpetual doubt that danger is being counteracted."[17] The provision of security becomes an ever more important goal of governance in a risk society, but of course security is intangible, elusive, and open-ended. Risk management becomes a task of measuring and managing probabilities, driving the expansion of scientific analysis, threat assessment, public relations, insurance, and securitization. But any probability distribution that manages temporarily to assuage public and investor fears is immediately shattered once anything happens that was believed unlikely. More resources are invested to attain better knowledge in the hopes of eliminating the possibility of unexpected events: "Collective fear and foreboding underpin the value system of an unsafe society, perpetuate insecurity, and

feed incessant demands for more knowledge of risk."[18] Second, the risk society fosters reliance on the "precautionary principle," worst-case scenario planning that distorts the allocation of security resources.[19] The precautionary principle attracts increasing security investments to deter the most heinous low-probability events, drawing resources from all sorts of pressing social investments. Precautionary spending even bleeds resources from other *security* spending, eroding protections against mundane but high-probability risks. There is no way out of this dilemma, but political (and financial) capital can be accumulated through greater security expenditures.[20]

Both of these concepts—the risk society and the precautionary principle—are at the heart of new configurations of state intervention and new blends of political discourse, popular culture, and security policy. Calculations of risk have shifted, and an altered spatiality of danger encourages scenario planning in line with the precautionary principle. The evidence is now undisputed that powerful alliances in the American neoconservative movement seized the fear after September 11 as an unprecedented opportunity to pursue longstanding imperial agendas—while unleashing a sudden round of domestic risk-society realignments. While annual federal defense appropriations approach the half-trillion dollar mark and the new Department of Homeland Security extends its tendrils in a major structural reorganization of the executive branch, state and local governments are caught in the most severe fiscal crisis in more than half a century. In the months prior to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, more than 160 local governments passed resolutions protesting the war in the face of massive cuts in social programs; at one public event an elected official asked Bush to wage war in East Cleveland, Ohio so its crumbing schools and roads could then be rebuilt. One local resolution protested the war because its "cost would be borne by the people of the City of Los Angeles, who rely on federal funds for anti-poverty programs, for workforce assistance, for housing, for education programs, for infrastructure and for the increased demands of homeland security."[21] Cities perceived as vulnerable to terror are colliding with the binding constraints of the precautionary principle amidst recession and unfunded security mandates from above. Some state and local officials, mindful of the local costs, decide on a case-by-case basis whether to follow federal directives when the terror color-coded alert system issues warnings of heightened risks. Others follow the lead of Ric Keller's plea on behalf of Disney World for increased federal funding. And some deploy the new imperatives of security to continue the assault on urban social welfare expenditures.

Perceptions of fear, vulnerability, and exposure are reshaping political discourse as well as physical planning in many cities. Constructions of risk are changing the experience of city life and relations within and among cities. The outlines of a global hierarchy of terror and antiterror are coming into view.

Cities are ranked in shifting hierarchies based on perceived risks of terrorism.

In classical theories of urban systems from the 1960s and 1970s, cities are creatures of economic competition, using innovation to attract growth and investment to climb up the hierarchy.[22] In the 1980s and 1990s, certain features of these old theories were either jettisoned or revised to capture the urban dimensions of globalization—but the emphasis on economic competition was retained and strengthened. Cities came to be seen as the leading edge of the particular type of globalization promoted

and often enforced by the United States, and thus any nation-state responding to such pressures invariably opened its cities to ever more complex transnational flows of investment, trade, migration, and communications.[23]

America's reflexive infatuation with globalizing cities is over, at least for those factions of the state leading the reorientation of geopolitical strategy and what is now officially known as homeland security. Cities are now seen as breeding grounds or targets, and sometimes both.[24] The American view of terrorist threats overseas is only implicitly urban, partly because of the continued centrality of the nation-state in diplomacy, and partly due to the nature of complex transnational organizations. And in the case of public pronouncements, federal rhetoric remains geared to the nation-state thanks to the general geographical ignorance of the American electorate. Nevertheless, each day's headlines prompt a resorting of cities and regions across the globe according to real and perceived risks as well as American responses, and cities like Kabul and Falluja become ever more familiar landmarks in the mental maps of average Americans.

On the domestic front, the attempt to map terror's urban system is more explicit, but, of course, always provisional and uncertain. Many institutions have taken an interest in this new, uneasy cartography, but the clearest map yet comes from the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), launched by the Office of Domestic Preparedness of the new Department of Homeland Security.[25] The first round of the program applied a formula including population density, critical infrastructure, and "threat/vulnerability assessment" to identify cities for targeted grants "to enhance the local governments' ability to prepare for and respond to threats or incidents of terrorism."[26] The first wave of recipients could thus be regarded as the official roster of America's first-order terror cities: New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco, and Houston.[27] Almost immediately after its inception, however, UASI became the vehicle for the predictable bring-home-the-bacon imperatives of Congress, creating security budget windfalls (on a per capita basis) for Wyoming, Montana, and scores of small cities. Sustained press coverage and fierce battles among Congressional delegations, Homeland Security staffers, and big-city mayors finally culminated in a revised threat- and population-based formula for Fiscal 2005.[28]

The U.S. terror city hierarchy coexists and interacts with the now-familiar urbanization processes of neoliberal governance and statecraft, but introduces several fundamental differences. First, the mapping enterprise involves intense research and speculation regarding terrorist motives, and thus tends to sideline the celebration of utility-maximizing consumers or heroic entrepreneurs. Indeed, the subtle shifts in meaning and signification that marked the 1990s (e.g., the recasting of diversity as a market opportunity for capitalism) have taken a sharp turn. In an article ironically drafted shortly before September, 2001, Savitch and Ardashev devised a ranking of cities vulnerable to terrorism, and gave "diversity" an ominous connotation that has subsequently proven quite influential:

> ...urban heterogeneity puts different social groups in close proximity to one another. While social pluralism provides rich synergies, under certain conditions it can be a nesting-ground for terrorist organisations. A sense of relative deprivation sharpens as different groups come into closer proximity. Word gets around more quickly and socialisation proceeds more rap-

> idly in densely packed environments. This kind of environment provides an abundant source of recruitment for potential terrorists.[29]

Second, the hierarchy is inherently unstable and uncertain, and its dynamic character is further complicated by the circulation of hallmark sports events, tourist festivals, trade summits, and other real and perceived targets. The itinerant travel of potential targets introduces an inherently dynamic element to the hierarchy of vulnerability, as demonstrated by the mobile infrastructure of fortified motorcades, clean-swept routes from airports to downtown landmarks, and isolated patchworks of anti-protest "free speech zones" that follow President Bush whenever he visits a city. Third, the unstable domestic hierarchy of vulnerable American cities interacts with the accumulation of new intelligence (some reliable, some not) to create a dynamic sorting of the global hierarchy of perceived threats. In the American geographical imagination, "cosmopolitan" cities can rapidly jump up the terror ranking while sliding down the economic scale (Beirut in the 1980s, the recent decimation of Egypt's tourist industry), and once-obscure places assume sudden prominence. Yesterday's Entebbe is today's Kabul, Quetta, or Falluja.[30] Nevertheless, key domestic elements of the risk ranking are likely to remain comparatively stable: New York and Washington, D.C. are almost certain to remain atop the urban security hierarchy for the foreseeable future.

Sustained debate over the identity and motivation of terrorists is allowing federal officials to create a new form of national urban policy.

Any attempt to evaluate threats to different cities requires some understanding of the thinking of individuals and groups defined as terrorists. In the United States, political traditions of fierce federalism and home rule have always undermined the development of any meaningful framework for a national urban policy.[31] But the recent intersection of urban risk assessment and expanding federal authority seems to have overcome these barriers, allowing unprecedented discussion of Washington's power and responsibility for the fate of the nation's cities. It is axiomatic in this debate that federal authorities have the final word on who the terrorists are; and the new Department of Homeland Security has staked out clear parameters for theorizing and policy analysis. But longstanding contradictions have deepened. President Bush and cabinet members routinely visit nativist American audiences to deliver speeches laden with the rhetorical tropes of irrationality and zealotry to explain the terrorist threat. At the same time, official policy is unequivocal in its recognition of terrorists' rational planning and tactical competence:

> One fact dominates all homeland security threat assessments: terrorists are strategic actors. They choose their targets deliberately based on weaknesses they observe in our defensiveness and our preparedness.[32]

Similarly, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism portrays the threat as "a flexible, transnational network structure, enabled by modern technology and characterized by loose interconnectivity both within and between groups."[33]

Constructing terrorists as strategic, deliberate, and rational is a rather ironic anti-Orientalist move, a militarized postcolonial trope coexisting with firmly-

established Western stereotypes of Islamic zealotry.[34] The move requires and justifies corresponding analytical investments in homeland security, prompting a wide-ranging reconfiguration of the federal posture towards individual cities and the entire urban system. The post-September 11 federal transfers to New York City and the Urban Area Security Initiative certainly stand out as the clearest examples of a nascent and deliberate urban policy.[35] Yet the implicit impacts of the federal bureaucracy still dominate. The urban impacts of expanded defense and security expenditures (along with domestic multipliers from new overseas wars) are layered atop the city outcomes of relative or absolute cuts in social welfare transfers in a climate of state and municipal deficits. It remains unclear whether explicit federal commitments under the banner of urban security will end America's longstanding tradition of *de facto* policy through implicit, urban impacts.[36]

The terror city is a microcosm of transnational conflicts with national-level implications.

Terror cities highlight the complexities of intercultural and ideational interaction, exacerbating tensions of identity, difference, and otherness. Global conflicts are reproduced at the local level. Terror networks emerging from the global semi-periphery reach the United States, prompting swift American retaliation across the globe while opening new wounds in cities at all levels of the global terror hierarchy. Terror and antiterror have created a new version of Peter Hall's "City of the Tarnished *Belle Époche*" riven by polyethnic fears of profiling, scapegoating, and retribution.[37]

The predictable result is a selective yet pronounced hardening of ethnic-enclave boundaries in terror cities, as if the urban map began to mimic its unstable yet clearly-marked international counterpart. At the neighborhood scale, pockets of political dissent and cultural difference throw into sharp relief the divided allegiances of faith, ethnicity, nation, and generation. At the regional and national level, these tensions are woven into evolving discourses of immigration, racial and ethnic change, and the insecurities of America's white middle class. It is not unreasonable to expect that the urban landscape will endure at least some increase in polarization as a reflection of North-South and East-West animosities, perhaps with new waves of intraurban white flight that sharpen patterns of segregation by class, ethnicity, and race.[38] Such divisions will grow deeper if the scale and duration of American military engagements begin to affect refugee flows in European and North American cities.

But the terror city has national-level implications as well, suggesting inter-scalar dynamics similar to those observed in the link between neoliberalism and devolution.[39] The terror city hierarchy is based on evaluations of *urban* vulnerability to the transnational spatiality of terror networks, but the political response involves a sharp and pronounced revitalization of the nation-state. As Neil Smith observes, this was a "global event and yet utterly local..." and yet almost immediately this complex transnational event—perpetrators and victims from around the world -- was scripted into a *national* tragedy. September 11 was drafted into service by a "powerful nationalization of grief, anger, and reciprocal terror."[40]

The reactive elements of this change are obvious, as homeland security policy mandates tighter travel restrictions, intensified border policing, and heightened scrutiny of immigrants, workers, and students. But there are also innovative and preemptive

elements to the change, and part of the work done by the terror city construct is to pry open new points of entry for city figures moving into the national policy apparatus. Rudolph Giuliani's polarizing legacy of the 1990s (tourists love Times Square, but many New Yorkers remember the crackdown on dissent and the tough-on-crime credentials embellished with unapologetic defense of almost every single bullet ever fired by NYPD officers) was immediately forgotten after September 11. Giuliani secured an heroic *national* image, and after an ill-considered proposal to extend his own term in office, he quickly launched Giuliani Partners to offer advice on security, policing, and Times-Square style urban revitalization to big-city majors in Latin America and elsewhere across the globe. Giuliani Partners might well be considered the terror-city counterpart to the more traditional style of consulting firm launched amidst the nation-state rivalries of the cold war (e.g., Kissinger Associates). Nevertheless, those who try to use expertise gained in the terror city are not always able to achieve the goals of fast policy transfer: Giuliani's one-time police commissioner (Bernard Kerik) was later dispatched with great fanfare to supervise urban policing in Baghdad for the Coalition Provisional Authority, but quietly abandoned the effort after only a few months on the job (before his own nomination for Homeland Security Secretary collapsed in the face of yet another Nannygate and a classically New York legal dispute over unpaid condo fees).

On the other hand, the terror city narrows the autonomy of many other city-based officials in their relations with a revitalized federal executive branch. Moreover, the urban police surveillance tactics developed in response to the wave of globalization protests that began in Seattle in 1999 have been refined, redirected, and increasingly federalized. Close federal-local cooperation is now an essential part of preparation not just for trade talks and political conventions, but also for anti-war rallies and all other forms of dissent. In October, 2003, the F.B.I. sent a confidential memorandum to local law enforcement agencies detailing antiwar protesters' Internet organizing tactics and asking local authorities to report any suspicious activity to federal antiterrorism squads.[41]

The terror city construct is also now providing justification for a broad range of opportunistic state interventions, while also helping to deflect attention from state failures and crimes. On the one hand, an ever-broader range of dissenting views and actions are being recast as terrorist threats. Peaceful demonstrators protesting the economic violence of neoliberal policy were beaten with batons at the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) summit in Miami in October 2003, where Mayor Manny Diaz applauded the federal-state cooperation in security: "This should be a model for homeland defence."[42] Miami's police chief described FTAA protesters as "outsiders coming in to terrorise and vandalise our city," and $8.5 million of the event's security costs came directly from the $87 billion Congressional appropriation for the Iraq invasion.[43] On the other hand, terrorist priorities are now routinely invoked to explain or masquerade unrelated state scandals. In late 2003 the House Committee on Government Reform issued a report citing the FBI for extensive use of murderers as informants in Boston for more than three decades. The document offers a macabre inventory of a quintessentially local, urban underworld in 1960s South Boston, but the Bureau's official response is quick to shift the focus from Boston 1965 to New York 2001 or Baghdad 2003: "While the F.B.I. recognizes there have been instances of

misconduct by a few F.B.I. employees, it also recognizes the importance of human source information in terrorism, criminal, and counter-intelligence investigations."[44]

As the outlines of the terror city hierarchy become clearer, the new urban system born of transnational vulnerability helps to justify a resurgent, activist and militarist nation-state. Glocalization has accelerated, while shifting from a discursively constructed, aspatial conception of economic empire[45] to a more explicit reassertion of borders and boundaries enforced by military tactics and geopolitical strategy.[46]

A pervasive discourse of risk and fear is changing the purpose, scope, and methods of urban planning.

The mantra that "all things have changed" since September 11 has altered the way cities are seen by many different groups of urbanites—not just national war planners in the Iron Triangle of the Pentagon, Capitol Hill, and Crystal City defense contractors, but also big-city mayors coping with uncertain, fluctuating, and increasing unfunded mandates from above in a time of fiscal disaster, as well as wealthy residents of Chicago's high-rise John Hancock Tower and other elite addresses suddenly perceived as potential targets. But the urban planner seems to have endured the most jarring dislocation. Planners are confronted with an urgent and evolving barrage of demands, many of them suddenly rendering irrelevant the old dichotomies that have shaped the planning profession since the 1960s (e.g., theory/praxis, quantitative/qualitative, economic/cultural, participatory-pluralist/expert-modernist).

The planner's first task, unsurprisingly, was to respond to (or join) the immediate wave of urban futurism. Less than a week after the September 11 attacks, Kunstler and Salingaros concluded, "We are convinced that the age of skyscrapers is at an end. It must now be considered an experimental building typology that has failed."[47] They predicted the end of skyscraper construction and the dismantling of existing structures: no one could feel safe in a megatower again, and they should not, because "[e]very would-be terrorist who is now a child will grow up and be instructed by those surreal, riveting images of the two airplanes crashing into the World Trade Towers."[48] Marcuse and others also suggested the possibility of security-minded dispersal, as residents, state institutions, and "multinational businesses change their spatial strategies in the search for security in more outlying areas."[49] In this way, planners' sudden, urgent attempts to come to terms with new urban fears revived a theoretical and discursive tradition of America's mid-century urbanism:

> As the Cold War deepened, many scientists and political commentators began to suggest that American urban populations were excessive; atomic disasters would simply affect too many people, and too many industrial sites. The most effective and comprehensive solution to this problem ... was a massive program of urban dispersal and decentralization ....[50]

Contemporary urban sprawl, to be sure, cannot so easily be linked to policies of planned dispersal. Yet as a multifaceted spatial expression of complex and often contradictory social forces, the suburban built environment now provides a deep reservoir for intensified insecurities in the "war on terror." Private alarm and surveillance companies and automakers have been quick to revise their marketing campaigns to emphasize security, and Ford has gone so far as to introduce a new SUV concept car at the 2005 Detroit Auto Show—a "techno sanctuary sculpted in urban armor and

inspired by the popular B-cars of congested international hotspots."[51] Ford advises that "As the population shifts back to the big cities, you'll need a rolling urban command center," and the new SYN[US]—under the slogan "Vaulting Into the Urban Future"—is lampooned by the transportation activist Aaron Naparstek as the "Ford Blade Runner."[52] But, of course, Ford's new SUV should come as little surprise for a commodity "always advertised as a vehicle of war, a machine of escape and velocity in and through the urban jungle," and Eduardo Mendieta is certainly correct to define the SUV as the "vehicle of a violence and destruction that epitomizes a new form of anti-urbanism."[53] If the exuberant Cadillac tail-fins symbolized late-1950s American suburbia, today's icons include the Hummer, the Expedition, and soon, perhaps, the Ford Blade Runner.

Other planning functions are also having subtle effects on the physical fabric of cities. The precautionary principle is intensifying pressures on city planners and architects to minimize risks by adjusting building air intake vents, designing advanced air filters, building structural fortifications around ground-level columns, and designing redundant webs of structural beams to avert the disaster of building collapse.[54] American urban architecture may come to reflect selective adaptations of common Israeli designs, and security systems of all types are selectively hidden or highlighted in order to maximize deterrence.[55] In general, terror cities will include more divisions, separations, walls, and checkpoints—amidst new relations between public and private space, and new criteria for public citizenship and the rights of privacy and private association. In this way, the terror city reinscribes the lessons of the public space literature from the 1990s,[56] where spatial solutions flowered as a direct result of societal failures to deal with inherently social problems: even the strongest spatial fortifications of the most insular terror city in the American Homeland "will never provide real security in the presence of deep social, including international, differences."[57]

Public officials and private entrepreneurs are remaking the internal structure of the terror city with risk-based revaluations of urban space and centrality.

The terror city has reshaped significant parts of the American insurance and risk management industries, installing a militarized analytical perspective on urban space and the built environment. The initial shock of September 11 was seen as cataclysmic for this sector: the attacks were projected to "result in the largest insured loss ever recorded by U.S. insurance companies," prompting Standard and Poor's and other credit rating agencies to place 19 large insurance companies on immediate "credit watch."[58] Predictable calls for federal assistance were couched in terms of the need to assure employers, developers, and investors; within ten weeks Congress had completed its work and President Bush signed the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act (TRIA) of 2002. The legislation requires that insurers provide terrorism coverage, in return for a tiered system of federal backing for claims against the industry above a specified threshold (starting at 90% of claims above $10 billion in the first year).[59] The legislation was intended to provide only a transitional solution, but it is far from clear that unfettered (unsubsidized) entrepreneurial innovation will ever replace corporate welfare and investor socialism.

In the long term, TRIA and related federal interventions will expand the scale and *de facto* policy leverage of the risk management industry—much as regulatory

policies in the debt markets has for many years given bond-rating agencies veto power over city spending priorities.[60] Emblematic of the sector is Risk Management Solutions, Inc., a spinoff originally founded at Stanford University in 1988. Now billing itself as "the world's leading provider of products and services for the quantification and management of natural hazard risks," RMS has reoriented many of its models to include terrorist vulnerability. The models are used by more than four hundred insurers, reinsurers, and investors (as well as the Rand Corporation's Center on Terrorism Risk Management Policy) and some estimates suggest that RMS holds half of the market for catastrophe modeling.[61] The firm's methods involve a blend of game-theoretic probability models, adaptations of financial market models (e.g., weather derivatives), geographic information sciences and spatial diffusion models, and expert opinion techniques. In its terrorist risk assessments, RMS ranks potential U.S. target locations based on the known aims and *modus operandi* of known terrorist organizations; of course, Rumsfeld reminds us that there are known unknowns, and then there are unknown unknowns. The RMS model estimates the likelihood of a particular type of attack at a specified location, with stratified probability estimates for the use of conventional, chemical, biological, or nuclear attacks. It then evaluates the capacity of counter-terrorism measures and security procedures at various sites to "disrupt or deter" various modes of attack.[62] The firm's products offer a wide variety of customized maps of event probability and itemized loss severity; examples of model output include detailed maps of downtown San Francisco targets with the highest "utility" for terrorists, building damage footprints from a truck bomb in downtown Chicago, spore deposition densities from an urban anthrax attack, and urban population vulnerabilities to smallpox spread in northeastern U.S. cities.[63]

Private entrepreneurial innovation in risk management and insurance is never far removed from federal research, policy, and subsidy; indeed, the RMS literature gives one the sense that the firm has somehow created less controversial (i.e., less publicly visible) versions of John Poindexter's ill-fated Terror Futures Market and Terror Information Awareness Program. The latest release of the RMS U.S. Terrorism Risk Model now includes "integrated functionality for analysis of coverage provided by" TRIA for certified events, and in February of 2003 the Insurance Services Office of the U.S. announced nonbinding "benchmark rates" for terrorism coverage in what were considered to be the most vulnerable centers: New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, and San Francisco.[64]

The terror city is becoming an ever more important instrument of capital accumulation.

The commodification of terror and war should come as no surprise. The last three years have seen a remarkable spirit of military and intelligence entrepreneurialism, with innovative erosion of the dichotomies of economics and culture, defensive protection and offensive pre-emption.[65] Yet many of the most visible signs that seemed to point to immediate profiteering—Bush's pleas for Americans to continue shopping to defy terrorists, no-bid Iraqi reconstruction contracts for Halliburton, the wave of Homeland Security expenditures financed by record federal deficits[66]— are only incidentally urban. The direct role of the terror city in capital accumulation lies on a more subtle level, and must be seen in the context of three decades of geopolitically-conditioned urban and regional restructuring. Even if we set aside the historically-

rooted question of the spatial politics of transnational oil markets and domestic fossil fuel consumption,[67] the evidence suggests that subtle changes in economic production and competition in American cities are now interwoven with an endless "war on terror."

First, the unstable yet rapid realignment of the post-cold war domestic regional-industrial network is being reversed and reconstructed. Congress, the White House, and security industry lobbyists have recast the early-1990s policy dilemmas of "defense conversion"—which forced regions and cities to diversify away from heavy reliance on military functions—as irresponsible and dangerous luxuries of a lost era.[68] Second, new industries, new services, and the critical role of lobbying and communications have privileged cities with particular industrial mixes. Growth-machine elites have been quick to identify and pursue the profit opportunities distinctive to Hollywood's creative industries, Seattle's struggling aviation base, Silicon Valley's software and data-mining preeminence, and New York's financial markets. The Washington, D.C. area is particularly well positioned with its vast federal workforce and a global agglomeration of lobbyists, associations, think-tanks, military policy consultancies, and media strategy consultants. The $87 billion 2003 appropriation for Iraq and Afghanistan allocates $40 million for an Iraq studio for Al Hurra ("The Free One") a U.S.-sponsored news network designed to compete with Al Jazeera; Al Hurra studios are already under construction in Springfield, Virginia, a suburb on Interstate 95 a few miles south of Washington, DC.[69] Other items in the reconstruction budget are more firmly privatized, as in the case of Creative Associates International, a D.C.-based for-profit company that landed a $157 million contract for "educational reform" in Iraq.[70] Other prominent recipients of the first round of reconstruction contracts include the familiar names of Halliburton, through its Kellog, Brown, and Root subsidiary, as well as Bechtel and Flour; but others (the Research Triangle Institute, the Washington Group International) provide an explicit reminder that much of the "Iraqi" reconstruction expenditures will cycle through America's postindustrial service suburbs.[71]

AU: Wish to update?

Third, the spinoff multiplier effects of heightened domestic security are generating new opportunities that seem set to create ever more complex forms of local economic development entrepreneurialism. Steven Brill, creator of a media legacy anchored by *CourtTV* and *The American Lawyer*, is working with a former national security adviser and other partners to create Verified Identity Card, Inc., an enterprise that will offer an EZPass-style security check at airport gates for customers willing to pay and go through security screenings.[72] Among the thousands of homebuilders attending the 2004 International Builders Show in Las Vegas were thousands of displays of ever more sophisticated security cameras, fortified deadbolts, antibiological invasion technologies, and a "Secure Mail Vault" to replace the nostalgic mailbox.[73] Adapting urban economic base theory to a post-September 11 era suggests that cities will face mounting pressures to innovate and profit from (rather than simply sign up to pay for) the constant flood of new products and services mandated by what David Lyon has called "circuits of city surveillance" in "a new global alliance of surveillance states."[74] The city is becoming a *secured and biometrically-monitored* growth machine.

These accumulation opportunities expose significant contradictions. First, the overreaching of the coalition of military/security industries and the federal government has

generated a potent backlash, temporarily uniting right-wing antigovernment conservatives with progressive and radical groups to challenge the presumed tradeoff between security and constitutional rights of privacy and due process. This unlikely alliance has also tapped into a deep vein of consumer resistance. It may be no coincidence that the Pentagon's Terror Information Awareness and Terror Futures Market projects—powerful blends of market forces and information technologies —died in the same year that Congress passed antispam legislation and half of all American households signed up for the Federal Trade Commission's "Do Not Call" antitelemarketing list.[75] It is also instructive to consider how the institutions established in earlier generations to impose market discipline on liberal social-welfare expenditures are gradually becoming more hostile to the unprecedented deficits racked up by neoconservative militarism (witness the decline of the U.S. Dollar and the unease among Asian central bankers and other bond traders buying steadily-devalued U.S. Treasuries that finance the deficit). Second, the realignment exposes new conflicts between cities and other units of local government and higher levels of the state, as the costs required to sustain profit opportunities exceed the fiscal capacity of cities and regions. The nineties saw the growth of a national, domestic prison-industrial urban system as deindustrialized small towns and rural market centers sought to attract state facilities or private correctional contractors; suddenly these cities are vulnerable to the changing priorities of state legislatures unable to afford mandatory sentencing policies for minor drug offenses.[76]

Finally, the comparatively organized urban system of America's cold war war machine[77] has evolved into a far more complicated global network of military-commodity-chains. This system exposed the contradictions between the nostalgic "buy American" streams of conservatism and contemporary flexible specialization global production networks when Duncan Hunter, the conservative Republican chair of the House Armed Services Committee, inserted "buy America" provisions into the Fiscal 2004 Pentagon Budget. Facing a nightmare for Pentagon managers and military contractors sourcing from across the globe, Donald Rumsfeld threatened to recommend a Presidential veto of his own Departmental budget until Hunter backed off.[78]

Conclusions

In this chapter, we sought to develop a conceptual framework to guide analysis of how wars of and on terror are reshaping cities and urban life in the United States. We suggest that a powerful alliance of companies, investors, and neoconservative officials in the Bush administration are creating a genuinely new urban narrative object. This alliance rarely pursues explicit, deliberate, or openly-acknowledged attempts to reshape the American view of cities: but much as earlier conservative coalitions ignored the needs of cities in order to pursue "free-market" economic policies to benefit the wealthy, today's alliance is based on anti-urbanist principles and a solid commitment to an imperial, unilateral American strategy in the "war on terror."[79] As a consequence, the urban is redefined: cities now appear in terms of their *vulnerability to* terrorism, or their propensity to *breed and support* terrorists. The construct of the terror city performs the daily work of justifying the increased militarization of urban life "over here" in order to protect Americans from terrorists "over there,"

providing a distinctively urban counterpart to America's National Security Strategy doctrine of preventive war.

The ultimate trajectory for the terror city wrapped in the logic of the precautionary principle is toward a paranoid, insular enclave: New York as Pyongyang. The precautionary principle overrides conceptions of the "good life" in cities and urban planning, and gains credence from axioms that cannot be challenged if the imagination of terror is strong enough. Fears of terror underwrite demands for expanded definitions of threats and expanded resources to fight these threats. Imagination becomes the catalyst for incessant accumulation of surveillant knowledge and power. Perfect security is impossible to define (let alone achieve), but public acknowledgment of such realities appears weak, dangerous, or irresponsible in today's Orange-alert climate of intensified fears.

American cities are deeply vulnerable to the dangers inherent in the terror city hierarchy. Longstanding challenges that cities face in competing for people and jobs are now joined with intensified competition to minimize exposure in the new urban system of fear. The virtues of globalization and markets are suddenly rendered conditional upon a passport and a retinal scan. The freedom and entrepreneurial spirit of informal Islamic money transfer networks are recast as weapons of terror; the circulation of capital is now revered only if it can be traced through the GOP donor lists itemizing the assets of billionaire investors and defense contractors, or through the privatized consumer databases that can quickly be pried open under the provisions of the Patriot Act to see what we're buying at the local Wal-Mart. At the intraurban scale, the envelope of security expands insidiously as urbanites adapt to restrictions that soon become natural, reasonable limitations on freedom, movement, anonymity, uncertainty, disorder—all those things that constitute the essence of the urban. Fear takes concrete form in the urban landscape, reshaping the experience of city life and legitimating further restrictions on the freedom of urbanity. At the same time, the wealth and insecurity of the American terror city is defined and sustained by its other—by the world urban system of terror cities under varying degrees of "control" by American force, by imperial ambitions that, in turn, generate new currents of rage that can be defined as part of the terrorist threat. The American city is defined by, and its security restrictions are justified in reference to, the Iraqi villages encircled with barbed wire and guarded checkpoints to contain the insurgent threat. Colonel Nathan Sassaman, a battalion commander serving in Iraq, may well have demonstrated his qualifications for a cabinet-level appointment in a Bush-era U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, when he finished encircling an entire village with barbed wire fortifications and told Dexter Filkins of the *New York Times*, "With a heavy dose of fear and violence, and a lot of money for projects, I think we can convince these people that we are here to help them."[80] Assaulted with officially-sanctioned warnings of constant, evolving threats emanating from cities and villages across the globe, residents of American cities may acquiesce to the current logic of the Project for a New American Century: pre-emptive war to eliminate all possibilities of challenges deemed by the American state as unacceptable in a unipolar world. But another scenario is possible, as American urbanites come to understand that city fortifications against "global" threats fail to keep terror out: such measures only succeed in hiding and justifying American state-sponsored terror in Iraq and

elsewhere, in bringing new and more virulent forms of insecurity into the American city, and weaving the metropolis into a destabilized, insecure global urban system of risk. Another world is possible, if we can build a foundation of nonviolence, social justice, human rights and engaged, democratic, communicative action—and if cities can remain open, cosmopolitan, connected. A first step is to challenge the terror city construct and the violence it underwrites. After a generation of deindustrialization, American cities were suddenly forced into a competitive niche in manufacturing consent: it is time to shutter these ideological factories, with their just-in-time production runs of fears and stereotypes, and to begin the hard work of building truly emancipatory systems within systems of cities.[81]

Endnotes

1. We are deeply indebted to Derek Gregory and Allan Pred for their guidance, patience, and critical engagement. We are also grateful for comments, criticisms, and suggestions from Jatinder Dhillon, Nick Blomley, Tom Slater, and members of the Rutgers Brooklyn Group (Bob Lake, Phil Ashton, James Defilippis, Kathe Newman, and Mark Pendras). John Friedmann graciously received our provocation, but we retain all responsibility for the torture we have inflicted on his pioneering scholarship. John is optimistic that the "present aberration" of the terror city is confined to the American Homeland, and in any event will not outlive the present Administration. We do sincerely hope John is correct. John Friedmann, personal communication by electronic mail (Vancouver: January 7, 2005).
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3. Neil Smith, "Scales of Terror: The Manufacturing of Nationalism and the War for U.S. Globalism," in Michael Sorkin and Sharon Zukin (eds.), *After the World Trade Center* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 97–108; Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).
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11. Hans Blix, interviewed in James Bamford, *A Pretext for War: 9/11, Iraq, and the Abuse of America's Intelligence Agencies* (New York: DoubleDay, 2004), 360.
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14. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
15. Mike Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales*, 4.
16. See Brian Knowlton, "U.S. Must Act on 'Murky' Data to Prevent Terror, Wolfowitz Says," *International Herald Tribune*, July 27, 2003; Norman Mailer, *Why Are We at War?* (New York: Random House, 2003); and Peter Marcuse, "Reflections on the Events: All Cities Will Change"'
17. Richard V. Ericson and Kevin D. Haggerty, *Policing the Risk Society* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 86.
18. Ericson and Haggerty, *Policing the Risk Society*, 6.
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20. Ericson and Haggerty, *Policing the Risk Society*.
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22. See, for example: Brian J. L. Berry, "'Cities as Systems of Cities Within Systems of Cities," *Papers of the Regional Science Association* 13: 147-163; and Allan Pred, *City-Systems in Advanced Economies* (New York: Wiley, 1977).
23. Scott, Global City-Regions, and Smith, Transnational Urbanism.
24. Ron Scherer and Alexandra Marks, "Gangs, Prison: Al Qaeda Breeding Grounds?' *Christian Science Monitor*, June 14, 2002.
25. U. S. Department of Homeland Security, "Securing the Homeland: Protecting Our States and Cities," press release, April 8, 2003, Washington, DC: Office of the Press Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.
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28. Eric Lipton, "Big Cities Will Get More in Antiterrorism Grants," *New York Times* (December 22, 2004) p. A14.
29. Savitch, and Ardashev, "Does Terror Have an Urban Future?" 2516.

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33. U. S. Directorate of Central Intelligence, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* (Langley, VA: U. S. Central Intelligence Agency, 2003): 8.
34. See, for example: Davis, *Dead Cities and Other Tales*; Gregory, *Colonial Present,* and Harvey, *The New Imperialism*.
35. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, "Securing the Homeland."
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39. See, for example: Lynn A. Staeheli, Janet E. Kodras, and Colin Flint, eds., *State Devolution in America: Implications for a Diverse Society* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997); Jamie Peck and Adam Tickell, "Neoliberalizing Space," *Antipode* 34,no. 3 (2002): 380–404; and Neil Smith, "Scales of Terror: The Manufacturing of Nationalism and the War for U.S. Globalism," in Michael Sorkin and Sharon Zukin, eds., *After the World Trade Center: Rethinking New York City* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 97–108.
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62. See Risk Management Solutions, Inc., *Managing Terrorism Risk in 2004* and Risk Management Solutions, Inc. *Understanding and Managing Terrorism Risk*, 2003, Newark, CA: Risk Management Solutions, Inc., available at http://www.rms.com.
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69. Jim Rutenberg, "Coming Soon to Arab TV's: U.S. Answer to Al Jazeera, Production Values and All," *New York Times*, December 17, 2003: A22.
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71. See Lewis, "'Press Release Announcing Windfalls of War."
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