

# Command of the Cities: Towards a Theory of Urban Strategy

by [John P. Sullivan](#) and [Adam Elkus](#)

## Command of the Cities: Towards a Theory of Urban Strategy

Cities are likely to play major roles in the distribution of future global power. In 2008, over half of the world's 6.6 billion inhabitants lived in cities.<sup>[1]</sup> This development has led many observers to note that we now live in the “urban century.” According to one view “Our future existence as a species is, inevitably, an urban one. By 2050, some projections have it that seven out of every 10 humans on earth will be living in a city.”<sup>[2]</sup> With at least 200 cities of a million or more already in place or developing, urban warfare is now a strategic rather than operational or tactical question.

Urban warfare is remarkably diverse. Students of recent military history have observed and discussed urban sieges on the scale of Stalingrad, urban terrorist assaults like Mumbai, “Londonistan” type incubators of extremism, or feral feuds like those currently seen in the gang wars occurring in Ciudad Juárez and the world's “invisible cities” (global slums).<sup>[3]</sup> Here we attempt to stimulate the development of a theoretical framework for thinking about the command of the cities by states and other political communities.

### Strategic Theories and the Commons

Beginning in the late 19th century, military theorists began to develop systemic theories about how military command of geography could lead to victory or defeat. Geography came to be seen—rightly or wrongly--as destiny. By the end of the 20th century, a set of different strategic schools oriented around different theories of strategic geography and their military applications emerged. These theories of geographic strategy culminated in Barry Posen's idea of the “command of the commons”—a unified idea about command of space and place.

One school of strategy—the Continental movement—encompasses theorists of strategy ranging from geopoliticians such as Halford Mackinder and Nicholas Spykman to more militarily focused landpower advocates. The Continental theorists concern themselves with political-military domination of crucial areas through either indirect political influence or manpower-intensive military strategies.<sup>[4]</sup> These theories have traditionally been the most influential. The Anglo-Afghan Wars, for example, were fought because British policymakers placed Afghanistan within the geopolitical framework of the Great Game and saw it as a strategic buffer for India that must be maintained in order to keep Britain's strategic position in Asia viable. A maritime school of theorists, with Mahan the most prominent, focuses on control of the high seas and more recently the littoral zones. With control of the seas, surface ships, submarines, and amphibious forces could dominate the mainland via blockades or naval ‘descents’ and strategic raids.

There are also aeronautical and astronautical theories of strategy focused on the domination of air and space for the purpose of deterrence and coercion. One might also say that information superiority is emerging (though perhaps explicitly non-geographic) as an equivalent school of strategy.<sup>[5]</sup> While airpower theory has been dissected, theories of information superiority as an element of geopolitics are still for the most part speculative.<sup>[6]</sup> Theories of cyber dominance are also, to some extent, still conceptually reliant on analogies on other models of power.<sup>[7]</sup>

Many of these theories were overly deterministic, but they served a useful function in identifying the strategic importance of geography and how military exploitation of different strategic commons can serve to shape strategic choices. The Cold War-era Maritime Strategy was a crucial aspect of the long-term strategic competition between the United States and the Soviet Union. Access to space gives the United States the ability to utilize sophisticated C4ISR (command, control, computers, communications, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance) systems. American planners take command of the skies for granted during recent campaigns. And American strategy often places a high premium on preventing the emergence of a dominant hostile power in Eurasia.<sup>[8]</sup>

Command of the commons is the mega-theory of geographic strategy. In “Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of US Hegemony,” Barry Posen argued that the key to US hegemony was control of the commons:

“The U.S. military currently possesses command of the global commons. Command of the commons is analogous to command of the sea, or in Paul Kennedy’s words, it is analogous to ‘naval mastery.’ The ‘commons,’ in the case of the sea and space, are areas that belong to no one state and that provide access to much of the globe. ... Command does not mean that other states cannot use the commons in peacetime. Nor does it mean that others cannot acquire military assets that can move through or even exploit them when unhindered by the United States. Command means that the United States gets vastly more military use out of the sea, space, and air than do others; that it can credibly threaten to deny their use to others; and that others would lose a military contest for the commons if they attempted to deny them to the United States.”<sup>[9]</sup>

Budget and strategy debates increasingly highlight the “command of the commons.” In “The Contested Commons,” Department of Defense officials Michele Flournoy and Shawn Brimley argued that a combination of irregular actors in the ‘commons’ and the ramping-up of anti-access capabilities by state and non-state actors poses a threat to the international system constructed around stable US-facilitated control of the commons.<sup>[10]</sup>

### **Urban Theories of the Commons: World Cities, Feral Cities, and A City-Based Geopolitics?**

Might cities be considered a commons akin to control of the cities and the air? According to Saskia Sassen, “Cities have long been sites for conflicts—wars, racism, religious hatred and expulsion of the poor—yet, where national states have historically responded by militarizing conflict, cities have tended to triage conflict through commerce and civil activity.”<sup>[11]</sup> But although Sassen believes that cities are once again becoming a locus of conflict, her work has focused on the changing economic, political, and spatial role of the city.

There is a growing body of literature on so-called ‘global cities’ that act as pivot points of commerce. Sassen’s pivotal book *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, looks at the idea of ‘world cities’ as nodes in a global economic system. This idea is now so well known that it perhaps approaches some element of cliché, but is at the core of an emerging literature of popular urbanism trying to focus study of geopolitics away from nation-states back towards dynamic city-states.<sup>[12]</sup> We use the term “dynamic” because some writers, such as Jane Jacobs, write about cities as living entities. She stated in her famous final chapter in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* that cities exhibited “organized complexity ... [which] present ‘situations in which a half- dozen or even several dozen quantities are all varying simultaneously and in subtly interconnected ways’.”<sup>[13]</sup> Cities are indeed complex adaptive systems whose evolution defies “high modernist” methods of explicit planning, and the research path that Jacobs outlined has been an inspiration to many urbanists.

Military and security theorists have also tried to keep pace with these developments. Martin Coward, for example, has explored the idea of ‘urbicide’—the destruction of cities that provide a space for heterogeneous identities. Coward’s monograph uses the destruction of cities in Bosnia as a paramount example.<sup>[14]</sup> Ralph Peters’ seminal paper “The Human Terrain of Urban Operations” also added to the growing literature on cities and urban operations, with his taxonomy of different types of cities and different concepts of order. His idea of ‘hierarchal cities’ organized along command-and-control lines also parallels to some extent the writings of Paul Virilio about the military influence of urbanization in early modern Europe.<sup>[15]</sup> There is also the parallel idea of ‘feral cities’ expressed in military urbanist concepts with their visions of decaying metropolises as bases for enemies and criminals creating temporary urban autonomous zones.<sup>[16]</sup> This dystopian view is echoed in works that describe an emerging network of slum metropolises that are coming to span the globe.<sup>[17]</sup>

The common idea in all of these visions is an idea of an emerging network of mega-cities connected to each other through spatial flows, as elaborated by Manuel Castells in his works on the network city.<sup>[18]</sup> The notion of mega-cities parallels the concepts of sprawling slums laid out in dystopian urbanism and military urbanism, and for close to twenty years, military planners and theorists have anticipated the rise of mega-cities as micro theaters of operation for specially tasked urban forces.<sup>[19]</sup> The problem of mega-cities and slums have spawned a host of operational and tactical military concepts for pacifying unruly urban zones through a combination of older population control methods and newer networks of surveillance and control.<sup>[20]</sup>

The rise of the city also has political implications that have not gone unnoticed. Parag Khanna, an international relations scholar, asserts that the 21st Century “will not be dominated by America or China, Brazil or India, but by the city.” In his view, “cities rather than states are becoming the islands of governance on which the future world order will be built... This new world is not—and will not be one global village, so much as a network of different ones.”<sup>[21]</sup> Khanna’s article has sparked a rather intense debate, but it is important to note that while the form of the future state and its role in the global order remains at best unclear, we can speculate that cities will comprise a ‘space of flows’ where the landscape’s spatial transformation is a fundamental component of the social structure of the new global network society. This new

spatial architecture demands an analysis of metropolitan regions and connectivity among (and within) these regions.

### **The Emerging Mega-City/Mega-Region: Terrain, Process and Conflict**

Several scholars have attempted to characterize the spatial dynamics of this new global urban network. For example, urbanist John Friedmann conceptualizes cities as being arranged within a global hierarchy in which London, together with New York and Tokyo, are ‘global financial articulations’ while others such as Miami, Los Angeles, Amsterdam and Singapore are ‘multinational articulations.’<sup>[22]</sup> Sassen envisions ‘global cities’ such as London and ‘sub-global cities’ with specialized roles such as Frankfurt (for banking), within this spatial dispersion. These hierarchical functions are the result of the internationalization of production and increasing centralization of the management and regulation of major multinational companies, financial and business services, and government.<sup>[23]</sup> Finally, world cities serve as control or command centers within the global networks of ‘producer service’ firms (financial and business services).

The ‘space of flows’ among and within these urban nodes—especially among the growing ‘mega-cities’ is determined by three factors: 1) material e-circuits (connectivity allowing the flow of information at anytime, anywhere); 2) nodes and hubs that are defined by strategic (or non-strategic) functions, with each ‘place’ having a specific hierarchical role, characteristics, and products to offer; and 3) spatial organization that foregrounds a social hierarchy where elites are increasingly cosmopolitan and people are increasingly local.

Communication technology is fostering multifunctional spatial decentralization. Some cities (and increasingly regions and especially nodes within regions) are able to specialize in form and function. As a consequence, parts of ‘global cities’ or ‘mega-regions’ are tightly coupled to the global grid--others are not. Elites are concentrated in key specialized neighborhoods of activity. Key global transport nodes (airports for example) create worldwide connectivity. Key neighborhoods attract core businesses (those that conform to the metro regional specialty), and then high-end hotels, restaurants, and cultural/entertainment venues will follow. Key decision-makers will concentrate in these neighborhoods and will link in real or chosen time with their colleagues globally. Networks of culture and people will connect these sectors of the metropolis (with like-situated persons globally and in other intra-metropolitan nodes). Intra-urban areas will continue to specialize locally and globally.

A potential consequence of this stratification is increased tension between those connected by new urbanism and those who are not. The contradiction between the ‘space of flows’ and the ‘space of places’ potentially promises to exacerbate the separation and isolation of those who are not well integrated into the global economy. Here, the concept of ‘dual cities’ is imperative.<sup>[24]</sup> Mega-cities (as nodes in the global hierarchy of mega-cities) are likely to be “spatially and polarized between high value-making groups and functions,” vice “devalued social spaces and downgraded spaces.” As a result, the urban process is likely to yield ‘mega-slums’ as well as ‘mega-cities.’<sup>[25]</sup> Mega-cities and mega-slums are often discussed as opposites, but they are two sides of the same coin.

Urbanization and the desire to link to the global networked economy and reap its benefits are drawing people to mega-cities. Most of these persons are unable to reach the higher functioning positions within the megapolis and wind up in the world's growing slums. According to Davis by 2030 an estimated 5 billion of the world's population (which is estimated to be 8.1 billion at that time) will live in cities, about 2 billion of those (40%) will live in slums. The ratio of slum dwellers to elite (and middle class) will be variable throughout the world, and within mega-cities, but in some regions it will be stark. For example, 80% of Nigeria's urban population currently resides in slums, while 4 million residents of Mexico City reside in the Neza/Chalco/Izta slum. An additional differential will be the distribution between inner city and peripheral slums. In each case, the position in the intra-metropolitan hierarchy will vary.[\[26\]](#)

Urbanization and favelization[\[27\]](#) promise to be increasingly synonymous. As a result, slums/*desakotas/favelas* are likely to become important nodes in the embryonic megapolises of the future (Consider the emerging RSPER: Rio/São Paulo Extended Metropolitan Region as an extreme example of the polycentric mega-city.) Parts of these slums will be 'lawless zones' or 'failed communities' where extreme violence will fester; others will be vibrant incubators of innovation. A good deal of slums are likely to be something in between. All will be complex local economies interacting in diverse ways within their own mega-city region. Global cities linking global economic circuits are also home to transnational criminals and global gangs. At times these illicit economy and illicit economic actors (gangsters) will link with gangsters in other mega-slums in a criminal parallel to the global network of mega-cities.[\[28\]](#) Mega-cities, or the polycentric megapolis emerging now and maturing in the future will as always be determined not by place, but by process.

The various nodes within each mega-conurbation will likely (as they do now) possess distinct social and architectural forms. Activities will continue to concentrate in specific districts (quarters or neighborhoods). The elite will continue to cluster to enjoy the benefit of shared company and fill the need for face-to-face decision-making. Advanced services and special functions will cluster within 'mega-politan' regions and continue to link with other nodes distributed globally (as well as within their region). Mega-slums will surround and interact with the distributed cosmopolitan core.

Mega-slums will surround and interact with the distributed cosmopolitan core. Mega-regions will be dense with population and traffic congestion, and as a result, metro transit systems and high-speed rail to connect nodes intra- and extra region; as well as airports and rail terminals will become key terrain nodes. A range of associated services will cluster in the proximity of associated key terrain.

The dense traffic conditions will speed the process of urban elite cluster, which will continue to be surrounded by excluded zones (slums). As a result, security features will become increasingly proximate (as suggested by Davis). Walled and gated communities, video surveillance, and armed security will permeate the interface between mega-city and mega-slum. Operations in urban terrain will be common. The distinctions between urban and national strategy may increasingly blur, and significantly from an operational perspective, military and policing techniques and approaches will have greater mutual influence.

## Bridging Operations and Strategy in Cities: Some Observations

Cities are not only hubs of commerce, political power, cultural difference, and geopolitical importance. They are fundamentally *contested* by police, military, criminal, and paramilitary forces. They are contested not because of a neoliberal design, as much contemporary urbanist literature suggests, but because they have become commons of political, economic, and thus strategic importance. The human experience of strategy over millennia suggests that which is valuable or gives a strategic advantage *will* become an object of contestation, despite whatever norms of cooperation have developed. And this is the case with the contemporary urban environment. The trends catalogued suggest possibilities beyond the current operations in places such as Grozny, Baghdad, or Rio de Janeiro—although a continuity of operations is also likely.

Tactics and operations inside urban zones, as everyone from Sun Tzu to RAND's Russell Glenn have noted, are fundamentally different than other military operations. The basics are familiar to everyone: command and control is fragmented, small-unit tactics assume even greater importance, and unorthodox uses of armor and airpower (particularly new intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance and unmanned platforms) are the key to military dominance. Indeed, the rise of operations in cities parallels other trends in military affairs in the 20th century in the greater demands on small-unit leaders and difficulties in command and control. Unorthodox maneuvers and concepts are key to mastering urban geography, as is more conventional isolation of the urban environment and grinding attrition. Both can be seen throughout military history.

Historically, cities derived military effectiveness from their ability to conserve manpower and sustainment by the substitution of fortifications for warm bodies on the front line. Cities could effectively dominate the surrounding countryside and serve as effective pivot points for armies to launch operations from. One could bypass a city but in doing so had to tolerate a hostile garrison in his rear. Moreover, cities were also full of resources, politically important, and sometimes capturing them could be the capstone to a war or campaign.<sup>[29]</sup> Although the advent of artillery solved one of the major problems of urban warfare—breaking through the siege walls and suppressing enemy firepower—it did not eliminate the numerous logistical, command-centric, and human challenges associated with capturing cities. In fact, these have in some ways increased. Many of these challenges are already familiar. One challenge, however, that has not been observed is one of *density*.

As Russell Glenn observed, many of the best-known urban battles occurred in environments that are considerably smaller than they are today:

“Stalingrad, Manila, Seoul, and others are well known to those in the armed forces who see the world's ever-increasing urbanization as a harbinger of more such challenges to come. Yet these historical examples are perhaps less relevant than they might at first glance appear. The cities of Manila and Seoul boasted populations of only a million or so when Americans fought for their liberation in 1945 and 1950 respectively; today both measure residents and workers at well over ten times that number.



...Seoul was virtually an entity unto itself in the middle of the twentieth century, separated from neighboring small cities or towns by expanses of rice paddies and lightly occupied terrain. By the century's end, the city was awash in a much larger metropolitan area. Seoul and Incheon had seemingly merged.

Tentacles of urbanization joined the heart of the capital with once remote and far northern Munsan, Uijongbu, and Tongduchon. That the numbers of buildings, streets, vehicles, and people have increased is apparent in the comparison. The regional urban density has also increased. Whereas in 1953 built-up areas were the exception in the northwestern Republic of Korea, they are now predominant. Further, a city's components today are considerably more dense. More people now live and work in a square kilometer, a phenomenon made possible by ever-taller buildings and deeper subterranean structures. More vehicles pack the same downtown area; more offices, apartments, and commercial enterprises fill a unit of space than was the case in mid-century."[\[30\]](#)

The predominant strategic challenge of urban pacification and conventional urban operations in the 21st century is thus one that Sun Tzu and many ancients would have understood very well: one of cities swallowing armies. Today's professional armies are growing smaller and more expensive, while cities in turn are growing larger and more unruly. While, as Napoleon understood, a "whiff of grapeshot" in the face of a mob armed with inferior weaponry can have a force multiplication effect, pacification of urban megapolises will not be achievable by force alone—especially when political and logistical considerations limit the amount of force able to be brought to bear. As Glenn notes, complexity and density should not be understood purely in terms of pure size. Rather, urban warfare also an issue of increasingly diverse and complex human intelligence issues, infrastructure, and urban networks.

For smaller forces such as police and paramilitary organizations, megacities comprise entire theaters of operation. While professional armies concern themselves principally with operations against other forces, internal security concerns the suppression of armed rebellion, protection of critical infrastructure, and counter-gang and high-intensity policing. The challenge of internal security, for many governments, will actually be front and central. Governments must control cities to maintain sovereignty internally. This has become a strategic challenge, and will continue to be as mega-cities and slum cities continue their growth. It is entirely possible that cities will develop alternative identities hostile to that of the larger state, as already seen somewhat in the phenomenon of 'failed communities' within the Americas in which gangs have developed unique internal zones of difference and control.[\[31\]](#) This much is clear, and is generally accepted as a part of military planning and thought over what is now approaching two decades.

The response, however, has been entirely on tactical and operational levels. Concepts of 'swarming' or urban control have proliferated and have been implemented with some success in urban battles in Iraq. Of particular note are advances in network targeting and ISR integration. Tight and precise joint operations coordinated on the lowest levels have resulted in success in Iraq's urban warfare, although none of this has obviated the need to go 'house to house' in bloody battles that often unfold on the personal level. In the police realm, the revival of urban paramilitary shock attack in the Americas and South Asia has led to insights about focusing the full force of police and paramilitary elements throughout an urban theater of operation.

The importance of protecting and controlling key commercial nodes will be a military concern in conventional warfare. Urban density has the potential to swallow up armies attempting to contest control of cities and alternatively protect and destroy crucial commercial nodes. But the converse applies to internal threats. The power of relatively small groups to disrupt nodes and use interconnectedness to create widely dispersed operations across multiple urban “theaters” will challenge states’ response capability. The temptation will be to either cordon off mega-slums and control them through periodic raids (as is the practice in some parts of Latin America) or demolish cities entirely to make a harsh political point (as did the Syrians in Hama in the 1980s and today). Neither response is more than a temporary expedient and depending on the nature of the response will only aggravate the situation.

On the other hand, strategists operating on the conventional end of the spectrum may grow so fixated on the purely economic aspects of the conflict that they may forget the importance of tying control of resources and nodes to political objectives. Contesting a fortress-city and losing many men and resources out of a false expectation that controlling the “pivot point” will lead to the other side either giving in or that certain nodes will deliver instant knockout blows to a nation’s economy will repeat the worst excesses of the theories of economic war and industrial targeting that predominated during World War II and Vietnam. Armies that allow themselves to be trapped in cities, such as the Chinese Nationalists in the late stage of the Chinese Civil War, risk being swallowed up by their own fortresses and cut off.

### **Towards a Theory: Strategic and Political Context**

The idea of the ‘commons’ is a starting point for a more strategic view, as many of the points elucidated about the importance of air, sea lines of communication, and cyberspace, can easily be extended into the urban realm. Alice Hills’s look at post-conflict policing can also be a starting point, as her writing on the importance of political order and its production through the law enforcement profession can also help strategic theorists think about the unique challenges of urban strategy.<sup>[32]</sup> A theory of urban strategy would take a systematic look at the changing strategic environment, and determine the imperatives of police and military forces to successfully operate within and control urban spaces.

The model for such a theory would not be the theories of airpower that predominated in the early 20th century, nor the rather scattered landpower literature, but Julian Corbett’s elegant and nuanced works on naval strategy. There are parallels between urban theory and seapower, to some extent, as urban operations present an environment of operations that poses special challenges requiring its own unique vocabulary. The terminology of sea control and contestation also has some analog in control of urban spaces.

The political context for a theory of urban strategy is the notion that internal and external security are roughly co-equal and in some cases flow seamlessly into each other, an problem that advanced Western states have not had to ponder for a while since the coercive power of the modern state has suppressed or indulged internal dissent to the point where external threats have been the only problems worth devoting extensive defensive resources. To some extent, the Cold War fears of internal Soviet subversion and present-day fears of Islamic radicalization have



interfered with the external dimension of state security, but military-strategic thought and planning on the strategic level remains focused primarily on external threats.

It should also be noted that the “new” dialectic between interior and exterior security is a restatement of a very old problem. Old-school political realism, from the small-r republicanism of Machiavelli to Morgenthau and Kissinger, has concerned itself largely with the privileges of elite power and the restraint of the power of the popular mob and those who instigate them. Machiavelli was not only concerned with maximizing the power of his prince but also the politics of city-state dynamics. For Kissinger, the spread of destructive popular ideologies threatened the delicate balance of power internationally—as his work *A World Restored* focused on the attempts to put together antebellum Europe in the aftermath of the destructive Napoleonic wars. [33]

A key element of theory-building will be translating the nodal aspect of urban spaces into politics. One chief political issue will be the rift between the haves-and-have nots within cities and the challenge to order posed by those on the margins of that political order. In this light, Mike Davis’s *Blade Runner*-like imagery of attack helicopters making incursions into slums and retaliatory car bombs is not an exaggeration of the future challenges. Elites will struggle to pacify unruly cities and “disconnect” them from other cities and spaces, or close off cities as they exist in order to create expansive regimes of surveillance and control. The literature on “urbicide” also shows how cities are also spaces of political identity that make them targets for violence designed to totally destroy those spaces to quash certain identities.

Distinctions between national and domestic policing strategies, as mentioned before, will erode, which will require the ability to connect the urban element at the national level to military strategy, thus complicating issues of jurisdiction and shattering the fragile barrier between military and civil law operations in many democratic nations. Another corollary of this is that *urban policy* will also connect with grand strategic policy, as national prosperity (and the root of military capabilities) will increasingly become linked to the general health and prosperity of the global set of nodes that connect global cities and global slums.

What corporeal forms a theory of urban strategy will take is left up to the readers of this article. However, we wish to emphasize a point about the *human* dimension of cities often missing from discussions of urban operations. Command of the cities not only provides material gain and territorial integrity, preventing them from becoming so many holes of Swiss Cheese (the reverse inkblot) in a nation’s territory but also should create an open space for urban residents to live, play, work, and grow to their full potential. Although the literature on cities and urban operations often casts connectedness—electronic, illicit, or commercial as dangerous, it also enhances human prosperity and happiness. Both of the authors grew up in major cities and have lived in the Greater Los Angeles mega-region, and are often amazed by the fluid mix of cultures, nationalities, and trades. Cities should not be thought of merely as sources of danger or economic nodes but places of difference that add immense human and cultural value to a nation’s fabric. This adds to the importance of protecting them without squelching their potential through security theater or collateral damage.

Such a balance will not be easy. The London riots demonstrate how flash mobs and swarms of people can lead to a lethal combination of government paralysis, popular fear, and ruinous destruction of property. Creating better security will take not only prudent political leadership but also knowledge of how to disperse and manage increasingly scarce manpower throughout larger and larger urban centers. At times, this will also hinge on involving citizens in their own security and prosperity rather than making them passive bystanders—a step that will be difficult for police forces and militaries wedded to the idea of monopolies of force to tolerate. Security in the mega-city is as much a matter of “population-centric” engagement in the local liquor store or taco truck as grand strategic calculations.

*John P. Sullivan is a career police officer. He currently serves as a lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies on Terrorism (CAST). He is co-editor of Countering Terrorism and WMD: Creating a Global Counter-Terrorism Network (Routledge, 2006) and Global Biosecurity: Threats and Responses (Routledge, 2010). His current research focus is the impact of transnational organized crime on sovereignty in Mexico and elsewhere.*

*Adam Elkus is an analyst specializing in foreign policy and security. He is Associate Editor at Red Team Journal. He is a frequent contributor to Small Wars Journal and has published at numerous venues including The Atlantic, Defense Concepts, West Point CTC Sentinel, Infinity Journal, and other publications. He is an associate at SWJ El Centro and blogs at Rethinking Security.*

[1] John Loring, *Cities, A Groundwork Guide*, Toronto: Groundwork Books, 2008, p. 7.

[2] “The Big Question: The New Urbanism, In the future what will our cities look like?” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, Winter 2010/2011, p. 3.

[3] See for example, Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad: The Fateful Siege: 1942-1943*, New York, Penguin, 1999; John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus, “Postcard from Mumbai: Modern Urban Siege,” *Small Wars Journal*, 16 February 2009 at <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2009/02/postcard-from-mumbai/>; Melanie Phillips, *Londanistan*, New York: Encounter Books, 2006; John P. Sullivan and Carlos Rosales, “Ciudad Juárez and Mexico's 'Narco-Culture' Threat,” *Mexidata*, 28 February 2011 at <http://www.mexidata.info/id2952.html>; and Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, Verso: London, 2006.

[4] Joseph Collins, *Military Strategy: Principles, Practices, and Historical Perspectives*, Dulles: Potomac Books, 2002, 61.

[5] Ibid.

[6] See Will Goodman, “Cyber Deterrence: Tougher in Theory than in Practice?” *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Fall 2010, Vol. 4., No. 3, p. 102-135.

[7] See Adam Elkus, “Legacy Futures in Cyberspace,” *Threats Watch*, 03 March 2009 at <http://threatswatch.org/commentary/2009/03/legacy-futures-in-cyberspace/>

[8] See Michael A. Lind, *The American Way of Strategy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

[9] Barry R. Posen, “Command of the Commons: The Military Foundation of U.S. Hegemony,” *International Security*, Summer 2003, Vol. 28, Issue 1, p. 8-9.

[10] Michele Flournoy and Shawn Brimely, *Proceedings*, July 2009, Vol. 135/7/1/, p. 277, <http://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2009-07/contested-commons> .

[11] Saskia Sassen, “Saskia Sassen on War” in “The Big Question: The New Urbanism, In the future what will our cities look like?” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4, Winter 2010/2011, p. 4-5.

[12] See, for example, Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

[13] Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, New York: Random House, 1961, 433,

quoted in Jeremiah S. Pam, “The Paradox of Complexity: Embracing Its Contribution to Situational

Understanding, Resisting Its Temptation in Strategy and Operational Plans,” in Christopher M. Schnaubelt

(Ed), *Complex Operations: NATO at War and On the Margins of War*, Rome: NATO Defense College

Forum, 2010, 3.

[14] See Martin Coward, *Urbicide: The Politics of Urban Destruction*, New York: Routledge, 2009.

[15] See Ralph Peters, “The Human Terrain of Urban Operations,” *Parameters*, Spring 2010, 4-12, <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/USAWC/parameters/Articles/00spring/peters.htm> and Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics*, New York: Verso, 2006.

[16] See Richard Norton, “Feral Cities: The New Strategic Environment,” *Naval War College Review*, Autumn 2003 (need page numbers).

[17] See Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums*, New York: Verso, 2006.

[18] See Manuel Castells, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Vol. I, The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1996.

[19] P.J. Taylor, "Worlds of Large Cities: Pondering Castells' Space of Flows," *Third World Planning Review*, 21 (3), (1999).

[20] See Stephen Graham, *Cities Under Siege: The New Military Urbanism*, New York: Verso, 2010.

[21] Parag Khanna, "Beyond City Limits," *Foreign Policy*, Oct/September, 2010.  
[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/beyond\\_city\\_limits](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/16/beyond_city_limits)

[22] J. Friedmann, "The World City Hypothesis," *Development and Change* 4, 1986, p.12-50.

[23] Saskia Sassen, *The Global City and Cities in a World Economy*, London: Pine Forge Press, 1994.

[24] Manuel Castells, "The Informational City is a Dual City: can it be Reversed?" in Donald A Schön (et al) (Eds.), *High Technology and Low Income Communities*, Cambridge: MIT Press. 1998.

[25] Mike Davis, *Planet of Slums and City Of Quartz: Excavating the Future of Los Angeles*, New York: Vintage, 1992.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Favelazation is the process of slum formation, it draws its name from Brazil's notorious slums of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

[28] See John P. Sullivan and Adam Elkus, "Global cities – global gangs, *openDemocracy*, 02 December 2009 at <http://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/john-p-sullivan-adam-elkus/global-cities---global-gangs> .

[29] See Lieutenant Colonel Lou DiMarco, "Attacking the Guts: Urban Operations Through the Ages," in William G. Robertson and Lawrence A. Yates (eds), *Block by Block: The Challenges of Urban Operations*, Ft. Leavenworth: US Army Command and General Staff College Press, 2003, 1-29.

[30] Russell Glenn, *Heavy Matter: Urban Operations' Density of Challenges*, Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2000, xi-xii.

[31] See for example John P. Sullivan, "Gangs, Hooligans, and Anarchists—The Vanguard of Netwar in the Streets," Chapter Four in John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt (Eds.), *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy*, Santa Monica: RAND, 2001, pp. 99-126.

[32] See Alice Hills, *Policing Post-Conflict Cities*, London: Zed, 2009.

[33] See Dan Trombly, “Old School Realism and the Problem of Society,” *Fear, Honor, and Interest*, August 12, 2011, <http://fearhonorinterest.wordpress.com/2011/08/12/old-school-realism-and...>

Average Rating:

0

Your rating: None

## About the Authors



[John P. Sullivan](#)

John P. Sullivan is a career police officer. He currently serves as a lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department. He is also an Adjunct Researcher at the Vortex Foundation; Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies on Terrorism (CAST); and Senior Fellow at *Small Wars Journal-El Centro*. He is co-editor of *Countering Terrorism and WMD: Creating a Global Counter-Terrorism Network* (Routledge, 2006) and *Global Biosecurity: Threats and Responses* (Routledge, 2010). He is co-author of *Mexico's Criminal Insurgency: A Small Wars Journal-El Centro Anthology* (iUniverse, 2011). His current research focus is the impact of transnational organized crime on sovereignty in Mexico and other countries.



[Adam Elkus](#)

Adam Elkus is an analyst specializing in foreign policy and security. He is Associate Editor at Red Team Journal. He is a frequent contributor to Small Wars Journal and has published at numerous venues including The Atlantic, Defense Concepts, West Point CTC Sentinel, Infinity Journal, and other publications. He is an associate at SWJ El Centro and blogs at Rethinking Security.