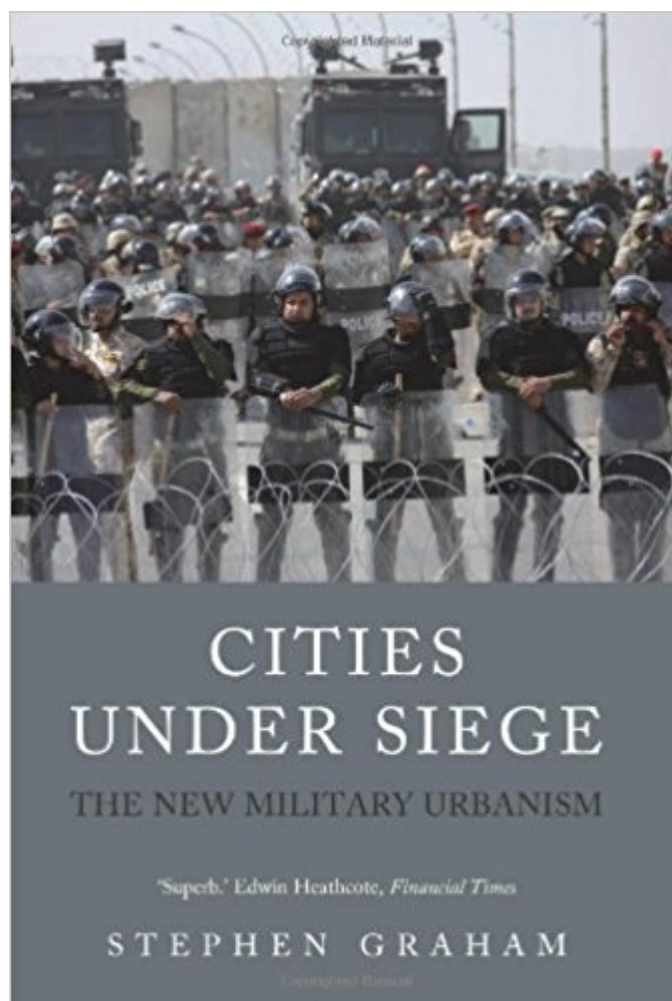


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# Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism



## Synopsis

Cities are the new battleground of our increasingly urban world. From the slums of the global South to the wealthy financial centers of the West, *Cities Under Siege* traces the spread of political violence through the sites, spaces, infrastructure and symbols of the world's rapidly expanding metropolitan areas. Drawing on a wealth of original research, Stephen Graham shows how Western militaries and security forces now perceive all urban terrain as a conflict zone inhabited by lurking shadow enemies. Urban inhabitants have become targets that need to be continually tracked, scanned and controlled. Graham examines the transformation of Western armies into high-tech urban counter-insurgency forces. He looks at the militarization and surveillance of international borders, the use of "security" concerns to suppress democratic dissent, and the enacting of legislation to suspend civilian law. In doing so, he reveals how the New Military Urbanism permeates the entire fabric of urban life, from subway and transport networks hardwired with high-tech command and control systems to the insidious militarization of a popular culture corrupted by the all-pervasive discourse of terrorism.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Look, you're just going to have to read this book after a while you begin to wonder whether books like this will be allowed to be published for much longer."  
•Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian* "Superb ... Graham builds on the

writings of Mike Davis and Naomi Klein who have attempted to expose the hidden corporate and military structures behind everyday life.

•Edwin Heathcote, Financial Times  
 “A rigorously researched, pioneering book packed with disturbing and at times astonishing information.

•Icon  
 “Sharp, lucid and elegant prose

•Graham is consistently insightful and compelling. Cities Under Siege is an indispensable analysis of the dark fantasies that the military imagination is seeking to realise in the coming century.

•Red Pepper  
 “Roll over Jane Jacobs: here’s urban geography as it looks like through the eye of a Predator at 25,000 feet. A fundamental and very scary report from the global red zone.

•Mike Davis, author of Planet of Slums  
 “Cities Under Siege is a detailed and intense forensics of new urban frontiers, laboratories of the extreme where experiments with new urban conditions are currently being undertaken. In this fascinating new work Steven Graham has created a novel concept of the city, looking at war as the limit condition of urbanity and calling for an alternative urban life yet to come.

•Eyal Weizman, author of Hollow Land  
 “A brilliant critique of the deadly embrace of military violence and contemporary urbanism. Steve Graham writes with immense power and lucidity, layering detail over detail and image over image to expose the shadows that are falling across cities around the world. This is not a dystopian future but the present, and Graham compels us to open our eyes to the dangers military urbanism poses to contemporary democracy.

•Derek Gregory, Professor of Geography, University of British Columbia and author of The Colonial Present  
 “An enlightening overview of the security state’s impact on contemporary cities, from overt authoritarian control in war-torn areas to more subtle forms of behavioral influence in places supposedly at peace. Graham shows how military/police/security forces perceive urban places and urban dwellers as subjects to control, and how their inherently undemocratic tactics threaten freedom all over the world.

•Nate Berg, Curbed

Stephen Graham is Professor of Cities and Society at Newcastle University. He is the author or editor of Telecommunications and the City and Splintering Urbanism (both with Simon Marvin), Cities, War and Terrorism and Disrupted Cities: When Infrastructures Fail. His most recent book is Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism.

Ever since the events of 9/11 the U.S. and most notably Israel have turned their countries into occupied territories patrolled by police departments trained in and equipped with military tactics and

equipment chapter 7 of this book LESSONS IN URBICIDE clearly detail what this process consists of, we the 99% are being herded into locations where the 1% can easily control, monitor, and eliminate the undesirables, if you think I am making this stuff up then I urge you to buy and read this book.

Required for college

Came in great condition, my brother is excited to read it soon.

Received on time with no complaints

If you can bear the neo-Marxist cant this book is an outstanding introduction to the 21st Century battlefield transformation from trenches and hilltops to urban areas where wars are fought "among the people". It is a worthy read because of its near complete coverage of all of the aspects of urban warfare including the outdated practice of "rubbling" a city to the new tactics of merely disabling infrastructures such as water, electricity, etc. This revolution in warfare has been brought about by the disappearance of modern standing armies of millions of soldiers and the emergence of technically savvy soldiers who are fighting asymmetrical warfare against non-state actors who occupy buildings in the midst of functional cities. There is much demonization of the United States and Israel in this tome but the information given is worth the twaddle of the left leaning sociologists who contributed to it. What the reader can take away from this left leaning view of the future is that we are in for a long war and that much of it will be fought among us in the cities we inhabit. Welcome to WW IV. This book will help you interpret what you are seeing as it unfolds.

Bought the book out of pure interest in the subject, and Graham does deliver a comprehensive treatment to the matter. This said, the style and language used in the book was unnecessarily complex and far too academic. If the issues addressed in this book are important enough to warrant 400 pages, and I believe they are, why not bring the language down to a readable level. I made it through the book, only through willpower and coffee. For those like me who have an interest in this subject and geography, I think you will still find the book useful. Note to Graham, get a better editor and lose your thesaurus.

(by Jeff Heydon, originally published in Review 31) Living in downtown Toronto during the G20

summit in the summer of 2010 was instructive. Myriad CCTV cameras were erected, additional police were imported from multiple municipalities close to the city, and a barrier was established around the Convention Centre that would protect the leaders of nations from the Great Unwashed. A new Toronto was produced - a city where the condition of living became a process of negotiation and where attempts were made to avoid any act that would qualify as 'conspicuous'. The result of reading Graham's *Cities Under Siege* is an immediate reassessment of that initial reaction. In light of an overwhelming amount of research and carefully considered theoretical applications to linked trends in security and the production of the visible citizen, the events of the G20 appear to be relatively mundane. Graham's uncovering of the mechanisms being developed and the general approach to the control of urban populations - typically in political climates that are inherently distrustful of cities - opens up the question of how the contemporary condition of urbanity functions on political and sociopolitical levels. In *Society Must Be Defended* (Allen Lane, 2004) Michel Foucault argued that while colonial powers undeniably transplanted their values and governing practices to the cultures they invaded, newly developed techniques of control that were the result of colonial practices would often be carried back to the domestic sphere. Foucault called this returning flow of strategies of control and domination 'boomerang effects'. Graham tracks this recognition down to the current modifications taking place in the larger Western cities today. The techniques developed to manage 'hostile' populations and set up hyper-controlled zones in Afghanistan and Iraq are being transferred in a very conscious way back to North America and Western Europe. Following a noticeable emphasis on technological developments in the conduct of warfare, as well as the expansion of electronic media into nearly every facet of our lives, Graham states that '[t]he writing of this book is partly motivated by the absence of an accessible and critical analysis exploring how resurgent imperialism and colonial geographies characteristic of the contemporary umbilically connect cities within metropolitan cores and colonial peripheries.' This book, then, is an attempt to draw the typically separated worlds of international political and military analysis, and domestic security and social organisation together. What emerges very quickly here is that the divide between these areas of inquiry is much smaller than it might appear. In 'three broad thematic chapters' and 'seven extended case studies' Graham interrogates trends in domestic and international security, population demographics, and market-driven motivations regarding the closing and monitoring of urban space. Practices of 'hyper-incarceration' currently carried out in the United States begin to bleed into the practices surrounding extraordinary rendition in Afghanistan and Iraq. The establishment of a process of removal, and the continuous threat of enacting that process of removal independent of reason or demonstrable justification, have become an

international condition of governing on the part of Western powers. The trend towards a mechanisation of all aspects of security opens up discussion as to the role of technology in the determination of the humanity of citizens. The recognition that modes of crowd control developed in Iraq have been transferred to civilian police forces for use in events like the G20 summit draws a line under the contemporary viability of Foucault's 'boomerang effect'. The degree to which a regime of control is transferable from one theatre of conflict to another now seems to come down to the approach a dominant power structure takes toward its own population. Going back to the G20, the shift I noticed personally in the way an area feels, or in how I related to my surroundings, was substantial. The ease with which practices that would have been refined in the construction of the 'green zone' in Baghdad were transferred to an alternate city was unnerving. The language coming out of the police department prior to the construction of the safe area for the summit included the predictable assurances that the changes made to the area - the CCTV cameras installed across the downtown area as well as the concrete barriers placed around the property line of the Convention Centre - would disappear shortly after the event concluded. The aggressive monitoring of the area was something that was temporary. The militarisation of central Toronto, in other words, was something that could be implemented, carried out and scaled down (supposedly) according to the demands of the situation. Not only is the new military urbanism something that can be erected quickly, according to the lessons learned from previous experiments in control, but the hoof prints can be swept away almost as soon as they've been pressed into the gravel. The type of procedural and technological adjustment that Graham highlights can be visible or invisible, present or simply held in reserve. That these procedures are available to virtually every police force on the planet is no longer noteworthy. What is of interest is the sheer number of different areas affected by these processes of control. *Cities Under Siege* traces links between the automobile industry, the defence industry, domestic and international politics and the conceptual redefinition of local, national and regional boundaries. Reasoned case studies illustrate what is in fact a much larger and more pertinent question - namely, in what sense are cities things that still belong to those who live in them? Is a city a place that belongs to its citizens or is it an organism that is forever under surveillance, under inspection for fear of a disease that might be rotting it out from the core? Graham's response to this question is, in short, a breathtaking assemblage of research coupled with a reasoned, considered take on the likely direction of the mechanisms of control that are becoming more and more commonplace. Where it would be tempting to fall into a techno-deterministic rhythm when investigating this subject, Graham manages to hang on to and develop the theoretical questions that are pertinent to the subject matter. He argues that the

purpose of the book is to address a lack of cross-disciplinary inclusion in the debate surrounding cities. As difficult as it seems to avoid limiting the debate to one area of inquiry or another, *Cities Under Siege* accomplishes this to a remarkable degree. In attempting to incorporate what are normally presumptively disparate areas of social investigation, Graham has developed a text that should be compulsory reading for anyone planning to research the contemporary condition of urbanity.[...]

'*Cities Under Siege*' is an extremely impressive exposé of how military doctrine and vague and all-pervasive 'security' concerns are starting to dominate urban life across the world. Addressing everything from 'homeland' security to military destruction of infrastructure, militarised urban video games to SUVs, and drones and robotic weapons to right-wing diatribes against cities, the book covers an amazing amount of ground. The book is informed by the latest theoretical and academic thinking. It uses this to illuminate a myriad of examples from across the world, from London's 'ring of steel' to G20 summits, counterinsurgency warfare in Iraq and Israel to biofuels plantations in Indonesia. The book uses this extraordinary range to reveal many startling and poorly explored aspects of contemporary militarization. The book is a stark warning that 'security' industries are doing well out of urban paranoia, market fundamentalism and war mongering: another vision of our urbanizing world is desperately needed. '*Cities Under Siege*' does a fantastic job of revealing what's at stake. It also opens up some ways forward for activism and resistance.

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