

Towards a New Blast Zone: Washington D.C.'s Next-Generation Hunting Forest

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Using rhetoric rooted in Cold War narratives, municipalities along the Interstate-81 (I-81) corridor in Northern Virginia's rural Shenandoah Valley 75 miles west of Washington D.C. are marketing their region as "just outside the blast zone"¹ to federal security agencies who are relocating -- for post-September 11 security reasons -- from the capital region's core to its distant borderlands. Within view of the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains that mark the western fringes of Greater Washington's advancing metropolitan sprawl, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), United States Coast Guard (USCG) and unidentified intelligence agencies are seeding bucolic apple orchards with buildings "studded with security cameras and bollards"² -- the signature apparatus of contemporary anxiety.

The development of a security armature along the Interstate-81 corridor suggests a geopolitical futurity emerging from the intersection of post-September 11 security discourses and Greater Washington D.C.'s real estate exigencies. Expanded perimeter security requirements for government structures; a subordinate periphery removed from the symbolic capital's high-value targets; and cheaper costs -- are conflating in rural greenfields, shaping an automobile-and-commute dependent security aggregation of as yet undetermined morphology along the metropolitan margins due west of the capital.

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Framed by sassafras, sweet birch, and eastern hemlock -- the fragrant agricultural landscapes nourished by the Shenandoah River watershed are being partitioned within spatial scenarios that recall America's unique experience of continental nation-building, as represented in dominant origins narratives that privilege the 'Western Frontier'. In that pervasive and durable national script, American identity and exceptionalism are held to have been forged in borderland spaces separating civilization and wilderness.³ Landforms like the agricultural Shenandoah Valley -- 21st century Greater Washington D.C.'s western fringe -- provided physiographic gateways towards advancing frontier zones of the western periphery during the nation's century-and-a-half period of continental expansion and the colonizing of its internal empire.

Triumphalist narratives shape interpretations of the originary wilderness preserved in nationalized landscapes like those sacralized in the Shenandoah National Park, which provide an "archetypal conjunction of personal identity and national identification".⁴

National myths underwrite the museography of the Frontier Culture Museum of Virginia, a state-run institution off I-81 in the Shenandoah Valley town of Staunton, whose agrarian "living-history" installations illustrate the valley's role as gateway to nation-building: "Farms such as these were often the homes of those Americans who sought new opportunities further west and pushed the American frontier across the North American continent."⁵ Narratives that celebrate the advancing periphery's righteous agrarian character and lionize its heroic yeoman farmer are silent about the violence of security practices linked to territorial conquest. Accounts of state-sponsored aggression are absent from museum scripts that consecrate the frontier ethos: "the way-of-life they created together on the American frontier has shaped the success of the United States".⁶

Notwithstanding the persistence of borderland discourses deeply rooted in historical security geographies that underpin the American spatial imagination, the crisis of September 11 demonstrated that ideas about American territorial sovereignty -- product of processes of continental intervention and conquest tracked through the westwardly advancing frontier -- had been catastrophically degraded by hostile actors exploiting a radically different spatial paradigm. Manipulating the financial, communications, information, media and travel networks associated with the transnational world market system's deterritorialized flows, mobile footsoldiers of a non-state "global insurgency"⁷ successfully undermined the security of an interventionist state by displacing sacrosanct borders with their audacious



transborder interventions.

The post-September 11 territorial reordering at I-81's western security fringe is developing in co-evolutionary relationship with antipodal Washington D.C.'s urban core of governance 75 miles to the east – the centroid of state-centric power whose vulnerable inside-the-beltway icons were demonstrated on September 11 to rank high on the targeting lists of the global insurgency's annihilative masterplan of contra-urban design. In order to reassert sovereignty and deflect centralized risk, the capital -- whose utopian masterplan claims to embrace democratic ideals of transparency and accessibility -- is infiltrating the arcadian margin with an opaque doppelganger of shadow governance.

The increasing privatization of security services and an expanding defense contractor class are blending with national security institutions into the private sector through commercial real-estate markets, forging a new alloy of potential hard and soft targets on the periphery, with attendant new categories of public and private risk.

At risk are interstitial civilian domains stretching between the capital's center of power and the neo-security zone of the region's western periphery. Among constitutionally-sanctioned spatial practices that also include free speech and dissent, civil liberties produce geographies for vaunted suburban privacy. Sprawl is morphologically unruly, and its predominantly civilian domain is easily compromised by invasive security technologies in the name of state-centric 'law and order', not the least of which are monitoring tools that target the polity's data-rich communications flows, threatening to criminalize political speech within the linguistic cryptanalysis of hidden Markov algorithms. Anarchic sprawl landscapes flowing between center and periphery have been transformed by the so-called Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) into metaphoric latter-day royal hunting forests linked to constitutive formations of the original 1791 L'Enfant Plan for Washington D.C.. As will be explored below, surveillant architectures embedded in the royal hunting forest of European gardens that inspired L'Enfant's design are being revived through new spatial management technologies. The GWOT counterterrorist discourse is projecting Greater Washington D.C.'s royal hunting forests from capital region into global space.

Aftershocks of the airborne attacks of September 11 rippled outwards beyond the damaged Pentagon into the multi-centered metropolitan conurbations that make up the urbanizing continuum from Washington D.C.'s

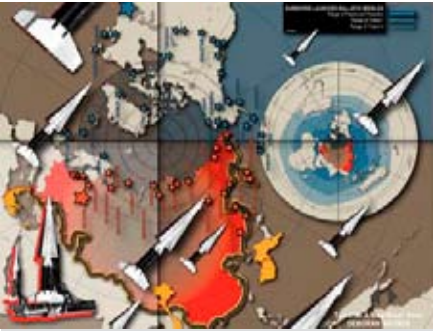


Monumental Core to its rural western fringes along the Shenandoah Valley. At the Department of Defense's Pentagon impact site, a single block of charred limestone masonry retrieved from the rubble and inscribed with the fateful date has been replaced as a cornerstone in a façade renovated to erase all other traces of destruction. An onsite memorial park will recall 184 victims. The "Secure Bypass Project" has re-configured Northern Virginia's Route 110 to increase stand-off distance from the Pentagon's vulnerable east façade.⁸

New building standards for federal facilities include setbacks that address perimeter security and progressive building collapse.⁹ Department of Defense (DoD) personnel are being withdrawn from more than 140 non-compliant structures closer to the capital and relocated to the regional periphery, spawning a large-scale exodus of over 50,000 employees and their families, with expected substantial impacts on sprawl commutes, transportation routes, housing stock, schools and services.¹⁰ Percolating towards the metropolitan borderlands beneath the human shield of sprawl's diffuse civilian settlement patterns, regional migrations are decentralizing Washington D.C.'s dense national security infrastructure.

Communities up and down the I-81 corridor from Harrisonberg and Winchester, Virginia to Hagerstown, Maryland give assurances that, along with lower living costs, they can provide sanctuary beyond the presumed 50 mile-radius "blast zone" that would be impacted by a nuclear detonation centered on the iconic capital city.¹¹ During years of Washington D.C.'s profound investment in Cold War discourse, the capital was identified both as offensive center of its superpower sphere of influence -- the center of the West, according to the period's East-West binary -- as well as a prime target of the polarizing dichotomizations produced by its global security culture. The prospect of always-imminent nuclear catastrophe generated security cartographies that plotted the concentric diameters for civil and military defense systems, ultimately never to be tested by war. These included the cordon of Nike missile batteries (1958-1974) emplaced within rapidly-suburbanizing postwar landscapes,¹² as well as the circumferential Interstate 495 (1964), the Capital Beltway -- a 64-mile long nominal civil defense evacuation route that rings the city.

Cold War security cartographies prospectively superimposed the mushroom cloud's profane calculus onto the repertoire of sacred geometries that underpinned the capital city's famed 18th century masterplan, a "gardenesque"¹³ urbanism inscribed within the perfect diamond of the District of Columbia's 10-mile square bounds. The Soviet superpower's



targeting crosshairs threatened a predictable radius of annihilation,¹⁴ introducing forensic craterology to the region, along with a clinical lexicon of anticipated blast effects: instant vaporization of bodily tissue, firestorms, gamma ray bursts, retina-blinding light, multi-spectral heat blasts, pressure waves and hurricane-force winds. The imagined blast's ominous radial borderline – a liminal within-and-without of being and nothingness – helped manufacture fear, adding a malicious chapter to the taxonomy of litigated national borders – whose key borderland condition was the iconic Western Frontier, wilderness site of the 19th century's "savage war", prosecuted by European settlers exalted as "gaunt, fierce warriors of the frontier".¹⁵

The Cold War era's Continuity of Government (COG) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) were bolstered after September 11, requiring deconcentration and redundancy to be designed into key infrastructures of state to ensure continuance of essential operations in the event of catastrophic loss.¹⁶ I-81, an 855-mile-long north-south trucking route built between 1957 and 1963 that skirts metropolitan centers as it links Tennessee in the mid-South with the Canadian border in upper New York State -- would provide crucial backup should the East Coast's premier north-south Interstate-95 transportation artery be severed during its trajectory through a damaged Capital. Product of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, I-81 is among 41,000 miles of roads of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways "so located as to connect by routes, as direct as practicable, the principal metropolitan areas, cities and industrial centers to serve the national defense and to connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance".¹⁷

New security cartographies are being superimposed onto the Washington region's geography of obsolescing perimeter security formations -- fragments of an urban archeology of defense technologies and discourses linked to prior warfare paradigms.¹⁸ Vestigial defense concentricities are aligned in an expanding scale that reflects metropolitan growth during years of increasing postwar suburbanization, as well as the evolving scope of warfighting capabilities.

Concentric defenses at local and regional scale recapitulate the frontier schema of "circling the wagons", in which wagon trains that were the crucial mobile system for the penetration and colonization of continental terrain also functioned as a flexible apparatus for perimeter defense. The I-81 corridor forms the most recent, outer frame of a descending scale of historical defense peripheries whose meanings are keyed to the overarch-



ing frontier security script. Remnants of deactivated Nike surface-to-air missile launch sites delineate the edge of 1950s and 1960s suburbanization, chronicling the anticipated assault by nuclear-armed Soviet long-range bombers. Nested within the Nike system's diameter is the lesser radius of AAA anti-aircraft batteries (1951-59) that awaited a blitz that never struck.¹⁹ More tightly inscribed still is the vestigial inner ring of *barbettes*, *lunettes* and *chevaux-de-frise* of the Civil War Defenses of Washington (1861-1865), a never-breached network of 68 forts, 93 batteries, 807 cannons, 98 mortars, and 30 miles of military roads that safeguarded the un-tested Capital's strategic turnpikes, railroads, and shipping lanes.²⁰ In 1901, during the City Beautiful movement, the relict fortifications were absorbed within the Fort Circle Parks as a belt of elegiac green space surrounding the city. Like the entertainment culture of Civil War "buffs" and cheerful battle reenactors, the picturesque rhetoric of parklands effectively censored the Civil War's brutal legacy of internecine carnage.

In the post-September 11 era, with a burning Pentagon only recently extinguished, the recycling of such vintage and inflammatory locutions as the thermonuclear "blast radius" suggests the rhetoric of prior security paradigms is being recycled through the emergent spatial discourse underwriting GWOT (pronounced gee-wot), the incongruously slapstick acronym bestowed in the name of presumed bureaucratic efficiency on the so-called "Global War on Terror", a security project and rhetorical system²¹ which superimposes global, national, regional and local scales for maximum discursive coverage -- the first major paradigm shift in the metropolitan region's threat geography since the Cold War.

With a current security crisis shaped by multipolar, transnational flows and global insurgent networks, GWOT's recycling of state-centric spatial tropes -- invoking the continental frontier and the perimetrizations of Pax Americana containments -- appears to be diversionary. Heroic paeans to an essentialist frontier ignore the history of American borderlands undermined by the interventions of insurgencies and resistances. From Little Big Horn to the Ho Chi Minh Trail's Mu Gia Gap, to the streets of Baghdad, the hegemonic warfare doctrines of American military and political culture have consistently undervalue local knowledge and geographies that give meaning to insurgencies.²² The emerging trend of security analysts rejecting the term 'Global War On Terrorism' in favor of the trope 'The Long War'²³ suggests that idea of progress is being unlinked from grand strategies and military historiography.

GWOT rhetoric confirms Greater Washington's role as urbanized epicen-

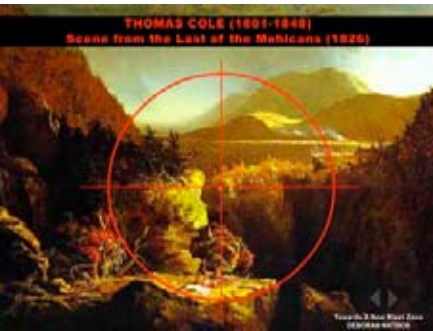


ter of geopolitical narratives that underpin statecraft and its projection of state-centered power through global agency. The region's elite culture of security theorists, experts, practitioners and vendors produce security scripts and deploy persuasive tropes to make representations about global fear, danger and risk.²⁴ Their discourse fuels the lucrative defense market that is among the region's key economic sectors.²⁵ The development of I-81's new security periphery is both a reflection of COG and COOP doctrinal requirements for dispersal and redundancy, as well as an aggressive real estate market's sprawling processes. With the region's vital national security culture helping make Greater Washington's counties among the fastest growing in the nation,²⁶ high costs are pushing home owners, corporations and federal agencies alike towards the rural periphery -- reprising America's historic patterns of westwardly continental settlement.

Just as the Cold War's imagined thermonuclear blast radius traced oblivion up to and including a prescribed outer periphery, the enemy's crosshairs were presumed to be focussed on the center as iconic site of power. Unlike densely urbanized European capitals targeted during successive waves of interstate warfare,²⁷ Pierre-Charles L'Enfant's utopian plan of 1791 had posited Washington D.C. in the ethereal language of transparency, with the iconography of "city as garden",²⁸ carved from wilderness rather than grafted onto a pre-existing colonial town. L'Enfant's master-plan established the pre-conditions for the region's unique relationship to pastoralism, later captured in post-World War II suburbanization.

L'Enfant's plan appropriated urban ideals from the European laboratory of Baroque garden designs, like those of Versailles and Chanteloup, where grand circulation and visualization systems of radial and diagonal *allées*, *carrefours*, *pattes d'oie* and *rondpoints* had been overlaid onto the raw wilderness of royal hunting forests to accommodate the aristocracy's theatrical perambulations.²⁹ Dominant interpretations of the 1791 plan identify monumental view corridors as republican symbols of democratic access and transparency, and the heroic scale of open space as inviting public assembly and free speech -- notwithstanding the fact that, by straddling Maryland and Virginia, the new capital was "squarely situated in slavery's heartland".³⁰ Heartland prosperity was the contaminated product of forced labor extracted from an internal colony of African slaves.

Discourses that support the democratic claims of L'Enfant's plan ignore the European hunting forest's legacy of asymmetrical warfare. During the violent drama of the bloody royal hunt, monumental visualization systems that the 1791 plan coopted as symbols of democracy had provided



the seigneurial predator with authoritarian optical control over doomed prey during ritualized killing. The baroque garden's privileging of controlling vision was a prescient metaphor for modern practices of omniscient observation at the service of coercive governance. This is nowhere more evident than in the discriminations, in-criminations and neighborhood watches, which, under the state-centric rubric of "law and order", discipline Washington D.C.'s troubled inner city,³¹ populated by the less-than-fully emancipated descendants of former slaves. After September 11, such surveillant techniques have expanded beyond the inner city into anarchic formations of the region's sprawl landscapes, constituting new metaphoric hunting forests for the Global War on Terror. GWOT discourse and next-generation spatial management practices are projecting the local hunting forest schema into global space.

After September 11, the National Capital Planning Commission (NCP), which provides overall planning guidance for Federal land and buildings in that National Capital Region, rallied to preserve the ideals of the monumental core's "L'Enfant Streets"- threatened by security measures ranging from street closures, crude jersey barriers to ad hoc perimeter hardening solutions.³²

To avoid communicating "fear and retrenchment and undermine the basic premises of a democratic society,"³³ NCP advocates security strategies tempered by an aestheticized defensive posturing. Truck bomb mitigation diagrams are incongruously rendered in the subtle hues of the 18th century landscape architect's watercolor palette. Camouflaged beneath the historic preservation movement's characteristic ornamental flourishes, hardened street furniture, curbside plantings, and topographic contextualism disguise covertly blastproof engineering. Historicizing veneers are masking the transformation of urban space increasingly hardened beneath the gaze of technologies of political control.

Punctuated by the call of the scarlet tanager and peregrine falcon, the agricultural Shenandoah Valley's vestigial wilderness presumably completes the cosmological assumptions of the gardenesque Capital's iconic plan, whose diagonal view corridors along monumental thoroughfares, such as Pennsylvania and Massachusetts Avenues, promised the infinite projection of democratic ideals into the vast American wilderness. The region's postwar suburbanization reflected the national predilection to tame and settle wilderness, a "sentimental pastoralism" that Leo Marx describes as the Virgilian impetus to "withdraw from the great world and begin a new life in a fresh, green landscape".³⁴



L'Enfant's monumental figural symmetries had superimposed a utopian *fait accompli* onto the capital city, but America's continental wilderness would not be tamed by classicizing geometries. Rather, a mechanism of violent hammerblows shaped territorial conquest in the hunting forests of the advancing Western Frontier, where a militarized borderland delimited "the meeting point between savagery and civilization" -- so codified by the historiography of Frederick Jackson Turner's seminal "frontier thesis" in 1893.³⁵ The binary rhetoric of the frontier *mis-en-scène* would be recapitulated in America's ideological investment in global borderland sites in divided Germany, Korea, Vietnam and Iraq -- each of which, in turn, has been identified by the locution "Freedom's Frontier".³⁶

The capital's processes of peripheral urbanization are addressed by the *Washington Post's* prediction that the I-81 corridor will be transformed from rural greenfield to incipient "edge city",³⁷ a term coined by *Post* journalist Joel Garreau in the early 1990s, who characterized the densely urbanized sprawl assemblages as "the new frontier".³⁸ This typology includes Tysons Corner (1968) -- the retail, corporate, and defense industry behemoth bordering the Beltway closer-in to the capital's historic core, site of one of the nation's first regional mega-malls. In the digital era, the regional mega-mall's inexorable flows of consumer data make it a node of both the world market system and global war system, providing massive inputs for GWOT databases, watchlists and datamining operations.

Marking the limits of 1960s Greater Washington D.C.'s western edge, the Tysons Corner edge-city's urbanizing agglomeration emerged in an era of Northern Virginia's Cold War expansionism. Fairfax County's decentralizing suburban development due west of the capital yielded a new Central Intelligence Agency headquarters (1962), Dulles International Airport (1962) and the Capital Beltway (1964), among other critical infrastructures. These provided the national security foundation for Northern Virginia's westwardly advancing suburban sprawl, which continues today at one of the fastest paces in the nation -- part of a greater region which, in its broadest definition, hosts a population of more than 6,000,000 in a metropolitan area of some 6000 square miles.³⁹

At the new National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) covertly installed in 2005 at the northern edge of the Tysons Corner consumer mecca -- in a building that mobilizes heroic scripts with its placename "Liberty Crossing" -- GWOT strategists and war-gamers⁴⁰ are producing scalable narratives to situate the evolving national identity within the flows and networks of global space.⁴¹ Sequestered in an earlier generation's edge-city



formation, counterterrorist discourses and practices are developing new categories to order and grid the world's surfaces into latitudes, longitudes and great circles of threat. Guided by vulnerability assessments and risk management methodologies,⁴² experts reterritorialize national landscapes as hunting forests and incipient impact sites, overlaid by masterplans that anticipate the probability of enemy attack, whether by brute force or a diaphanous toxic plume. Their new taxonomic frameworks organize knowledge about hard targets, soft targets, robust perimeters, restricted space and vulnerable networks – defining a theater of war shaped by anticipatory siege-state. With its conceptual core at the nation's capital, GWOT threat-scape discourse and practice are readily exported to the furthest national peripheries via law enforcement and security networks.

Cold War historian John Lewis Gaddis has noted that the two superpowers – the US and USSR -- both emerged out of revolution, both embraced ideologies with global aspirations, and that “both, as continental states, had advanced across vast frontiers.”⁴³ America's seminal domestic experience of advancements at the western frontier was reprised in the US's Cold War investment in the system of global borderlands⁴⁴ -- fissures and rifts that shaped containment doctrine's contested edge between the superpowers' bipolar spheres of ideological influence. New classification of border zones infiltrated US conceptualizations of its global security space. Underpinned by Turner's seminal historiography, Cold War discourse redeployed tropes from American popular culture, notably the Hollywood Western genre, whose central origins narrative held that national character had been forged in the violent context of the periphery.⁴⁵ Although the threat of nuclear annihilation deterred the superpowers from direct military engagement, hot wars were prosecuted at regional and local scale along the polarized frontiers of European and Asian client states enlisted as ideological allies. With America's continental frontier having been declared effectively closed by 1890,⁴⁶ the new limits for American identity were reinscribed along global border markers of the Cold War's “proxy frontiers”.

To implement containment doctrine and limit costs and America's exposure to overt warfare, intelligence agencies formed under the provisions of the National Security Act of 1947 were authorized to mobilize covert offshore interventions from within Washington's vast infrastructure of classified archives and restricted space.⁴⁷ In a reversal of L'Enfant's commitment to transparency and access, an extensive clandestine architecture became embedded in the Cold War landscapes of the region's western periphery, contoured by one of eastern North America's major landform



features: the border between the Blue Ridge and Appalachian Valley and Ridge physiographic provinces. Intermittently hollowed by dramatic limestone caverns, the Shenandoah Valley's physiographic edge is represented in 18th century maps as a prominent barrier to transportation, communication and colonial expansion.⁴⁸ The I-81 corridor tracks the physiographic edge's distinctive classified topography: a nuclear-blastproof system of secret bunkers, tunnels and command centers carved into a geology of granitoid rock.

Command-and-control networks for Continuity of Government (COG) and Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) are encrypted in the landscapes of the clandestine periphery. These include the covert Alternate Joint Communications Center (AJCC) or Raven Rock Mountain Complex, near Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, a Cold War-era sanctuary known as "Site R"⁴⁹ -- located ten miles north of Camp David, the World War II-era presidential retreat in Maryland's Catoctin Mountains. Blasted into the greenstone granite of Raven Rock Mountain between 1950 and 1954, Site R's underground command bunker is one of the "undisclosed locations" to which the Vice President is said to withdraw in times of national security crisis, including on September 11, 2001. Linked nodes of the subterranean command-and-control network are located at the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center near Bluemont, Virginia, and the ATT&T Long Lines Communications Site at an undisclosed location, code-named VA-1, which is thought to house a secure DoD telephone network.⁵⁰

In the aftermath of September 11, the clandestine national security periphery is infiltrating the broader civilian milieu. Counterintelligence is cited as a critical federal resource for site planning and facilities design.⁵¹ With the goal of safeguarding the core's high-value targets, aggressive protocols are being deployed to manage potential threats cloaked beneath chaotic suburban landscapes. Perimeter security accoutrements of bollards, barbed wire, blast-resistant and tinted glazing, buffer zones, closed-circuit cameras and confrontational signage are external clues of more covert technologies being deployed to discipline the civilian milieu. Like royal hunting forests, sprawl's diffuse formations are to be disciplined by the capital's emerging technologies of political control.

GWOT's geospatial paradigms are being superimposed onto embedded narratives and formations spanning Washington's gardenesque center to the Shenandoah Valley's wilderness periphery -- a hunting forest threatscape in which state security space is coincident with civil space. Geographical information systems informed by invasive, military-grade

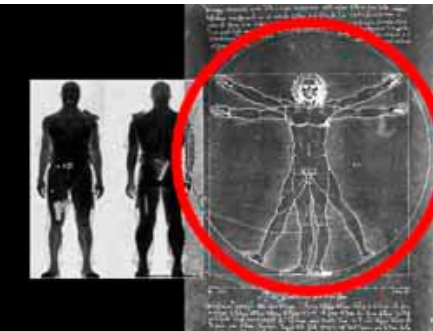


C4ISR tools ⁵² -- technologies for network-centric warfare focussed on command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance -- discipline Greater Washington D.C.'s anarchic sprawl as *battlespace*,⁵³ the multi-layered geographical information environment within operational areas.

The 18th- and 19th-century Shenandoah Valley's frontier security apparatus of palisade and circled wagons has been replaced by C4ISR technologies deployed by the I-81 corridor's exurban system of McFortress installations. These include the biggest of sprawl's big-boxes, a major FBI archive where the mining of data flows requires penetration and capturing of the quotidian details of American consumer life -- patterns that track finances, purchases, travel, medical history and library reading habits, ⁵⁴ readily commandeered from compliant commercial databases.

If suburbanization has been characterized as "the privatization of American life," ⁵⁵ the McFortress security corridor and its invasive processes of post-September 11 data collection and data mining are in fundamental conflict with suburban privacy ideals -- among other constitutionally supported civil liberties that shape the presumably emancipated space of democratic settlements.⁵⁶ The loquacious "Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001" (USA Patriot Act - USAPA) increases surveillance and investigative powers, permitting medical, educational and library records to be obtained without a show of probable cause.⁵⁷ The panoptical goals of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) discredited -- but not entirely abandoned -- Total Information Awareness (TIA) program developed "counterterrorism information architecture" to scrutinize US citizens, among other targets.⁵⁸ The Department of Defense's secretive Threat and Local Observation Notices (TALON) ⁵⁹ compiled information on "suspicious" citizens classified as threats, including anti-war Quakers engaged in non-violent dissent.⁶⁰

The demi-urbanized sprawl of Greater Washington's pervasively suburban threatscape has been diagnosed as a compromised by the ultimate transgression: camouflaging a subversive, embedded enemy, as was alleged in March 2002, during aggressive raids against members of the Greater Washington Muslim community ⁶¹ -- the seventh largest in the nation. The geographical rhetoric of enemy inroading -- trumpeted in a books like *Infiltration: How Muslim Spies and Subversives have Penetrated Washington* ⁶² -- recalls the xenophobic "othering" of the Cold War's "red scare".⁶³ With nation-state sovereignty compromised by the un-American degrading of secure boundaries and identities, the meme an insidious



alien "Other" contaminating nation-space has invited punitive regimes of surveillance, biometric intervention and identity monitoring.

Threatscape interventions are being normalized within a compliant culture via the coyly *völkisch* locution "homeland", a sentimentalized usage deployed to mobilize public opinion and inspire docile acquiescence. *Homeland* is a national security trope that calls for a new geositioning of the self in relation to national myths of struggle and conquest. Greater Washington's participation in rhetoric and discourses of local, regional and global relevance - all in an expanding communications space - make it a unique site of homeland agitation.

Homeland invokes the iconic spatial conditions of extra-urban settlement, America's dominant residential typology.⁶⁴ Despite its inferred rectitude, however, the use of *homeland* invokes the domestic scale and sentimental domesticity with the intent of privileging nation-state power and projecting state interests into inter-state and global scales. Elaine May's exploration of the symbiotic relationship between the culture of the Cold War and the domestic revival of the 1950s points out that "the self-contained home held out the promise of security in an insecure world."⁶⁵ If, as May suggests, the nuclear family was a product of the nuclear age, then *homeland's* domestic revivalism is building upon the Cold War's discursive legacy.

Conclusion: Whither the new blast zone?

The detached house on its ornamental plot of manicured, primal green is the iconic spatial building block of American democracy. In the face of "a national temperament which emphasized mobility and change,"⁶⁶ the suburban acre recreated the fundamental spatial achievement of the agrarian frontier's originary settlements. As units of stasis, permanence and privacy wrested from the insecurity and violence of the advancing frontier, the homestead's autonomous green enclosure recapitulated the triumph of conquest by reprising -- at the scale of the individual citizen -- the territorial conditions of the sovereign nation-state and its sacrosanct borders.

Along Greater Washington D.C.'s western borderlands -- consistent with narratives that celebrate the militarized frontier as site of struggle and ultimate triumph -- the hardening of the Interstate-81 periphery ostensibly promises *homeland* security benefits projected from the capital's core of power. In the aftermath of September 11, however, security discourses



and practices are recontextualizing the geography of sprawl's constitutive homesteads. Erstwhile units of stasis and privacy are being reconceptualized as nodes enmeshed within global flows of possibly suspicious data, actionable communications, inappropriate library reading habits or un-American consumer patterns -- all potentially aiding and abetting transnational networks of a lethal global insurgency. The detached house's legacy of frontier conquest is being revoked, as suburban homesteads and their inhabitants are absorbed into the wilderness of the next-generation hunting forest, *homeland* site of asymmetric warfare.



FOOTNOTES

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