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BETWEEN CAPTURE AND THE CAMP:
APPREHENDING PRISONERS IN AMERICA'S WARS 1949-2011

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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Robert W. Lake

This dissertation is a genealogy of the geographical and technological practices that shaped the space between battlefield capture and the prisoner of war camp in America's wars between 1949 and 2011. I piece together a historical depiction of a space that has confounded US military planners, frightened and endangered captives, and remained largely invisible in the military historical record. It is my argument that consideration of these spaces can reveal important but overlooked elements of the geography of warfare and violence, the nature and governance of bodily power, and the dynamic role of enclosure in security performances. I build my argument using a qualitative research approach that includes critical textual and visual discourse analyses of archival materials drawn from a range of sources, from formerly classified administrative logs to recently leaked security files.

Over the course of the past sixty years, these liminal spaces, balanced precariously between the lethality of war and the humanitarian objectives of care and custody, have transformed from largely unregulated sites of encounter to technologically mediated, highly choreographed, and geographically distributed interfaces. I begin by considering

the spatiality of the point of capture and subsequently trace an unfolding and expanding set of technologies and bodily practices that have reconfigured the limits of American wartime detention. This interface between inside and outside is no longer necessarily a violent encounter between war fighters, but is increasingly mediated by expansive digital technologies that aim to control a global population of potential threats. I highlight the historical development of the shifting terrain on which these thresholds came to be known, knowable, and governed.

This project represents the first sustained engagement with the history of American military detention practices in the field of geography and the first academic study of the precarious space between capture and the camp.

For Senior

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ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BIMA	Biometrics Identity Management Agency
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CLPE	Certified Latent Print Examiner
CORDS	Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support
COIN	Counterinsurgency
CPF	Caribbean Peace Keeping Force
CT	Counterterrorism
DC	Displaced Civilians
EPW	Enemy Prisoners of War
EUSAK	Eighth United States Army in Korea
FOB	Forward Operating Base
GPW	Third Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IdM	Identity Management
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
JAG	Judge Advocates General
KNP	Korean National Police
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
MACV	Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MI	Military Intelligence
MP	Military Police
MSU	Michigan State University
NPCIS	National Police Criminal Information System
NVA	North Vietnamese Army
OPS	Office of Public Safety
OR	Operations Research
PDF	Panamanian Defense Forces
POW	American Prisoner of War
PMG	Office of the Provost Marshal General
PSD	Public Safety Division
PSYOP	Psychological Operations
PWIS	Prisoner of War Information System
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
ROKA	Army of the Republic of Korea
SIF	Strategic Internment Facility (Guantanamo)
TIF	Theater Internment Facility
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNC	United Nations Command, Korea
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCI	Viet Cong Infrastructure
VCIIS	Viet Cong Infrastructure Information System

...the more accurately the nature of war is described, the more likely the chances
that it will one day be displaced by a structural surrogate.

—Elaine Scarry,
The Body in Pain

INTRODUCTION: INTERFACES OF CONTROL
Meditations on the Spatial Limits of Wartime Detention

In a multiplicity, what counts are not the terms or the elements, but what there is 'between', the between, a set of relations which are not separable from each other.

—Gilles Deleuze to Claire Parnet,
dialogues II



Figure 1.1: Chinese captives pleading for their lives during the Korean War, 1951

Introduction: Three Sketches at the Interface

One: Captive

“I thought I would be killed.” A North Korean prisoner of war (EPW) describes his frame of mind upon being captured on the battlefield. Another notes that his commanders had told him that, if captured, he “would be killed immediately, so that is what I expected.”¹ Such fears were neither uncommon nor unfounded. Indeed, in an article describing the “savagery by proxy” employed by US allies the South Korean police during the war, *Time Magazine’s* Pacific correspondent John Osborne notes that they “murder to save themselves the trouble of escorting prisoners to the rear; they murder civilians...to avoid the trouble of searching and cross-examining them.”² Historically, most incidents of wartime detainee abuse and mistreatment occur when a body—enemy or other—crosses or is forced to cross a spatial threshold separating personal freedom and external control.³ In the case of the Korean War, combatants making the long journey to the camps were often hungry, tired, injured, and scared. In these mobile spaces of encounter they were subjected to the direct and individualized control of another power. The process of capture and evacuation from the battlefield frequently

¹ Meyers and Bradbury, “The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis,” 229. This study was initially published in August 1958 as a HumRRO technical report (GWU-HRRO-TR-50) and later edited for inclusion in this more general publication.

² Osborne, “The Ugly War.”

³ This fact has now been incorporated into military doctrine: “The POC is where most detainee abuse allegations occur; it is the point where emotions following enemy contact may run high and where there is a need to collect immediate intelligence information that may prevent additional casualties. Leaders and Soldiers must monitor unit and individual stress to prevent violations of U.S. military policy.” Department of the Army, *FM 3-39.40 Internment / Resettlement Operations*, 4–8. See also: Moss et al., *U.S. Preparedness for Future Enemy Prisoner of War/Detainee Operations*, D-7.; Prugh, *Law at War*.

amplified and exaggerated the precarity of the boundary between life and death in a warzone.

Two: Captor

An American tactical interrogation guidebook written over a half-century after the Korean War points out the utility of the prisoner's vulnerability, positioning the shock caused by capture as an instrumental tool for generating timely intelligence about the shifting battlefield. The manual specifically discusses the manipulation of prisoner emotion and affect, noting that detainee value systems are "easier to bypass immediately after undergoing a significant traumatic experience" such as battlefield capture. Citing the disorientation felt by the newly captured, the text also highlights how deeply both a new environment and a lack of control affect the detainee; stating that while being captured, their "mores were of no use to them," and most therefore "survived this period by clinging to very basic values."⁴ The manual instructs interrogators to attempt to prolong the shock of capture, to extend forward the precariousness associated with coming into the control of military forces, but to do so in a way that is ultimately governed by the "pertinent articles of the Geneva Conventions."⁵ The precarity lived by the captive thus becomes an object to be studied, administered, managed. In its very design, then, the performative acts of capture and evacuation seek to deploy coercive pressures as effectively as possible across a spectrum

⁴ Army, *U.S. Army Intelligence and Interrogation Handbook*, 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 12; Stone, Shoemaker, and Dotti, *Interrogation: World War II, Vietnam, and Iraq*, 202.

of force bound by lethal violence, the behavioral sciences, and international humanitarian law.

Year	Rallied	Captured	Killed	Total
1968	2,229	11,288	2,259	15,776
1969	4,832	8,515	6,187	19,534
		<i>Sentenced</i>		
1970	7,745	6,405	8,191	22,341
1971	5,621	5,012	7,057	17,690
1972 (Jan 1-Aug 1)	1,586	2,138	6,399	6,399
Total	22,013	33,358	26,369	81,740

Table 1.1: Phoenix Neutralization Statistics

Three: Planner

The emergent computer infrastructure of the 1960s enabled the American military to expand upon calculative practices initiated in the Korean War to produce and distribute numerical framings of war's successes and failures.⁶ The deployment of such methodological tools became so common that Vietnam ultimately became known as the social scientists' war.⁷ War data circulated widely, with both governmental and military war planners using statistical calculations to justify their strategic and economic decisions.⁸ Numerous studies, for instance, of the Phoenix Program (*Phụng Hoàng*)—the CIA's notorious counterinsurgency program aimed at 'neutralizing' the

⁶ Gartner and Marissa Edson Myers, "Body Counts and 'Success' in the Vietnam and Korean Wars."

⁷ Deitchman, *The Best-laid Schemes*, 28. The quote, usually attributed to Robert McNamara (though Deitchman cites a physicist talking to the Defense Secretary), refers to World War III as shorthand for Vietnam and the Cold War in general: "While World War I might have been considered the chemists' war, and World War II was considered the physicists' war, World War III...might well have to be considered the social scientists' war."

⁸ As the 'body count' became a focal point in public discourse about the war, anti-war activists also rallied around these quantifications in support of their position.

Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI)⁹—cite the same statistics to extol its effects and efficacy [Table 1.1].¹⁰ Positioned as it is between Phoenix’s targeted killings and ‘ralliers’, this table offers a vision of capture as a set of data points: the reduction of complex spatial processes into the quantifiable and interchangeable metrics of body counts.¹¹ Here, capture is positioned as a bloodless metric in the contorted calculus of late modern war.

‡ ‡ ‡

⁹ In the language of the CIA, the VCI were “the communist shadow government which provides money, recruits, supplies, intelligence and support to VC military units. Its primary mission was to attain effective control of the people and territory of South Vietnam by becoming a viable alternative to the GVN from hamlet to national level. Control of VC military units is vested in the VCI.” See: *Phung Hoang Advisor Handbook*. The origin of the term VCI—credited to William Colby and Ambassador Komer—took the word infrastructure, whose military usage ironically transformed a NATO term for a permanent military installation. See Bordenkircher and Bordenkircher, *Tiger Cage*, 49. Others have referred to the VCI as a simple euphemism for “civilian supporters of guerrilla fighters.” Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 41.

¹⁰ This table appears, for instance, in Thayer, *War Without Fronts*; House of Representatives: Ninety-Second Congress (First Session), *U.S. Assistance Programs in Vietnam*; Lewy, *America in Vietnam*. The distinction between ‘captured’ and ‘sentenced’ was important for messaging—as the provincial prison system (discussed below) was so overcrowded and in such disarray that many captives were unintentionally released, or languished for months with no trial. The table in the House hearings, which occurred in 1971, doesn’t include the information from 1972.

¹¹ Ralliers, also known as Chieu Hoi (which translates to ‘open arms’), were part of the large-scale PSYOP aimed at getting Viet Cong to surrender and defect to the open arms of the South Vietnamese government (GVN). The program offered, among other things, promises of aid, jobs, and safe passage for family members to protected areas.

“[That] a fighting man becomes a prisoner of war as soon as he is captured may well seem to be a blinding revelation of the obvious.”

—A.J. Barker,
Prisoners of War

These three vignettes, pulled from across the last sixty years of American war, articulate three very different ways of understanding, experiencing, and utilizing the ostensibly “obvious” space and time of battlefield apprehension. They also point to these spaces as ones that the US military has attempted to govern, control, and exploit to produce a clear narrative distinction between legitimate and illegitimate violence, modern culture and static traditionalism, old and new war, friend and foe. In this dissertation, I trace the transformative suite of spatial and technological practices that shaped these complicated sites between 1949 and 2011. This period has seen considerable changes in the landscape of global governance, the calculation of risk, and the incorporation of new modes of communications technology into both the military apparatus and the broader, rapidly globalizing civilian realm.

Detention practices, too, have endured a substantial reorientation. The evolving threat of global insecurity has exposed a crisis in the architectures of enclosure, establishing new requirements for the location and definition of detention in conflict areas and giving rise to novel forms of spatial control. Thus the space of capture that was once a marginal, anonymous, and violent encounter between warring bodies—a space outside of state control and effective regulation—became over the course of this study an encounter between bodies and specific technologies of control—globally distributed, electronic, mediated—that now seek to reproduce the conditions of

governance once possible only by apprehending the human body and physically removing them from the battlefield. Often described simply as a point—the point of capture—I argue that the threshold between the battlefield and the camp would be more accurately understood as a series of processes and tasks that is both spatially expansive and technologically evolving: the point of capture is multiple.¹²

In war, especially wars against foreign enemies whose languages, mores, and populations often exceed American systems of legibility, bringing a body into the camp requires a complex series of performances and translations that are often absent in both literatures of war and literatures of detention. It is through a study of these particular practices that we can begin to discern an interface distinguishing that which is detained from that which is not. Here, then, I trace the evolving contours mapped by these three visions of the interface between the battlefield and the camp as they have emerged over the course of the past sixty years of American war. The research presented in the following chapters represents the first attempt to draw attention to the historical production of these often-overlooked spaces and practices, revealing the diverse ways in which military space, specifically military detention space, has been written, managed, and reduced to “obvious” description.

As noted above, wartime capture operates simultaneously at the levels of individual affect and bodily encounter, institutionalized disciplinary techniques and

¹² Annemarie Mol has effectively shown that the emergence of an ostensibly singular real, in the form of a disease or diseased body, is actually a multiple process that is lived, discussed, and understood—that epistemologically and ontologically *is*—in an array of spaces and discourses simultaneously: a body multiple or what John Law calls ‘multiple worlds’. Caroline Croser extends parts of Mol’s analyses in her book exploring the performance of the ‘battlespace multiple’. These vignettes point to an understanding of the singular event of capture through this multiplied lens. See: Mol, *The Body Multiple*; Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*; Law, *After Method*.

practices, and the statistical population.¹³ The comments of both the Korean detainees of the 1950s and the contemporary interrogators present battlefield capture as a discrete, deeply emotional, lived spatial experience with duration and distance, one that involves movement and change, and one that is exposed to a host of political pressures and disciplinary technologies. Their comments also reveal that apprehension is a limit space—an interface—between the chaos and violence of the modern battlefield and the seemingly distinct administrative practices of the war prison governed by International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Yet it is also inextricably coupled with both. For both captor and captive, apprehension blurs boundaries, complicating the distinction between outside and in.

In the Phoenix statistics, capture appears as an abstract demographic unit that functions as part of an index of progress at the level of the population. This practice, like that of counting the war dead, assigns a value to a cumulative sum that has been decontextualized and standardized. The data is presented as politically disinterested and objective, and articulates a vision of the technological and biopolitical management of war. The numbers reframe the relationship between death and detention, and elide the continuum between the battlefield and the camp in favor of a fixed, statistical rationality. Here, the number of bodies detained relative to the number of bodies killed not only generates a narrative about the successes of military efforts, but also presents a rudimentary calculation of the nature of military restraint and ethics: more captures

¹³ As such, the performance of capture resonates in different ways with Michel Foucault's typologies of power; sovereignty and legal exceptionalism, the production of docile bodies fundamental to disciplinary power; and the biopolitical capacities of security power which targets populations through various modes of statistical analyses and technical apparatuses. See: Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

than kills, and operations are generating assessable results consistent with the ideals of liberal restraint and the benevolent warfare of the humanitarian present.¹⁴

The majority of scholarship on war and wartime detention takes capture as a thing that happens out on the battlefield, at some point in space, meanwhile framing detention as another, spatially distinct thing and thereby implying that there is a clear line between capture and the spaces that house the captured, that the camp walls describe the limit of the disciplinary enclosure. Koje Do in Korea, Con Son in Vietnam, Guantánamo, Bagram: these are the proper nouns that work to stabilize the disorderly geographies of war. However, I argue that if we turn attention to the spatial *practices* of detention, it becomes clear that the act of describing the point of capture quickly blurs into an attempt to map the flows, movements, regulations, technologies and topologies of capture and evacuation. Further, military detention itself becomes unmoored from the fixed material foundations implied by walls and proper nouns. The dynamics of detainment begin in these frequently improvisational, disorderly, or even invisible ‘contact zones’, in the spaces of interpellation between agents of military force and the subject position of ‘enemy’, in the iterative and multiple ways in which power seeks to give shape to captive populations, and populations aim to counter and contest this performance of security.¹⁵ Pratt famously defines these contact zones as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”¹⁶ But they are not just

¹⁴ Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*.

¹⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

contact zones between widely divergent cultures—areas of transculturation between western visuality and the occupied Other. They are also points of contact between humanitarian law and military violence; between technologies of annihilation and technologies aimed at management and life affirmation; between formal doctrine, rules, and law and informal practices and codes buttressed by the racialization of the enemy Other; and between the disorder and intimacy of encounters in a warzone and particular classification schemes, probability calculations, and technical apparatuses aimed at cutting through the fog of war. Thus, the spaces between capture and the camp represent a very particular type of encounter. The constitution of these spaces and the subjects that populate them is the focus of this dissertation.

Geographers are increasingly engaging with the spatial transformations that result from the revolution in military affairs (RMA), the evolution of technologies of killing and its attendant transformations in surveillance, vision, and mapping. However, while an array of critical scholarship addressing detention and captivity has also recently emerged, there is little work specifically drawing attention to the threshold spaces that connect and overlap these geographies.¹⁷ While research on warfare rightly addresses the use and distribution of deadly violence—presenting a view to a kill—the act of capture is either seen as a singularity or a byproduct of this violence: the body of the detainee is what’s left over after a military campaign. But capturing is more than

¹⁷ There are of course exceptions to this, like the work of Dominique Moran, who along with others tries to bridge the divide between new mobilities research and the study of detainment. See: Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, “Disciplined Mobility and Carceral Geography”; *ibid.* Additionally, a substantial literature on wartime detention, and descriptions of individual capture and evacuation can be found—most notably literature from the Second World War. But scholarship addressing the historical transitions in the ways that detainee populations are made, as a spatial tactic, has yet to be instigated.

not killing, and enemy prisoner populations are not solely the result of a trigger not pulled or of flashes of empathy on the battlefield.¹⁸ Capture and evacuation materialize at the interstices between the violence of the battlefield and the spatial logics of detention—between the utterances “[k]ill them if they try to surrender—we need the body count” on the one hand, and “it is impossible to interrogate a corpse” on the other.¹⁹ The process marks the performance of an interface between the management of forms of bodily violence and the violence of forms of bodily management.²⁰ Much goes on in the spaces between.

While there may be little that distinguishes the space that leads to the kill from that which results in capture, the negotiation between the two is not something that can be understood purely as the result of individual decision in the disorderly space of war. Capture is not just a chance side-effect of lethal violence; it is also propelled by an entirely different logistical framework, with different goals, objectives, and possibilities. For the military, the performance of capture is productive: the life (and administrative documentation) of the detainee, the civilian internee, and the unlawful combatant begins with apprehension on the battlefield. As the proliferation of doctrine, manuals, technical reports, and simulated exercises focused on the performance of capture shows, it is a space that must be managed; the methods of such management are deeply

¹⁸ For a discussion of discretion and the role of *not* acting in the performance of spatial governance, see Josiah McC. Heyman, “Trust, Privilege, and Discretion in the Governance of the US Borderlands with Mexico.”

¹⁹ This first quote is taken from Gibson, *The Perfect War*, 147. Gibson is quoting Cincinnatus [Cecil B. Currey], *Self-Destruction, the Disintegration and Decay of the United States Army During the Vietnam Era*, 85. The second quote appears in the nationally syndicated opinion piece Col. Robert D. Heinl, Jr., “The War to Get Rid of the VC Cadres.”

²⁰ For a discussion of the violence of disciplinary grids of intelligibility, see Robert M. Cover, “Violence and the Word.”

interwoven with the production of different versions of 'the enemy'.²¹ Capture and evacuation must be read along with epistemologies of the battlefield, military logics, and grand strategic narratives. Each has significant consequences on both how and if the enemy is killed or captured.

How, then, are we to think about these interfaces? What happens there? What kinds of stories can we tell about the nature of power and the geography of war when we consider capture as more than a fixed, isolated point? How is its performance modified by the particular development of the American way of war? How has apprehension been facilitated by narratives about the volatility of the enemy body, changes in the geography of security, and the particular geographic location of enemy threat? How do new wartime tactics and technologies help sculpt this interface between life and death, between inside and outside, between kill and capture, capture and the camp? These questions guide the research presented on the following pages.

Historical Limits

This study explores wartime detainment practices by US forces and those they oversaw between the signing of the Third Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (GPW) in 1949 and the killing of Osama bin Laden in the spring of

²¹ As Peter Galison notes in his essay on the ontologies of the enemy, there were many versions of the enemy in World War II: the inhuman, the abstract and anonymous target of bombing raids, and the calculating, machine-like opponent that was ultimately *made* in the scientific research labs of universities across the US and Britain. See Galison, "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision." As will be shown throughout this dissertation, the constantly changing forms and iterations of capture and evacuation that materialize after the Second World War are similarly predicated on a particular kind of enemy and a particular geography of the battlefield.

2011.²² These historical moments highlight the extraordinarily different ways that the spatial interface between capture and the camp has been imagined and performed. The Geneva Conventions established a more robust and internationally recognized set of guidelines for handling and protecting the prisoner of war: a form of life understood as a battlefield belligerent who “tries to kill you and fails, and then asks you not to kill him.”²³ The killing of Osama bin Laden, however, was part of an emergent global strategy of targeted killing by a small, flexible and stealthy Navy SEAL team on terrain not directly understood as a battlefield using precision digital technology and networked surveillance. At its root, this type of war sees taking and detaining prisoners as things that are to be avoided for economic and political reasons. A recent *New Yorker* article notes as much with regard to the bin Laden raid, quoting a special-operations officer saying that “[t]here was never any question of detaining or capturing him—it wasn’t a split-second decision. No one wanted detainees.”²⁴ Detention in this contemporary context is productive of a host of secondary and tertiary political fault-lines: it makes problems, dis-ease, and insecurity [Table 1.2].

Though the bin Laden raid might seem like an anomalous case, the sentiment that detainees and military camps are more trouble than they are worth is an increasingly common one. As one Marine recently noted, “[t]here is no point in having an

²² While the GPW is the primary historical marker, when discussing the Korean conflict, I do incorporate important aspects of the pre-1949 landscape in order to complicate its dominant Cold War bipolar framing. The US was heavily invested in the training, funding, and utilization of the detainment apparatus that existed from 1945-1948 that revolved around what Monica Kim refers to as the “politics of decolonization.” See Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960.”

²³ Famously attributed to Winston Churchill, as quoted in the *Observer*, in 1952.

²⁴ Schmidle, “Getting Bin Laden.”

unnecessary build-up of detainees; no one wants an Abu Ghraib situation on their hands."²⁵ Thus while the Geneva Conventions established a framework that sought to establish limits on the violence performed by state military institutions, the killing of Osama bin Laden was an attempt to deploy a form of state violence that could “stretch the law as far as possible without actually breaking it.”²⁶ Further, the GPW describes a war prisoner as a temporary, generic subject position, defined by bodily expressions of violence and their physical locations on a battlefield. While this classificatory system has not changed, because of the shifting scope and sophistication of surveillance and tracking, the body on the battlefield is indefinitely defined as a potential combatant—regardless of their actions in a geographically specific context. In contemporary conflict, then, the question that recent war planners have asked is not simply whether to kill or capture, but the more complicated issue of whether detention is a viable option for wartime population management at all.

My starting date, however, is not solely related to the introduction of a revised regime of international humanitarian law. The late 1940s and early 1950s were also a period of tremendous change in the nature of international governance, the geographies of violence, and systems of technological administration. These shifts can be seen as contributing productive lines of flight that intersect and inform this narrative. Among these are the birth and expansion of the Central Intelligence Agency, the emergence of the military think tank RAND in California, the publication of Norbert Wiener’s influential text on cybernetics, and George Kennan’s famous telegraph

²⁵ Sengupta, “Lock Them up Then Let Them Go.”

²⁶ Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, Location 1660.

outlining the Cold War strategy of containment. Not all of these shifts are directly related to detainment, but all of them have played key roles in the reorganization and re-description of who the enemy is and how they are to be apprehended.

Detention Issue	1949	2011
Role of capture and detention	Enclosure and sequestration as militarily advantageous in international war	Enclosure and sequestration as a military and political liability in global counterinsurgency
Scale	Industrial violence, total war	Precision targeting, full spectrum operations
Spatial imaginary	Battlefield	Battlespace
Battlefield units	Large standing armies; Battles and Fronts	Flexible military teams; small joint operations; Raids; light footprint
Temporal status of prisoner	Temporary	Indefinite
Classification	Enemy Prisoner of War (EPW)	EPW; Detainee; Enemy Combatant; Civilian Internee; Intel Source; etc...
Role of Geneva Conventions	GPW as protection for populations and states engaged in war; reciprocity	GPW as limitation on use of most effective military force; proportionality
Dominant Spatialization of Power	Disciplinary	Control
Camp Locations	Rear Area; Distant from battle front	Global / Everywhere / Nowhere

Table 1.2: Shifts in the landscape of capture²⁷

The temporal focus of this project also loosely corresponds to the period identified by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze as marking the commencement and expansion of techniques of control. Deleuze noted that institutional enclosures like the prison were, from the end of the Second World War, in constant crisis and in need of reformation in light of the speed and mobility of neoliberal capitalism. The period I focus on traces the ways in which bodies are identified for extraction from a battlefield and into what is ostensibly a disciplinary enclosure—the war prison—which is increasingly rendered as a

²⁷ It is important not to read these differences as representing any kind of teleological or singular narrative. It is my intention here to simply identify the broad spectrum of change that has occurred in the spatial and technical practices of American wartime detainment.

site of failure, political vulnerability, excessive cost, and continual disorder. The calculus mediating the threshold between capture and the camp has become exactly that: a technologically sophisticated interface calculated, calibrated, and managed. The objectives of many of these operations and modes of governance are to generate spatial or military control while avoiding the perils of an actual military detention apparatus.

Many of the changes discussed in the following pages are banal administrative shifts designed to address a very particular set of organizational or record-keeping issues that are unique to detaining individuals in a hostile and emergent landscape of conflict. On their own they tell nothing about the nature of enclosure, nor the instrumental uses of sequestration, and they most certainly present nothing so clear or dramatic as a paradigm shift or any epistemological or ontological rupture. They do, however, point to a breaking down of the singularity of the camp as an object, and point towards a more fruitful understanding of wartime detainment based on a multiple, fluid practice. These practices take shape at the site of encounter.

Notes on Method

One of the aims of this project is to approach military detention not as an end, as a passive object that is defined by the active, flexible, and disorderly space of war. The war prisoner is not simply a remainder of military violence. Further, my historical objectives are not “in the interest of a ‘true history,’ or of restoring to the record ‘what actually happened.’”²⁸ Rather my intention is to begin with the assumption that military

²⁸ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 7.

detention—as an assemblage of spatial practices, forces, and bodies—is an *active* apparatus that itself has flexible capacities and spatial reach. Despite the materiality of the camp, with its walls and concertina wire designed to give the edifice a kind of spatial and disciplinary stasis, the methodology I employ here allows me to push at that imagined spatial fixity by addressing wartime detainment as a set of spatial practices that push and pull the reach of the military prison assemblage in myriad ways.

In an effort to interrogate why and in what manner certain knowledges about the battlefield and wartime spaces of detention are rendered, disseminated, and reified, the project takes the genealogical form of a discourse analysis. Consistent with Ian Hacking’s description of the Foucaultian project, here I “reconsider what we experience as inevitable” about the spatial limits of detention by lifting “the dust cover off” of an idea and set of spaces that we often take for granted.²⁹ I “register the links between unstable and shifting frames of reference” rather than attempt to spatially fix any one particular discursive lens.³⁰ What interests me are the changes to the forces and procedures that establish the field in which these discourses emerge.

Throughout this dissertation, I approach detention as an assemblage that calls on a distinct set of technologies, expert knowledges, graphic and textual representations, and embodied practices in order to facilitate a particular rendering of security that simultaneously preserves the future of a particular conception of state power. Spaces of detention do not simply sit there. They must *do* things. In what follows, then, I use

²⁹ See the Introduction of Hacking, *The Emergence of Probability: A Philosophical Study of Early Ideas About Probability, Induction and Statistical Inference*, NP.

³⁰ Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 24.

archival data, technological artifacts, architectural renderings—a suite of things—in order to think through the landscape of military detention as an evolving set of *doings* that interact in space and time in certain specific ways and which generate and are generated by certain effects and productive capacities.³¹ When viewed this way, as a contingent layering of performances, it is thus possible to push back at the singularity of the camp as a spatial diagram marked by the clear (and largely unchanging) material distinctions between inside and outside.

Taking my methodological queues from Michel Foucault, in this project I piece together a “history of the present” that “opposes itself to the search for ‘origins’.”³² For Foucault, the practice of discourse analysis unfolds through the search for:

“relations between statements (even if the author is unaware of them; even if the statements do not have the same author; even if the authors were unaware of each other’s existence); relations between groups of statements thus established (even if these groups do not concern the same, or even adjacent fields; even if they do not possess the same formal level; even if they are not the locus of assignable exchanges); relations between statements and groups of statements and events of a quite different kind (technical, economic, social, political).”³³

Indeed, there is a strong parallel between the genealogical project as a research method that Foucault argues is “an insurrection against the centralizing power-effects that are bound up with” institutionalization and the proposed research subject, which itself is being approached as a distributed and decentralizing assemblage of practices emerging

³¹ On the concept of space as a ‘doing’, see Derek Gregory’s citation of Michael Dillon in Gregory, “The Black Flag,” 407.

³² Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 31; 140.

³³ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge & The Discourse on Language*, 29.

by way of the reorganization of the spatiality of power.³⁴ I focus on the relations between discursive framings of the enemy, the volatility of the foreign body, and the various means by which those framings have been spatially managed and controlled. Neither the method nor the focus of the research take the coherence of discourse as a given. Far from it. Rather, I utilize a relativist research approach structured around tracing associations and connections. This research articulates the ways in which certain images of security that rely on practices of confinement have been produced and endure while others are erased. In other words, I do not simply articulate the existence of spaces of detainment, but importantly engage with questions about how detention and the removal of bodies from the space of the battlefield have emerged as particular ways to ‘solve’ certain problems of war. I detail the ways that certain narratives of power have been either excluded or foregrounded—and the ways that these choices affect “the intelligibility of the contemporary functioning of power in which we ourselves are enmeshed.”³⁵

Thus, this is a dissertation about a spatial process—wartime *detention*—not specifically about military prisons. While this is a subtle distinction, I make it here for two reasons. First, understanding the landscape of US military detention means coming to terms with a system that is flexible and spatially variable. As a study of a flexible and performed interface, I address the production of relations on both the inside and the outside. I concentrate on the ways that the battlefield is made and the ways in which its territorial limits expand and contract. But I also highlight the ways in which

³⁴ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 9.

³⁵ Crary, *Techniques of the Observer*, 7.

detainment, as a part of the practice of that battlefield, is conceived, administered, and regulated.

The chapters below focus explicitly on the performance of the spaces between things themselves—technological objects, police apparatuses, civilian and military populations—in a spatial and historical context. So, whereas a study of war prisons would focus on the particular wartime enclosures, or those spaces that fall specifically under the doctrinal heading of ‘Detainee Operations’, here I aim to break the idea of the enclosure open, to study changes to the *doing* of spatial control through an exploration of the practices of detainment that occur at the margins by and through which the material fixity of the war camp is produced. As such the project is sympathetic with Doreen Massey’s framing of space as “the product of interrelations” that does not “exist prior to identities/entities and their relations.” Rather, these “identities/entities, the relations ‘between’ them, and the spatiality which is part of them, are all co-constitutive.”³⁶

Secondly, it is also important to note that in order to understand the role of the war prison as a spatial and material and political object, we must detach from our mental mapping the idea that the prison is a fixed edifice surrounded by walls. This is an incredibly resilient imaginary, but it belies the myriad formations of spatial control that work in concert to create the practice of detainment. The term war prison is extremely evocative, and deeply tied to a specific spatial imaginary. War prisons, as material spaces of enclosure like Guantánamo or Bagram or Abu Ghraib are but one

³⁶ Massey, *For Space*, 9,10.

vector for the performance of this narrative, but they are certainly not the only vector. In fact, these particular proper nouns do not often make an appearance in this dissertation. This is primarily because I seek, in a broad historical geographical sense, to describe changes in how detention emerges as a particular set of ideas and practices, one that has its starting point in the processes of capture and evacuation.

Archival Sources and Document Collection

The archives that form the basis for this research shift over the course of my sixty-year focus. Beyond hundreds of newspaper reports and television news clips, for both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the primary historical archive was constructed through more than three weeks of research at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) in College Park, Maryland. My time at NARA yielded thousands of documents about the day-to-day operations of US prison compounds, including interrogation logs, letters between the camps and the Eighth Army (Korea) and the Office of the Provost Marshal General (Vietnam), weekly incident reports, internal war crimes investigations, and inspection reports from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). I also unearthed architectural plans for camps with material counts and costs, as well as design variations for guard towers and water supply systems. Additionally, there were myriad proposals by private companies vying for a share of the capital beginning to accumulate in the nascent military-prison-industrial complex. I watched several hours of military film footage taken inside the camp compounds of Korea and Vietnam, and filed several Freedom of Information Act requests, including a successful attempt to declassify video footage of a small riot at the Thu Duc prison in Vietnam.

Additional trips were made to the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA and the Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives in Washington, DC. The Valentine collection was particularly useful, as it contained a number of leaked security files from the Vietnam War, including telegrams from the Central Intelligence Agency, memos from the US State Department, and primary sources pertaining to the Phoenix program and the deployment of assorted ‘coercive’ interrogation techniques.

However, the utility of each of these archives is temporally limited to the period of operations before the fall of Saigon in 1975. From 1972 forward, most relevant documents about US military detention practice remain classified. Document collection beyond this date required an increased reliance on unclassified military reviews, leaked documents—including the Guantánamo Files, the Iraq War Logs, and the Afghan War Diaries all released by *Wikileaks*—memoirs and media archives. As the research focus becomes recent military activity, I was able to procure technical manuals directly from product developers, and was able to get information from the Department of Defense about its burgeoning digital biometrics regime. These additional sources, along with television reportage, government literature, private technology brochures, legal briefs, photography, and first-person narratives round out the textual field from which this project draws its data.

Finally, any investigation that focuses on these sites is no doubt provisional, contingent, and partial—narratives of order or violence glimpsed “only in their aftermath, in traces on bodies or in anecdotes.”³⁷ The fragmented, classified or heavily

³⁷ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 55.

redacted security archives and the often-excluded voices and narratives of the individual lives that buttress them mean that this remains necessary. Further, the broad array of spaces, techniques, actors, and environments involved in the performance of capture and evacuation assure that my analysis here cannot point towards any kind of systemic security practices. Yet there is certainly something lost if we simply surrender apprehension to the shadows of war, to the blindness rendered by the chaotic violence on the battlefield. My aim here is therefore not to provide a full accounting of tactics or techniques, but rather to begin to describe and examine the late twentieth century management of this slippery interface between capture and the camp.

Chapter Outline

The following chapters examine the historical and technological transformations in the doing of wartime detainment. Chapter 2 begins the work of positioning this research as a conversation within and between literatures in geography and the expansive field of critical security studies. The objective of this chapter is not to stake out an exhaustive list of spatial or geographic literature on the topic of capture and military detainment, but rather to offer a series of meditations around which the dissertation is broadly framed.

First, I consider the issue of sequestration and enclosure in relation to questions about the production of security within a contemporary culture of circulation and exchange. Next, I trace a narrative through three sets of literatures that mark the intellectual terrain within which this project sits: those exploring the biopolitics of

security; risk and preemption; and control societies. In the final section of the chapter, I turn my attention to recent literatures on the geographies of detention, and situate this dissertation at the seams between the marginal historical literature on war prisoners and the growing body of critical geographical work addressing detainment and carceral landscapes.

In Chapter 3, I frame out a theoretical entry point for understanding the idea of capture and evacuation as a spatial process. What is capture, and what does capture portend about the nature of power and spatial control? First, I detail the etymology of apprehension and capture in order to highlight the ways in which the spaces between objects draw attention to the processes involved in *thinking* the act of apprehension. Rather than simply mark a one-for-one bodily removal from the battlefield, I argue that the objectives of battlefield capture are to establish and make calculable the connections between the black box of the unknown body and the multiple registers of that body's potential for battlefield violence. Next, I situate these thoughts within wartime history, detailing the vastly different roles that capturing bodies on the battlefield has played in literatures of late modern war. I contend that the space between capture and the camp is a paradoxical interface between military violence and humanitarian ideals.

The second part of this chapter seeks to articulate how the military has written and performed this interface over the past 60 years. Here, I address the seemingly straightforward question: What is the point of capture? Beginning from the simple identification of a static geographical location, the spatial 'point' of capture, I move to outline the myriad abstract problems that surround the shifting utility of apprehension

on the late modern battlefield: *why* detain bodies? Here I describe the tasks that must be accomplished in order to apprehend a body on the battlefield, and complicate simple spatial understandings of that position capture as a singular point in space and time. Next, through a discourse analysis of military doctrine, I argue that the presence of both the 'prisoner' and 'war' in detainee doctrine has shifted significantly, and that through these changes in detention discourse we can trace changes in the broader geographies of war. I do so by identifying the ways in which doctrine reveals the military's battlefield imaginaries and by subsequently tracing the emergence of an expansive battlespace that is both everywhere and nowhere and that all but erases the EPW subject as a protected human body in wartime doctrine.

After taking note of the shifting theoretical and textual terrain upon which the space of capture and evacuation occurs, the remainder of the dissertation explores the production and performances of these interfaces in a more specific historical-geographic way. Chapter 4 thus turns a more detailed eye on the Cold War battlefield, engaging with the ways in which the interface between the battlefield and the camps took shape at the intersection of humanitarian law, a territorially trapped, bipolar spatial imaginary, and a distinct set of technological and epistemological innovations. During the Korean conflict, the EPW emerged as not only a unique wartime subject identity, but also one that had the capacity to refract larger challenges of war and wartime space. As the enemy took cover amongst the population, and as the population itself was made through the disorderly politics of decolonization, the site of apprehension is revealed as troublingly violent and counterproductive. It also generated

spatial practices of capture that were largely arbitrary, not at all tethered to the canonical bipolar diagram of the Cold War but defined more explicitly by who and where a person was captured. Subsequently, the military began to try to understand and control in a more detailed way the mental and physical performances at the site of encounter. In Korea, the US learned that it needed to see beyond the black box of the visible body.

Part II of the chapter continues its focus on Cold War spatiality by tracing the integration of a host of new forms of knowledge production aimed at stabilizing the unknowns of the interface between capture and the camp. After mapping out the complicated and at times contradictory landscape of apprehension in Vietnam, I argue that there, new possibilities for battlefield logistical management were introduced into this threshold that were simultaneously new spaces for personal, individually directed, and largely unverifiable forms of violence. Specifically, I describe the ways in which the helicopter and the computer both began the work of changing the spatial performance of capture, revealing a unique set of management practices often at odds with a way of war increasingly described in terms of precision and technical exactitude.

Chapter 5 notes the co-emergence of a post-Cold War enemy and distinct techniques of apprehension and evacuation. Part I of the chapter details the reorganization of the American military in light of the failures in Southeast Asia and the American population's subsequent contraction of what became known as the 'Vietnam Syndrome', an oft-cited (but unproven) popular aversion to foreign military engagement. The resulting shift in discourse towards military precision and

professionalism are juxtaposed with two military actions from the 1980s and 1990s: Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and Operation Just Cause in Panama. Far from precise endeavors, in both cases the apprehension of prisoners took shape in an ad hoc way that, I argue, offers a distinct view of the unstable geography of the ways in which the US military engaged with the post-Cold War security threat.

In the second section of the chapter, I show how the imbrication of discourses of precision war and the hyper-mediation of the theater of war through televised media shaped the landscape of apprehension in the Persian Gulf War. Many have commented on the erasure of the enemy body from precision war—that technologies like laser-guided missiles enabled a form of war that was fought from a safe (for us) distance and only targeted legitimate military threats. However, I argue that in sharp contrast to this expurgation, the capture of bodies during the ground war revealed that even in a so-called bodiless war—where the lives and livelihoods of Iraqi civilians disappeared from public discourse and military calculations of wartime violence—there were still bodies that had to be managed and cared for. I maintain that the power of precision discourses ultimately renders the capture of prisoners of war as an unforeseen logistical problem and that the military was unprepared for the real bodies that are inevitably part of all war.

Chapter 6 explores the manifestations of the interface between capture and the camp in Iraq and Afghanistan. Here, I highlight two distinct but interrelated apprehension techniques: extraordinary rendition and digital biometric enrollment. Both of these spatial performances are underpinned by the ideas that the US is capable

of utilizing a precision form war and that dominant forms of surveillance will yield the ability to accurately parse friend from foe. The former is mobilized behind a distinct form of bodily capture, while the latter utilizes the capture of data as a way to introduce spatial control into the fluid spaces of counterinsurgency and counterterrorism. I contend that both practices—in exceedingly different ways—seek to blur or erase the distinctions between detention’s insides and its outsides. Both also aim to generate a maximum amount of spatial control while distancing and minimizing direct accountability over bodies and prisoner populations.

Through rendition, detailed in Part I of the chapter, the capture of bodies ultimately relies not on fixed spatial enclosure, but on a two part process of spatially extending the interface well beyond the battlefield (making the battlefield *everywhere*) and secondly, calling on a design logic that aims for complete spatial indistinguishability. In Part II I detail the rapidly expanding use of handheld digital biometric scanners in the wartime theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan. These technologies have dramatically redefined how, when, and where detainment is called upon in a wartime environment. Digital biometrics are used to dynamically produce large databases and information archives of occupied populations that can subsequently be used to manage and guide people. Through biometric enrollment, the encounter is increasingly understood as a manageable site of technological mediation, and the spatial relationship between capture and the camp is redefined.

My conclusion (Chapter 7) synthesizes these discussions and outlines directions for future work. The sixty-year transformation of military detainment and the

objectives of bodily capture detailed across the dissertation are placed into relief against the backdrop of the assassination of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan. Recently published accounts of the night raid that led to his death highlight the tensions between killing and capturing, and draw to the surface the precarity of spatial thresholds produced by and through contemporary military action. In the conclusion, it becomes clear that the question of wartime detainment is no longer simply whether to detain or not, but, more fundamentally, whether spaces of enclosure are being completely erased from the sphere of American war in favor of an imagined landscape of technologically precise, distant, lethal violence.

SECURITY, APPREHENSION, ENCLOSURE
Points of Entry in the Literatures of Wartime Detainment

Uncertainty is the enemy of security.

—Peter Gill,
Policing Politics

Introduction

As framed above, this project is concerned with the production and mediation of spaces of capture as they have occurred in American war over the past sixty years. However, with a few exceptions, the vast panorama of research, literature, and archival matter that comprise the historiography of war are omitted from the survey detailed below. This is intentional. It is my hope that through the reading of the dissertation itself, these works are brought into the fold not by way of their positions within or outside of the 'canon' of military history, but through the particular ways that they elucidate the battlefield interfaces that are my focus. The literature reviewed here thus maps out an entry point into the study, and as such is not exhaustive. Rather, I describe a broad set of security issues within which the problem of battlefield capture is situated.

As mentioned in the introduction, spaces of wartime detention are often portrayed by the state as *ends*: the sequestration of detainees is indicative of the successful operation of intelligence and security agencies in apprehending and removing deviant actors. Rather than approaching detainment as the completion of a linear process, this research places detention within a wider set of productive, frequently problematic means. These means are intricately interwoven with broad discourses of security, with actions and activities occurring outside the camp walls. The narrative I trace below seeks to describe the ways in which risk, uncertainty, and control circulate and open up spaces for particular forms of intervention into social space. It is through

these discourses that the removal of bodies and the decision “to deprive the opponent of his fighting efficiency” should be situated.¹

This dissertation traces the emergence of a mode of wartime vision that must wrestle with the idea that *the threat* and *the enemy target* are not territorially or temporally fixed. Geopolitical questions and concerns increasingly revolve around reconciling differences between a multitude of distributed agents (of which the state is just one node) whose plurality stands in stark contrast to the territorial landscape of the Hobbesian ‘ones’ of modern state sovereignty.²

The Problematic of Securing the Multitude

Aided by modifications in technology, science, and law, the movement of people, resources, and information has increased significantly in speed and volume over the course of the last century. This rapid and unruly circulation challenges the ordered image presupposed by the state system. Within this landscape, the mobility of bodies and the shifting positions of subject identities yield a condition in which “today’s friends may indeed be tomorrow’s enemies.”³

Both Paulo Virno and Hardt & Negri discuss this shift in the diagram of control through the concept of the multitude. Calling on the fear and distrust of the disorganized many that Hobbes proffers in both *Leviathan* and *De Cive*, Virno notes that Hobbes viewed ‘the many’ as an idea inherent in a “state of nature”, while ‘the people’

¹ Reid, *Prisoner of War*, 35.

² Hardt and Negri, *Multitude*; Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*.

³ Jabri, “War, Security and the Liberal State,” 61.

was a singularity, a body politic.⁴ For Hobbes, the multitude resisted political unity and as such posed a threat to the State. The vision of the disorderly multitude that never effectively “transfers its own natural rights to the sovereign” would ultimately cede to the modern State.⁵ Assessing the state of global political geography more than three centuries later, Virno asks:

“...whether, today, at the end of a long cycle, the old dispute has not been opened up once again; whether, today, now that the political theory of the modern era is going through a radical crisis, this once defeated notion (the multitude) is not displaying extraordinary vitality, thus taking its dramatic revenge.”⁶

This ‘opening up’ of the capacities of the body politic into a multitude presents a shift in the geographies of insecurity and disorder that the state must address. Insecurity comes “into form not just at the boundaries of the state, but on the streets, in the cities, in schools, in tenement blocs, in other countries and in detention camps in the midst of what otherwise are known as liberal democratic spaces.”⁷

Further, the sequestration and isolation of risk and insecurity to produce and maintain order are increasingly seen as less effective (and in many cases, less possible) than managing or guiding disorder.⁸ One diseased body on a transatlantic flight can introduce contagion into the networked society that could disrupt not only public health, but also distant supply chains and vulnerable economies worldwide.⁹ Confining

⁴ Hobbes, *Leviathan; De Cive*.

⁵ Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*, 23.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁷ Jabri, “War, Security and the Liberal State,” 61.

⁸ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*. These concepts are explored in greater detail below.

⁹ Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society*; Graham and Marvin, *Splintering Urbanism*.

that body is not possible: it doesn't exist yet. Security becomes increasingly tied to processes of deeming bodies and spaces knowable *in advance*, and making their targeted isolation justifiable, while keeping the flows of global capital and communication open and moving. This drive towards security produces a paradoxical landscape for the state: a geography in which the flow of all things is assured and smooth is a geography in which threats like biological and chemical weapons, the laundering of illicit arms money, and the bodies of potential terrorists themselves are all given room to move. Assuring control must not limit movement, for fear of producing another space of insecurity: the security state must paradoxically allow for one without conceding space to the other.

This problematic is indicative of the shift from strategies of defense to those of security. Paraphrasing Brian Massumi, defense as an ontological frame centers on that which exists as 'possible', whereas security, in its virtuality, is concretely *in the present*—as an always-potential real embedded in the systems of circulation and exchange of everyday life.¹⁰ This enmeshing of the future in the present is a key element of the logic of preemption. Massumi clarifies the distinction between the two approaches to temporality, noting that rather “than acting in the present to avoid an occurrence in the future, preemption brings the future into the present. It makes present the future consequences of an eventuality *that may or may not occur, indifferent to its actual occurrence.*”¹¹

¹⁰ Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

The topological character of virtuality renders all space as a potential source of risk and threat, but also renders the modes of address and solutions to those risks as unlocalizeable. The image of a “nondescript catastrophe” looming indefinitely on the horizon of the virtual, and the ways it is dealt with are somehow located everywhere and nowhere: a generalized condition of insecurity.¹² When the entire world becomes a virtual battlefield—the war on poverty, drugs, terror—then locating disruptive spaces, commodities, people, practices, ideologies and intervening preemptively become the paramount activities in the policing of global security.¹³ But these interventions in the name of security are not consistent in form, duration, or aim: they can make their appearance as the sequestration of the infected body, or the inoculation of the social through a set of techniques intended to incorporate, organize, and distribute an acceptable amount of disorderly contagion. In this landscape, discourses of biosecurity and national security converge around spectral representations of things that are not yet knowable in any specific sense—yet nonetheless premised on the “double infinity of extreme uncertainty and a catastrophic future.”¹⁴

It is through this ‘double infinity’ that the lines between established status categories begin to blur: thresholds between the civilian and combatant, state and non-

¹² Braun, “Biopolitics and the Molecularization of Life,” 17.

¹³ Bialasiewicz et al., “Performing Security.”

¹⁴ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions,(un) Knowing the Future”; “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror,” 31. Here the extreme uncertainty can be understood as the risk of future terrorist violence and the catastrophe as the violence that the terrorist act unleashes. Ulrich Beck, whose work is discussed in this literature review, gives voice to this catastrophic condition: “what thus emerges in a risk society is the *political potential of catastrophes*. Averting and managing these can include a *reorganization of power and authority*. Risk society is a *catastrophic* society. In it the exceptional condition threatens to become the norm. See: Beck, *Risk Society*, 24.

state, war and peace, international and domestic erode. Reference to the global circulation of migratory birds that *might* have avian influenza yields a similar language as the problematic of securing territory from global terror cells, which again echoes the emerging discourses of internet security. The systems of legislation and litigation deployed to detain potential terrorists at Guantánamo or Bagram mimic those used to detain international migrants and refugee seekers at Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) prison facilities. “The faceless, unseen and unseeable enemy,” those virtual threats that emerge into systems of control in unruly ways—along with their associated empirics of risk, vulnerability, exposure—produce a landscape that encourages states to act extraterritorially, to intervene in the catastrophic potentiality of everywhere, to assure it remains nowhere.¹⁵

Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Amoore and de Goede note that although the risk of future catastrophe remains unpredictable and beyond the purview of present formations of power, calculative techniques have not been abandoned. Rather they have been invested with a new set of vital tasks and aims.¹⁶ Governance happens *through* risk and through the preemptive calculation of the incalculable, as the “security apparatus no longer seeks to prevent, to order or to withhold, but instead to preempt, to allow to play out, to make probabilistic judgment.”¹⁷ Beginning with the

¹⁵ Braun, “Biopolitics and the Molecularization of Life,” 18.

¹⁶ Amoore and De Goede, “Governing by Risk in the War on Terror.”

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10. One need look no further than the way that risk was employed in recent mortgage lending practices, with individual risk being sliced and divided and bundled with other risk in an attempt to render the volatility of life calculable, consistent, and profitable. See, for instance Crump et al., “Cities Destroyed (Again) For Cash.” Additionally, the securitization of the economy, coupled with the rise of new economic instruments, has exposed more and more of the population to a state

spatial and temporal paradox of this ‘double infinity’, my aim with this project is to investigate the ways in which practices at the limit between kill, capture, and the camp have been designed, deployed, and managed consistent with the emergence of these novel forms of governance.

The capture of bodies at war occupies a liminal place in the landscape of power. Not mobilized solely through law and violence: capture is not purely about sovereign discretion. Nor is it simply about docility produced through visibility and surveillance: apprehension is not reducible to a disciplinary power. It involves an understanding of present threats and future risks, and acting requires mapping those risks and attempting to tie them to some stable narrative of power in the present. The performance of bodily capture then is perhaps most akin to Foucault’s description of the center of the triangle between sovereignty, discipline, and the art of government.¹⁸ This is a question of biopolitical security—concerning the governance of wartime populations; and a question of preemptive security—attempting to control the future through action in the present.¹⁹ Both are explored in more detail below.

Biopolitics of Security

A key theoretical frame for this research lies in literatures on the biopolitics of security and scholarship that addresses the myriad spatial strategies that aim to govern ‘life itself’. Foucault introduces the concept of *biopower* as sovereign power’s

of perpetual crisis and required they purchase *insurance* in the process. See: Collier, “Enacting Catastrophe: Preparedness, Insurance, Budgetary Rationalization.”

¹⁸ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*; Foucault, “Governmentality.”

¹⁹ Evans, “Anticipating Fatness”; Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

administration of populations through taking charge of life itself, rather than by way of a threat of death.²⁰ In Foucault's formulation, two vectors of biological power—the anatomo-politics of the human body (seeking to amplify the body's forces and imbue them with more systemic efficacy), and regulatory controls (focusing on the species body, the body understood at the level of population through such quantified data as birth rates, life expectancy, etc.)—were joined through various so-called technologies of power into one general strategy of governance. Capture, as positioned in the introduction, is a site where these competing claims play out.

Thus a biopolitical form of power emerges in the 19th century in which the life of the biological body is seen as part and parcel of the political task of the state.²¹ Recent work in areas of study as diverse as genetics,²² transportation,²³ media,²⁴ migration²⁵ and international relations²⁶ has utilized Foucault's framework, and his ideas provide a substantial critical thread through the work of recent political philosophers.²⁷

Michel Foucault used his lectures at the Collège de France in the late 1970s to address issues of power and how it moves through bodies and across space and time.

²⁰ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*.

²¹ Rabinow and Rose, "Biopower Today."

²² Rajan, *Biocapital*.

²³ Packer, "Becoming Bombs: Mobilizing Mobility in the War on Terror."

²⁴ Galloway and Thacker, *The Exploit*.

²⁵ Walters, "Deportation, Expulsion, and the International Police of Aliens"; "Secure Borders, Safe Haven, Domopolitics"; "Border/Control"; "Putting the Migration-Security Complex in Its Place"; "Editor's Introduction."

²⁶ Basu, "The State of Security and Warfare of Demons"; Bauman, *Liquid Fear*; Cooper, "Pre-Emptying Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror"; Dillon, "Cared to Death: The Biopoliticised Time of Your Life."; Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, "The Biopolitical Imaginary of Species-being"; Dillon and Reid, *The Liberal Way of War*.

²⁷ Agamben, "Security and Terror"; *State of Exception*; Hardt and Negri, *Empire; Multitude*; Virno, *A Grammar of the Multitude*.

For him, and authors of the literature that utilizes his theoretical framework, security is a mode of power—a way a specific order is rendered, understood, and differentiated from other systems of organization.²⁸ This work is a valuable addition to writings on national security from the international relations discipline, as Foucault takes neither the state nor the individual as a realist given, but instead tries to break down the production of each as a project related to specific technologies of power.²⁹ Indeed, Foucault’s security is largely distinct from the form of political subjectivity implied by a ‘national security’. His work positions discourses of national security and human security within a broader theoretical framework that interrogates the ‘hows’ of security power.

In one of the key passages from these lectures, Foucault makes the distinction between discipline and security as different frameworks, or as he calls them, technologies of power.³⁰ In the lectures, Foucault argues that discipline encloses everything: it works to bind threatening activities and practices (often within institutions) and prevent them from ever happening again. Discipline is centrifugal and sets up the limits of its own control: the prison wall, the state border, the leper colony. In contrast, security is centripetal.³¹ Security differs from discipline in both space and

²⁸ Amoore, “Biometric Borders”; “Governing by Identity”; “Data Derivatives”; Dean, *Governmentality*; Rose and Miller, *Governing the Present*; Rose, *Powers of Freedom*; Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*.

²⁹ Buzan, *People, States, and Fear*. Der Derian, “The Value of Security: Hobbes, Marx, Nietzsche, and Baudrillard”; Jabri, “War, Security and the Liberal State”; Lipschutz, *On Security*; Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization.”

³⁰ Discipline is famously diagramed in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1977), but his explorations of security are more helpful for my research project.

³¹ Bigo, “Detention of Foreigners, States of Exception, and the Social Practices of Control of the Banopticon.”

time. It is always seeking to expand, to incorporate more actors into its folds. “New elements are constantly being integrated: production, psychology, behavior, the ways of doing things of producers, buyers, consumers, importers, and exporters, and the world market. Security therefore involves organizing, or anyway allowing the development of ever-wider circuits.”³² Security is a neoliberal mode of organizing—political borders, institutional spaces, insides and outsides—all get reformulated in relation to flows of power. A biopolitics of security highlights the ways in which populations are invested with this form of power allied with flexibility, expansion, and freedom.³³ Recent work has focused on the expansion of the use of biopolitical security mechanisms, including the use of biometrics and surveillance; governance through insurance; and governance through contingency.³⁴

Risk, Uncertainty, and Pre-emption

One area of scholarship within literatures of the biopolitics of security that has deep resonances with Foucault’s analyses is work that centers on the attempted governance of threat and risk.³⁵ The Cold War period saw the epitome of a ‘national-scale’ security contest rage between the US and the Soviet Union.³⁶ The oft-articulated

³² Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 45.

³³ Dillon and Lobo-Guerrero, “Biopolitics of Security in the 21st Century: An Introduction.”

³⁴ Amoore and De Goede, “Governance, Risk and Dataveillance in the War on Terror”; Baker, “Liability and Insurance After September 11”; Collier, “Enacting Catastrophe: Preparedness, Insurance, Budgetary Rationalization”; Dillon, “Underwriting Security.”

³⁵ Beck, *Risk Society*; Caygill, “Liturgies of Fear: Biotechnology and Culture”; van Loon, “Virtual Risks in an Age of Cybernetic Reproduction.”

³⁶ Agnew, *Geopolitics*; Dalby, “Geopolitics and Global Security: Culture, Identity, and the ‘pogo’ Syndrome”; Liotta, “Boomerang Effect: The Convergence of National and Human Security”; Sidaway, “The Dissemination of Banal Geopolitics: Webs of Extremism and Insecurity.”

bipolarity of this debate was structured around ‘territorially trapped’ actors generating narratives of power and control in which they held the monopoly on the legitimate use of force.³⁷ Hannah Arendt would note that producing the image of security in such a way had the effect of drawing to the surface the fact that with the advent of lighter, more destructive military technology, smaller and smaller groups could produce increasingly large material destruction. The result of this was that the two superpowers would benefit from maintaining security as defined by the rational Cold War logic of state on state interaction.³⁸ By maintaining the security discourse at this level, so-called outside threats were absorbed into the sphere of this larger bipolar context. The (presumed) threat of Mutual Assured Destruction meant that deterrence was preferable to all-out war, and implied that the removal of this structure of inter-state diplomacy might indeed be cause for concern. Finally, Arendt presciently notes that, “the amount of violence at the disposal of any given country may soon not be a reliable indication of the country’s strength or a reliable guarantee against destruction by a substantially smaller and weaker power.”³⁹

As discussed further in Chapter 6, at the end of the Cold War, the logic of deterrence and the framework of security would become focused on guiding disorder rather than eliminating it.⁴⁰ Security through movement (as people and goods were increasingly deregulated and circulating the globe), did not see its heyday until after the

³⁷ Agnew, “The Territorial Trap”; Shah, “The Territorial Trap of the Territorial Trap.” On the state monopoly on the use of deadly force, see: Weber et al., *The Vocation Lectures*.

³⁸ Arendt, *On Violence*.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁰ Agamben, *State of Exception*; Cooper, “Pre-Empting Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror”; Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*; Rose, *Powers of Freedom*.

demise of the bipolar world: the structural diagram of just *where* security and insecurity was to come from was changing.⁴¹ Writing in the mid-1990s, Ronnie Lipschutz notes that the American national security apparatus would soon long for the Cold War, not because of its bipolarity, but because of the comfort in knowing that Russian missiles were pointed at “us”: that the threat came from an identifiable source. Conflict in the developing world—often argued to have been ‘released’ by the end of the Cold War—may indeed be reflected in the production of a world politics in which the social milieu (the scale of individuals and groups), rather than the state, was what generated the predominant security dilemma.⁴²

This unsettled the state and gave rise to a decentralization and disorientation of risk. The state is more exposed to the contingencies of risk if it is incapable of ‘seeing’ it. Ulrich Beck, in his widely read work on *The Risk Society*, notes the connections between the visibility of the *image* of risk and risk itself, by highlighting the fact that both sides “... converge, condition each other, strengthen each other, and because risks are risks in knowledge, perceptions of risks and risks are not different things, but one in the

⁴¹ In one of the more interesting studies, Jeremy Packer writes about the problem of increased movement relative to governing individuals as they drive their cars—their cars, which he is quick to add, are also seen as potential bombs. Even driving can become a national security issue. See: Packer, “Becoming Bombs: Mobilizing Mobility in the War on Terror.”

⁴² In discussing the link between security and natural resources, Simon Dalby notes the shift in the geopolitical rendering of the spaces of Africa, which are no longer a security commodity as they were (in providing raw materials as well as potential populations resistant to the Soviet other) in the Cold War, but a source of global insecurity. See: Dalby, *Environmental Security*. This link has also generated an expansive literature on the role of natural resources in conflict areas. See: Cilliers, “Resource Wars: A New Type of Insurgency”; de Beer and Gamba, “The Arms Dilemma: Resources for Arms or Arms for Resources?”; Harris, “Navigating Uncertain Waters: Geographies of Water and Conflict, Shifting Terms and Debates”; Le Billon, “The Geography of ‘Resource Wars’”; Le Billon, “Fatal Transactions: Conflict Diamonds and the (Anti) Terrorist Consumer”; Homer-Dixon, “Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict.”

same.”⁴³ Beck alludes to the mediated points of connection between what is present and the imagined future, concluding “in a fundamental sense they are both real and unreal.”⁴⁴ Finally, he points to the potency of wedding the image of risk with the political forms central to the functioning of modern globalized society. Risk comes not just from what we don’t know about the future, but from what we don’t know that generates out of what is latent in our modes of production and circulation.⁴⁵ Therein lies the contradiction of a risk society: Modernity “... has become the threat and the promise of emancipation from the threat that it creates itself.”⁴⁶

In a recent edited volume that explores governance through risk in the war on terror, several authors note that while both Foucault and Beck view risk as integral to modernity, Foucault was keen to note that risk yielded a diversity of tactics for its management.⁴⁷ Whereas Beck sees uninsurability because of the infinite potentials of risk, a Foucaultian approach highlights how this nonetheless translates into novel forms of calculability and new forms of governance.

In distinguishing between Beck and Foucault, Aradau and van Munster note

⁴³ Beck, *Risk Society*, 55.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁴⁵ In a related vein, Aradau and van Munster highlight the missing idiom from former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s famous quip “There are known knowns. These are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say, there are things that we know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know”. What are missing are the unknown knowns, the catastrophe that generates out of the systems that we know well and rely on. See Aradau and Van Munster, “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror.” Or, as Paul Virilio notes, “the invention of the ship is simultaneously the invention of the shipwreck. See: Virilio, *The Vision Machine*, 28.

⁴⁶ Beck, *Risk Society*, 177.

⁴⁷ Amoores and De Goede, *Risk and the War on Terror*; Aradau and van Munster, “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror”; Walters, “Putting the Migration-Security Complex in Its Place.”

“infinity is not synonymous with incalculability. What is new,” they write, “is not so much the advent of an uncontrollable risk society as the emergence of a ‘precautionary’ element that has given birth to new rationalities of government that require the catastrophic prospects of the future to be tamed and managed.”⁴⁸ Precautionary risk brings the virtual future into geographies of the present, the imagined threat concretizes a potential future.⁴⁹ Ulrich Beck, who coined the term “risk society,” has pointed out that the discourse of risk begins where trust in our security and our belief in progress ends. Thus, the concept of risk points to a “peculiar, intermediate state between security and destruction, where the perception of threatening risks determines thought and action.”⁵⁰ When speaking about risk, we are concerned with something which is *not* currently the case but which *could* happen if we did nothing to change a course of action. Risk is a measure of exposure to danger, of the likelihood and the extent of loss. The problem is that risks are estimations of possible events; they exist in the context of uncertainty. Therefore, our capability to estimate risks, to take measures to avoid them, and to adjust the proportionality of these measures is limited.⁵¹

Recent work has shifted the focus of studies regarding the typologies of power from one premised on risk to one of preemption.⁵² Risk is premised around an actuarial approach to some kind of knowable, quantifiable threat. Preemptive measures,

⁴⁸ Aradau and Van Munster, “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror,” 24.

⁴⁹ Bergson, *Matter And Memory*; Cooper, “Pre-Emptying Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror”; Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*; Grosz, *Time Travels*; Massey, *For Space*; Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*.

⁵⁰ Van Loon, “Virtual Risks in an Age of Cybernetic Reproduction,” 213.

⁵¹ Sutrop and Laas-Mikko, “From Identity Verification to Behavior Prediction,” 26.

⁵² De Goede, *Speculative Security*; Simon, “Suspicious Encounters.”

however, are oriented towards generating a “politics of zero risk,” that seeks to eliminate any and all *imagined* threats through anticipatory action.⁵³ Turning (potentially) risky spaces into a landscape of zero risk requires deploying “imaginative orientation toward the future that enables ways of acting upon indeterminate threats in the present.”⁵⁴ Preemption seeks to make present future consequences, such that they can be acted upon.⁵⁵

Melinda Cooper argues that this desire to preempt catastrophe is indeed producing novel ways to control emergence.⁵⁶ Identifying the key difference between precautionary risk and the Cold War diagram of bipolarity and national defense, she notes the catastrophic illegibility of an enemy whose movement is “oblivious to the persuasive force of mutual deterrence.”⁵⁷ Their movements are incalculable, uncertain in time and place, of indeterminable cost.⁵⁸ Out of this unlocalizable risk, François Ewald identifies the defining challenge of the neoliberal politics of security: “The catastrophe event,” he writes, presents us with a danger we “can only imagine, suspect, presume or fear,” one that we “can apprehend without being able to assess.”⁵⁹ Here, it is discourses of un-localizable catastrophe that establish our affective connection with a future and

⁵³ Aradau and Van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions,(un) Knowing the Future,” 103; Amoore and de Goede, *Risk and the War on Terror*.

⁵⁴ Simon, “Suspicious Encounters,” 161. See also: Adey and Anderson, “Anticipating Emergencies”; Anderson, “Facing the Future Enemy”; Anderson, “Security and the Future: Anticipating the Event of Terror”; Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*; Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency.”

⁵⁵ Amoore, “Data Derivatives,” 29.

⁵⁶ Cooper, “Pre-Emptying Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror.”

⁵⁷ The concept of the enemy here includes environmental threats, diseases, and terror networks.

⁵⁸ Cooper, “Pre-Emptying Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror,” 124.

⁵⁹ Ewald, “The Return of Descartes’ Malicious Demon: An Outline of a Philosophy of Precaution,” 286.

serve as the “only available basis for decision-making,” even while recognizing “the inherently speculative nature of this enterprise.”⁶⁰ This imagined drafting of the future gives rise to discourses of preparedness based on worst case scenarios, turns “law into a policy instrument” which must be mobilized to prevent catastrophe, and importantly for my work, situates the detainee body and detention spaces themselves as lynchpins in a precautionary geography of the virtual future.⁶¹

Control Societies

Nikolas Rose argues that contemporary liberal freedom is in fact a form of unfreedom.⁶² It is the result of imbuing subjects with the capacity for self-reliance, self-government, and self-control. This type of ‘open’ freedom is in actuality a form of rule, “a freedom to action that at the same time is also vulnerable to surveillance and manipulation.”⁶³ This is a politics of control, whose key mechanisms are “the automated categorization practices” which “effectively situate and define how we create and manage our own identities.”⁶⁴ This mode of governance works to gain purchase on the forces that traverse the multitudes of spatial encounters where conduct is the subject of government: sexuality, family structures, belief systems. These assemblages, once under

⁶⁰ Cooper, “Pre-Emptying Emergence The Biological Turn in the War on Terror,” 120.

⁶¹ Aradau and Van Munster, “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror,” 34. On preparedness, see Collier and Lakoff, “Distributed Preparedness.”

⁶² Rose, *Powers of Freedom*. See also: Rose, “Government and Control”; Rose and Miller, *Governing the Present*.

⁶³ Cheney-Lippold, “A New Algorithmic Identity,” 177.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

the authority of the sovereign, now became subject “only to the limits of the law.”⁶⁵ The power of the sovereign to determine for all the best disposition of things has been joined by an art of government diffused across the population: governmentality—the conduct of conduct.⁶⁶ The role of the state thus appears as only one element in a diverse and varied matrix of social organization.

As forms of governmentality have changed, so too have the relationships between power, space and time. Gilles Deleuze’s short but prescient essay, “Postscripts on the Societies of Control,” expands upon Foucault’s work on security and notes how his analyses pointed towards further spatial modulation under neoliberalism.⁶⁷ Deleuze calls these spatial formations control societies. For Deleuze, there are novel forms of control in *freedom*. If disciplinary societies have in the past attempted to govern at both the general and the specific scales, made political use of history at the expense of the future, and reified the centrality of the observer, Deleuze notes that these societies are presently experiencing a crisis. This crisis is not one of time (although it affects its management), it is of the *enclosures* upon which the societies of discipline hinge.

The diagram of disciplinary power has moved beyond the inflexible visual power of the architectural-institutional edifice that addresses the individual to forms of control that are actually indistinguishable from the operations of everyday modern life

⁶⁵ Rose, “Engineering the Human Soul,” 69.

⁶⁶ Dean, *Governmentality*; Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *The Foucault Effect*; Hannah, *Governmentality and the Mastery of Territory in Nineteenth-Century America*; Jessop, “From micro-powers to governmentality: Foucault’s work on statehood, state formation, statecraft and Idots”; Rose-Redwood, “Governmentality, geography, and the geo-coded world”; Tyner, *War, Violence, and Population*.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control.”

and work through “the statistical regulation of categorical groupings.”⁶⁸ Therefore, “it is not the personal identity of the embodied individual but rather the actuarial or categorical profile of the collective which is of foremost concern.”⁶⁹ As noted in the introduction, Deleuze locates this transition as gradually accelerating just after World War II, when the administration of reform in institutional enclosures became pervasive. As these interiors began their descent into perpetual reformation, a new mode of control—a society of control—has taken their place. If the wall was key to the function of disciplinary spaces like the prison, what happens to these very spaces—how they work, how they govern, how they generate docility—in light of the emergence of control? What does this particular meshing of the disciplinary with control look like?

This technology of power decentralizes and becomes light-weight, mobile. The model for control is the corporation. If enclosures are molds, Deleuze argues, controls are a modulation, a self-deforming cast that can change to fulfill the needs of power. Controls allow for individualized modulation and produce a state of “perpetual metastability.”⁷⁰ He proceeds through the articulation of key accelerations/crises of disciplinary enclosure that mark the societies of control—three of which are important for this research project. First, where the factory encloses and amplifies relations of power exchanged between the boss, and the unions, the ethereal corporation creates an environment of all against all, body against body. In the context of my work, this shift challenges the prevailing logics of detention, placing an emphasis on mobile and open

⁶⁸ Cheney-Lippold, “A New Algorithmic Identity,” 177.

⁶⁹ Hier, “Probing the Surveillant Assemblage: On the Dialectics of Surveillance Practices as Processes of Social Control,” 402.

⁷⁰ Deleuze, “Postscript on the Societies of Control,” 4.

performances of detainment rather than a fixed institutional isolation. Second, discipline had two poles, “those over whom it exercises power” that constituted a *mass* (with its accompanying administrative number) at the same time it “molds the *individuality* of each member” (marked by the signature) of that mass.⁷¹ With control, these distinctions—number and signature—are no longer clear, and what appears in their stead is a password, a code. The individual has become the *dividual*, and the mass has given way to samples, masses, markets—*banks*.⁷² The final distinction to be made here is in regards to duration. Time in the disciplinary societies was “infinite and discontinuous.”⁷³ For Deleuze, duration in control societies is “short-term and of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit.”⁷⁴ This is the globalized matrix of ‘just-in-time’ manufacturing and custom mass-production.

The resonances here between Deleuze’s work, studies of risk, and flexible, high tech, mobile practices of detention is evident. While Foucault keenly points out that disciplinary societies had a distinct set of spatial and temporal strategies, Deleuze’s short piece offers a glimpse at how technologies, circulations, and media savvy have contributed to changing this diagram. Additionally, these conditions point towards an understanding of how the micro-politics of discipline have leaked out of their spaces of enclosure and are veering towards the total decentralization and free-floating

⁷¹ Ibid., 5.

⁷² Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*.

⁷³ Ibid., 6.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

dynamism of control.⁷⁵ This has significant ramifications when considering the spatiality of detention practices typically understood as bound up within institutional space.

Thus, despite a considerable degree of added ‘freedom’, control is far from a neutral or passive process. Its primary vehicle is digital codes and coded databases. Code establishes a workable connection between data and decision—between online and offline views of databases. Unlike traditional surveillance, control is not primarily visual. As Carpo notes, for instance, seeing and verifying the authenticity of the actual object of the credit card is no longer necessary for validating the legitimacy of a financial transaction.⁷⁶ The data code and the algorithm that acts on it are.⁷⁷ De Geode places these issues into a security context by pursuing the channels of terror finance. This is also relevant in the landscape of detention. In particular, decisions to detain in the global battlespace are no longer solely made by war-fighters in the field, but by algorithms and databases at particular thresholds across the global landscape.⁷⁸

Geographies Of (Military) Detention

My focus in this dissertation is on liminal spatial practices that connect geographies of lethal violence with a detention apparatus. Most of these practices occur far from traditionally understood sites of wartime detainment. Yet they are nonetheless

⁷⁵ Galloway and Thacker, *The Exploit*; Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*; Mackenzie, “The Performativity of Code”; Packer, “Becoming Bombs: Mobilizing Mobility in the War on Terror.”

⁷⁶ Carpo, *The Alphabet and the Algorithm*.

⁷⁷ Anson, “Digital Power in World Politics”; “Registry, Print, Resistance.”

⁷⁸ Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*; Harwood, *The Interface*; Mackenzie, “The Performativity of Code.”

practices that rely on how detainment is performed and how it works to shape the rules and requirements for the threshold spaces I focus on. One of my aims in the dissertation is to trace the development over time of new forms of control that appear *outside* the camp that have the capacity to replicate and build on the strategic and tactical efficacy of the camp itself.

Martin and Mitchelson provide a useful definition of detention and imprisonment that resonates with these aims. They see detainment as “(i) intentional practices that restrict individuals’ ability to move from one place to another and (ii) impose orders of space and time so that individual mobility is highly constrained, if not eliminated.” These practices are distinct from the more “banal or irritating events” of everyday life (such as being caught in traffic) by the threat or application of violence.⁷⁹ They add that despite the fact that detention and confinement are premised on spatial tactics, with a small number of exceptions, so-called carceral geographies have until recently been a marginal subfield of geographic enquiry.⁸⁰ Discussions of detainment issues have largely been taken up in cognate fields like anthropology⁸¹, sociology⁸², ethnic studies⁸³, law⁸⁴, and criminology.⁸⁵ This has begun to change, with an increasing

⁷⁹ Martin and Mitchelson, “Geographies of Detention and Imprisonment: Interrogating Spatial Practices of Confinement, Discipline, Law, and State Power,” 460.

⁸⁰ Bonds, “Profit from Punishment?”; Gilmore, “Globalisation and US Prison Growth: From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism.”; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*; Ogborn, “Discipline, Government and Law: Separate Confinement in the Prisons of England and Wales, 1830-1877”; Pallot, “Russia’s Penal Peripheries”; Philo, “Accumulating Populations.”

⁸¹ Feldman, *Formations of Violence*; Feldman, “Abu Ghraib: Ceremonies of Nostalgia”; Redfield, *Space in the Tropics*.

⁸² Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*; Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?*; Parenti, *The Soft Cage*; Wacquant, *Prisons of Poverty*; Wacquant, “Deadly Symbiosis When Ghetto and Prison Meet and Mesh.”

⁸³ Rodriguez, “(Non) Scenes of Captivity: The Common Sense of Punishment and Death”; Rodriguez, *Forced Passages*.

number of geographers outlining the spatial nuances of the carceral landscape.⁸⁶ Much of this work focuses on prison location and political economy or places the prison within a wider lens of neoliberal restructuring, surplus urban labor, and prison practices such as visitation and transport.⁸⁷

With the onset of the war on terror and the revelations of torture, coercive interrogation, and extraordinary rendition, there has been increased attention paid to military detention and the global war prison both within and outside of geography.⁸⁸ Others have approached recent US detainment practices—specifically its use of

⁸⁴ Among others, see: Margulies, “Deviance, Risk, and Law”; Simon, *Governing Through Crime*; Waxman, “Detention as Targeting: Standards of Certainty and Detention of Suspected Terrorists”; Waxman, “Administrative Detention of Terrorists: Why Detain, and Detain Whom?”; Waxman, “Guantánamo, Habeas Corpus, and Standards of Proof”; Van Bergen and Valentine, “Dangerous World of Indefinite Detentions.”

⁸⁵ Welch, *Ironies of Imprisonment*; Welch, “Detained in Occupied Iraq”; Welch, “Counterveillance”; Welch and Schuster, “Detention of Asylum Seekers in the US, UK, France, Germany, and Italy A Critical View of the Globalizing Culture of Control.”

⁸⁶ Much of the impetus to clarify this subfield of geographic enquiry has been mobilized by Dominique Moran. See: Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, “Disciplined Mobility and Carceral Geography”; Moran, “Between Outside and Inside?”

⁸⁷ This work has focused on prison location and political economy (See Gilmore, “Globalisation and US Prison Growth: From Military Keynesianism to Post-Keynesian Militarism.”; Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*; Bonds, “Profit from Punishment?”; Bonds, “Discipline and Devolution: Constructions of Poverty, Race, and Criminality in the Politics of Rural Prison Development.”) or placed the prison within a wider lens of neoliberal restructuring, surplus urban labor, and prison practices such as visitation and transport (See Christian, “Riding the Bus Barriers to Prison Visitation and Family Management Strategies”; Moran, “Between outside and inside?”; Moran, Piacentini, and Pallot, “Disciplined mobility and carceral geography.”). An important conclusion of geographic work on this topic is that rather than assuming imprisonment is the endpoint of a spatial or political narrative, it places imprisonment as a constitutive element within contemporary economic and political geographies.

⁸⁸ Alison, “The Enforcement Archipelago”; Belcher et al., “Everywhere and Nowhere”; Coleman, “Immigration Geopolitics Beyond the Mexico–US Border”; Gregory, “The Black Flag”; Gregory, “Vanishing Points”; Mountz, “Embodying the Nation-state: Canada’s Response to Human Smuggling.”

torture—through the lens of law, lawfare, and human rights.⁸⁹ These works, and associated scholarship in critical social theory and security studies, has placed the war prison at the heart of questions about the nature of the American way of war.⁹⁰ This literature offers a detailed examination of many of the complex and contradictory spatial issues that underpin carceral space, and military detention, in contemporary war. This is markedly different from the body of research dealing with the *history* of American military detention. To date, this research remains limited to a small list of texts focused on particular ‘names and dates’ of detention sites while leaving the spatial complexity of sequestration largely unaddressed. Indeed, this dissertation represents the first sustained engagement with the genealogy of American military detention—as a system of actors, spaces, and practices—in the field of geography.

While the prisoner of war and war prisons were fairly popular in mid-century scholarship, few historical engagements with 20th Century American war prisons exist that detail post-Cold War practices.⁹¹ After an approximately 20 year gap, where the EPW and military detainment issues disappeared from the historiographical landscape, the events at Abu Ghraib brought the history of these marginal spaces back into the scholarly fold. James Gebhardt’s *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and*

⁸⁹ See, among others: Danner, *Torture and Truth*; Greenberg, *The Least Worst Place*; Mayer, *The Dark Side*; Otterman, *American Torture*; Peirce, *Dispatches from the Dark Side*.

⁹⁰ See, among others: Butler, “Torture and the Ethics of Photography”; Danner, *Torture and Truth*; Feldman, “Abu Ghraib: Ceremonies of Nostalgia”; Kaplan, “Where Is Guantánamo?”; McCoy, *A Question of Torture*; Puar, “On Torture: Abu Ghraib”; Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

⁹¹ For examples of earlier work on the war prison/prisoner, see: Barker, *Prisoners of War*; Prugh, *Law at War*; White, *The Captives Of Korea*. Most studies of prisoners of war highlight the experience of Americans who have been detained rather than the Americans who did the detaining. See here: Kramer, *Prisoners of War*; Reid, *Prisoner of War*.

Experience is one such text.⁹² This report put out by the Combined Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth focused almost exclusively on doctrinal development and sought to find root causes for the torture at Abu Ghraib in the gaps and ambiguities of these codes. The text is comprehensive, and one of his key findings is that the relationship between Military Police and Military Intelligence in the doctrine has historically been unclear, and in the case of Abu Ghraib, can be seen as contributing in some way to the conditions leading to torture. Current Joint Command doctrine covering Detainee Operations cites Gebhardt's study to introduce some of the problems that arose in the Korean camps (and thus implore Joint Commanders to be prepared to control the political lives of prisoners).⁹³ However, for reasons having to do with doctrinal authors' notorious inability to properly cite sources and the obviously uncomfortable history that generated his study, it is cited as the abbreviated: *US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*. Abu Ghraib, positioned as an anomaly and not a structural deficiency in doctrinal development, finds no quarter in framings of the future of detainee operations.

In 2010, after a gap of approximately twenty years in the literature, two historical works dealing with the history of American practice were published. Both Paul Springer's *America's Captives*, and Robert Doyle's *The Enemy in Our Hands* cover similar historical terrain—stretching from the American Revolution to the present.⁹⁴ Each presents an extremely useful survey that goes a long way towards identifying the key

⁹² Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*.

⁹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*, III-3.

⁹⁴ Springer, *America's Captives*; Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands*.

locations and events in this particular history. Perhaps owing to the paucity of official documentation and the fact that most classified records after 1972 remain restricted, both spend more space on US wars leading up to the Gulf War and the War on Terror, and are much less detailed with events after Vietnam. A *RAND* study released the following year, begins with World War II and continues to cover much the same terrain as Springer and Doyle—though skipping over the first Gulf War and Afghanistan entirely.⁹⁵ The *RAND* study does have the benefit of being able to call on classified material and interviews with current personnel in detainee operations, but their conclusions do not deviate from a basic administrative critique: poor planning leads to crisis and subsequent revision of policy, which is then forgotten between conflicts which starts the cycle again. Outside of Lelah Khalili's outstanding new book, *Time in the Shadows*, which focuses specifically on detainment practices in counterinsurgencies (primarily US and Israeli led), recent *historical* scholarship fails to offer a sustained investigation of the role that spatial and geopolitical imaginaries play in structuring the development of camp administration or in framing the relationship between the construction of the *idea* of the enemy and their capture.⁹⁶ This project seeks to expand upon this limited critical historical engagement.

Wartime detainees are not criminals, nor is their capture directly tied to a form of punishment or discipline. It therefore takes on a different set of parameters from those of incarceration and the prison system. The prison is an institution in which persons charged with committing a crime are sentenced to serve for a set period of time inside

⁹⁵ Benard et al., *The Battle Behind the Wire*.

⁹⁶ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*.

an institutional space. Detention, on the other hand, is a set of practices that skirts the margins of this institution, without ever being adapted in whole cloth.⁹⁷ One key distinction of spaces of detention is that those imprisoned have not necessarily committed a crime, nor have they necessarily been charged with one. Another deals with temporality, as detention may be seen as a (costly) temporary spatial fix or as (increasingly) an indefinite removal from the public spaces of everyday global exchange and circulation. Alluding to the dissimilarity between formalized prison practice and the less regulated modes of detention at the colonial margin, Peter Redfield notes that even “as techniques of confinement, isolation, and regulation grew refined in Metropolitan prison architecture, cruder structures of punishment took shape on the periphery.”⁹⁸ Finally, contemporary detention practices can rely on speed as much as they do on stasis, on coercion, violence, and pain as much as on the disciplined docility of the liberal subject. Detention is malleable, flexible, and in its performance in line with prevailing scholarship on modes of neoliberal power.⁹⁹

Many recent works on issues of detention view contemporary detainment practices like extraordinary rendition and indefinite detention through the lens of Agamben’s genealogy of German jurist Carl Schmitt’s ‘state of exception.’¹⁰⁰ While this

⁹⁷ Falah, “The Politics of Doing Geography: 23 Days in the Hell of Israeli Detention.”

⁹⁸ Redfield, *Space in the Tropics*, 53.

⁹⁹ Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*; Jessop, *The Future of the Capitalist State*.

¹⁰⁰ Agamben bases much of this exploration alternatively on the scholarship on the state of exception in the 1940s by Carl Schmitt and Walter Benjamin. Analyses of Schmitt’s work forms the basis of Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* and *The State of Exception*. He writes:

“If the state of exception’s characteristic property is a (total or partial) suspension of the juridical order, how can such a suspension still be contained within it? How can an anomie be inscribed within the juridical order? And if the state of exception is instead only a *de facto*

work is certainly useful and theoretically rich, my project is aimed at the ways in which law, mass media, space and technology are combined not through the suspension of the law, but through the expansion of its capacities and to secure its dominion over bodily actions and spatial activities.¹⁰¹ My research is aligned with contemporary analyses of detention that look at law as a performance where practices of detention are made through the activation and circulation of legal discourse, the exploitation and activation of loopholes at ports of entry, and the production of the ‘detainee’ as a representational practice that is central to processes of detention.¹⁰²

A key conclusion from this body of work on the geography of detention is that “there is no single geography of detention, but an emerging and continually changing assemblage of spatial tactics.”¹⁰³ Further, as detention practices, spaces, and detainee bodies are increasingly mobile and decentralized into a networked geography, new forms of order and calculability are beginning to emerge, and the so-called ‘exceptionality’ of detention practices is being routinized and re-codified within new forms of governance and control.¹⁰⁴

situation, and is as such unrelated or contrary to law, how is it possible for the order to contain a lacuna precisely where the decisive situation is concerned? And what is the meaning of this lacuna?” See Agamben, *State of Exception*, 23.

¹⁰¹ Gregory, “The Black Flag”; Gregory, “Vanishing Points.”

¹⁰² Blomley, *Law, Space, and the Geographies of Power*; Delaney, “Making Nature/Marking Humans: Law as a Site of (Cultural) Production.” On loopholes see Chalfin, “Containing Risk and the Bureaucratization of Security on Europe’s Maritime Frontier”; Nordstrom, *Global Outlaws*. On ‘detainee’ representation, see Coleman, “State of Exception Review.”

¹⁰³ Martin and Mitchelson, “Geographies of Detention and Imprisonment: Interrogating Spatial Practices of Confinement, Discipline, Law, and State Power,” 467.

¹⁰⁴ Diken and Laustsen, *Culture of Exception*.

Conclusion

My goal in this dissertation is to describe and complicate the historical geographical performance of a narrowly defined, yet spatially inconsistent, improvisational, and contingent set of wartime practices that mark the limits of the military detention assemblage. I explore the transformations that have occurred at a key site in the making of the above-described security narrative. While this dissertation is concerned with outlining a history of the present, the above literature deals almost exclusively with questions of contemporary security. The research that follows this literature review is concerned with the question of *how* this particular iteration of the present has materialized in and through spaces of wartime capture and evacuation over the course of the past sixty years.

Sequestration and removal are key spatial performances in the landscape of contemporary global security. As the borders between civilian space and the battlefield, between peace and war, have blurred in international law, in military strategy, and in the quotidian spaces of places the world over, the liminal spaces that form the core of my dissertation have begun to migrate *out* from their complicated locations within the preserves of a clearly defined battlefield and *in* to the spaces of everyday life in global neoliberalism.

**PLACING THE INTERFACE, WRITING THE INTERFACE:
The Spaces Between Kill, Capture, and the Camp**

The prisoner of war may be narrowly defined as a member or potential member of an armed force captured by an enemy force during a time of recognized warfare. He is more than a casualty to be subtracted out of war's history, more than a neutralized vehicle of propaganda, object of charitable relief, or pawn of diplomatic negotiations. He is a special type of participant in modern warfare, a unique historical entity whose impact requires a bit of special methodology.

—Gerard H. Davis,
Prisoners of War in Twentieth-Century Economies

From the very earliest times, ever since man has fought man, the problem of the prisoner of war, the captured enemy, has been a vexing one.

—George S. Prugh,
Prisoners at War: The POW Battleground

Introduction: The Relational Spaces Between Capture and the Camp

Towards the later part of 1965, if one were to rummage through the pockets of a US or South Vietnamese soldier on their first mission in Southeast Asia, he likely would have come upon a 3" x 5" card that had been printed (in English or Vietnamese) for them by Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV). Issued to all deployed personnel, the card—titled *The Enemy in Your Hands*—was meant to remind soldiers of their basic training, when they watched instructional videos and took short classes that detailed their responsibilities under the Third Geneva Conventions of 1949 (GPW). It offered a simple set of guidelines for the soldier to follow in the eventuality that he encountered and detained a person on the battlefield:¹

THE ENEMY IN YOUR HANDS

As a member of the US Military Forces, you will comply with the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention of 1949 to which your country adheres. Under this Convention:

YOU CAN AND WILL

Disarm your prisoner
 Immediately search him thoroughly
 Require him to be silent
 Segregate him from other prisoners
 Guard him carefully
 Take him to the place designated by your commander

YOU CANNOT AND MUST NOT

Mistreat your prisoner
 Humiliate or degrade him
 Take any of his personal effects which do not have significant military value
 Refuse him medical treatment if required and available.²

¹ Prugh, *Law at War*, 75; Carvin, *Prisoners of America's Wars*, 110.

² "Tab A to Appendix II to Annex L: Detainee treatment Card (front)," 29 December 1971, Box 39, RG 389. Record of the Provost Marshal General 1941- : POW/ Civilian Internee Information Center; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). RG 389/290/76/6/Shelf 3. For an alternative version of this card, see Appendix H of Prugh, *Law at War*.

The chaos of the battlefield, and the long difficult operations far from military outposts meant that these cards did not stay in soldiers' uniforms for long, but the reasons behind the issuance of the card were clear. Personnel out in the field, away from the oversight and governing eyes of the US command structure, were capable of seeking personal revenge on civilians or combatants that would exceed the limits articulated by the GPW, thereby compromising the military effort and potentially making the state liable to war crimes litigation. The state, in its attempts to retain its monopoly on legitimate uses of violence, needed to train soldiers in how to perform at the limit between lethal violence on the one hand, and care and custody on the other. The performance of capture and evacuation thus had to be regulated, observed, anticipated, and prepared for: the aggression, anger, and brutality of war needed to be channeled in ways that were both legal and militarily useful.³ In the same way that a soldier learns to fire a gun or deploy a weapon, here, they had to learn to use restraint and emotional control. Even while they were preparing to kill, soldiers needed to be ready to capture.

The Enemy in Your Hands points towards a space outside the walls of the EPW camps in which the GPW—the international law pertaining to detainment practices—is nonetheless still in effect. In this chapter I argue that military detainment begins in these distributed spaces of encounter, in the space between the battlefield and the camp. Here, I explore these complicated liminal spaces as both a set of ideas: how has battlefield apprehension been *thought*; and as a set of bodily practices: how has it been done?

³ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 149.

‡ ‡ ‡

In the first section of this chapter, I frame out a theoretical entry point for understanding the idea of capture and evacuation as a spatial process. Just what are we talking about when we refer to capture? How do we distinguish capture and evacuation from other forms of battlefield action, and other types of battlefield violence? I engage with these questions by exploring apprehension at two discursive scales: First, working through an understanding of capture and evacuation in their broadest sense, I draw on etymology to highlight not only the complexity of the spaces between both kill and capture, and capture and the camp, but also the processes involved in *thinking* their apprehension.

Next, I detail the fluid role that the idea of capturing bodies on a battlefield has played in theories of late modern war. While thinking capture might seem straightforward, it actually has a rather unstable relationship within recent military thought which often circulates around the collisions between war and humanitarian interests. To explore the ramifications of these affinities, I pursue the following questions: If there is an enemy of global space, how is their capture and evacuation to be imagined? How has the relationship between killing and capturing been complicated by forms of war-for-peace, in which, according to Rupert Smith, you are often fighting “on behalf of your enemy”?⁴

In Part II of the chapter, I turn to the ways in which the *doing* of capture has been woven through the pages of military doctrine. In short, I ask: What is the point of

⁴ Pfanner, “Methods of Warfare: Interview with General Sir Rupert Smith,” 727.

capture? I outline the more concrete problems that surround the shifting utility of apprehension on the late modern battlefield: What tasks must be accomplished in the space between capture and the camp? By whom? Where? Through a discourse analysis of military doctrine, I next argue that the ontological status of the ‘prisoner’ of war in this literature has shifted significantly from a human being to an abstract, dehumanized object to be managed.⁵ This textual abstraction, I argue, is paralleled by an increasingly expansive understanding of where and what the battlefield is, who is on it, and what types of legal protections are available to those who occupy it.

Without a clearly defined battlefield, there can be no clearly defined space in which doctrine is effective. Yet at the same time, a doctrine that does not account for the spatial ambiguities of the late modern battlefield does little to inform military personnel about their expected normative behavior. The ways in which the military defines “the battlefield may still define the privilege to kill,” while simultaneously “humanitarians...want to define the not-battlefield to open a space for humanitarian law.”⁶ Where are practices of capture situated in this space between war and humanitarianism? Here I contend that by shifting focus to the space between capture and the camp, we can reveal a productive and paradoxical interface—a space in and through which new forms of life and control are made.

‡ ‡ ‡

In military doctrine, as well as in wartime reporting and international law, this place where and when a person comes under the control of American forces is referred

⁵ This shift is detailed in Chapters 5 and 6.

⁶ Megret, “War and the Vanishing Battlefield,” 4. Megret is citing Kennedy, *Of War and Law*, 121.

to as the initial point of capture.⁷ It is at this point that hostile bodies are removed from the battlefield, depriving “the opponent of his fighting efficiency” in order to increase the chances of defeating the enemy.⁸ For the combatant, the effects of capture should be statistically equal to the effects of the kill: whether an enemy is killed or detained, there are fewer potential killers on the battlefield. This synergy between the terms is conveyed in the language of doctrine itself, which has long posited that a primary goal of military operations is to ‘kill or capture’ the enemy. This overlap has even extended to calling the recent night raids in Afghanistan—kill/capture raids—implying that on some level there is a kind of parity between the two.⁹ The ease of movement between the terms implies an either/or logic: both accomplish the same thing.

Aside from the basic distinctions between life and death, other important differences distinguish kill from capture in battlefield practice. Consider, for instance, the fact that the laws of war accommodate “frequent mistakes in the targeting context,” which can lead to civilian death or other forms of “collateral damage,” but similar errors in detention operations “are widely condemned as lawless.”¹⁰ In contemporary war, a certain amount of civilian death is to be expected, and an acceptable civilian body count is determined relative to a framework of ‘proportionality’. By determining these tolerable levels of civilian death, military strategists and international humanitarian

⁷ See, for instance: *Detainee Operations at the Point of Capture: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (FOUO)*.

⁸ Reid, *Prisoner of War*, 35.

⁹ See, for instance: Edge, “Kill/Capture.”

¹⁰ Waxman, “Detention as Targeting: Standards of Certainty and Detention of Suspected Terrorists,” 1368. Waxman is a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs and current Columbia Law School professor.

legal scholars have together negotiated an economy of violence, a calculated ethical threshold for civilian killing on the battlefield. Eyal Weizman calls this threshold the 'least of all evils'—beyond which war becomes excessive in the eyes of IHL.¹¹ Death, even a certain degree of civilian death, is somehow given space in this collusion between humanitarian law and military force. It is understood as an unfortunate yet intrinsic part of legitimate war. Wrongful detainment, misidentification, and especially death in spaces of detainment, on the other hand, do not figure into this proportional calculus of violence. Performing a wartime capture instigates a different framework for international law, one in which practices like the use of lethal force, indefinite detainment, and torture exceed the bounds of proportionality.¹²

The distinctions between killing and capturing cascade out in many directions from these complex entry points. Note, for instance, that hundreds upon hundreds of linear feet of shelving in research libraries are given to books exploring the historical distribution and deployment of lethal weapons. This is a central component of military scholarship, and it is one that seemingly gives the use of deadly force legitimacy in and of itself. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) is not evaluated based on a relationship with any particular piece of military technology used by a specific enemy. Rather, UAVs offer up a set of potential uses that at any historical moment can be applied to any battlefield or any enemy. Drones, like tanks; radar; the helicopter; atomic

¹¹ The ideas and metrics used to identify acceptable limits to proportionality are explored in Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*.

¹² The practice of torture in US military prisons in Iraq and Afghanistan itself was designed to utilize the gaps in international humanitarian law. See Nisa, "Demons, Phantoms, Monsters: Law, Bodies, and Detention in the War on Terror."

weapons; or most other military technology, are analyzed in terms of their technological development, their particular capacities, the ethics of their use, and their strategic or tactical efficacy. Thus while Shapiro notes that “weapons design articulates a space of encounter” that can reveal the state’s approach “to valuing, excluding, and sustaining versus eliminating forms of life,” a weapon’s efficacy is understood relative to its performance and not to how the enemy is imagined.¹³ American use of lethal force is not meant to establish parity or reciprocity—it is meant to dominate.

The same is not necessarily true for detainment. Detention is itself part of another equation. It is not a spatial technique aimed at the annihilation of a threat, but one designed to maintain the life of the enemy just to the basic minimum requirement to conform to international law or the basic necessities of biological life. If violence in the humanitarian present is positioned relative to a ‘least of all evils’ threshold, wartime detainment seeks to explore the ‘least of all goods’.

The definition of the border between the least good and the least evil is often established by the demands of relationality and reciprocity, rather than by way of any kind of fixed ethic. Wartime detention, though frequently situated as an integral part of both war’s violence and practices of battlefield management, is nearly always positioned as a relational practice whose successes and failures are refracted off of the detainment practices of the enemy and the perceived pathologies of enemy culture. Perhaps this is a result of the historical legacy of military detention, which was for so long guided by the idea, if not the practice, that the way that a capturing power treated its enemy prisoners

¹³ Shapiro, “The New Violent Cartography,” 304.

had a direct effect on the way that its own prisoners were subsequently treated by the enemy. At the same time, this understanding of the importance of reciprocity is not without political implications, as evidenced in most research devoted to the history of military detention. Such works tend to discuss these reciprocal relationships *after* noting a particular deficiency in the American detainment practice: There was disorder in our camps during the Korean War, they note, but *always remember that their camps were worse*.¹⁴

These particular relational practices were even of use when discussing the violence of those that the US trained and funded. Such was the case when images of abuse and abject conditions—including mass graves and overcrowded subterranean ‘tiger cages’ holding malnourished, tortured, and injured political prisoners—at the provincial prison on the South Vietnamese island of Con Son were taken by a congressional delegation and published in *Life Magazine*. The United States went to great lengths to position this not as a problem of training, oversight, or adequate investment in prison infrastructure, but of a particular cultural pathology.¹⁵ Ross Adair, the ranking Republican on the Southeast Asia Committee, declared on NBC News that the torture was evidence of “a system which is Oriental, the standards of which are quite different than ours.” He then offered the argument that the use of torture and deprivation in the

¹⁴ This particular relational juxtaposition forms the basic narrative structure of one of the most cited books on prisoners in the Korean War, William L. White’s *The Captives Of Korea*. That book moves breathlessly between descriptions of Americans working hard to meet the requirements of the Red Cross and the despicable, abject practices of the North Koreans. The structure of this deeply Orientalist narrative essentially guarantees that the Other is viewed as less than human.

¹⁵ “The Tiger Cages of Con Son.” Offering further evidence of the importance of reciprocity between friend and enemy detainee handling, the hope was that by sending this delegation to prisons that were managed by the U.S., Americans would be allowed more leverage with the North Vietnamese in negotiating the release of American POWs in Hanoi.

camp was completely unrelated to US interests or activities in the region:

“There are things done and tolerated in that part of the world that we would certainly not accept here. I think perhaps that this system is representative of such a condition. We are dealing with another sovereign government and we have to respect the rights of that government.”¹⁶

However, the fact is that not only did the US directly fund and develop this provincial prison infrastructure, there is also significant evidence that suggests that the CIA directly trained the national police forces in South Vietnam (and elsewhere) to torture prisoners.¹⁷ Yet Adair and others were nonetheless able to generate discursive distance by embedding the camps in orientalist visions of the Other. If their camps were not worse than our camps, this was not because of *our* administrative failings or a lack of oversight. It was because of *their* culture. Capture and detention seem to be inextricably bound to the violence and practice of the Other: folding “geographic distance into Orientalist hierarchies of human value.”¹⁸

Yet in military history and strategic studies, the methods and volume of killing civilians and combatants in war are somehow largely self-referential and self-evident: attempts are made to understand them on their own terms. This is how I want to understand the practices of capture too. Thus, rather than get mired in ethical questions about ‘us’ versus ‘them,’ here I explore American-led practices through American performance and on American terms.¹⁹

¹⁶ “South Vietnam / Con Son Prison.”

¹⁷ McCoy, *A Question of Torture*.

¹⁸ Feldman, “Empire’s Verticality,” 330; Gregory, *The Colonial Present*.

¹⁹ There exist great variations in order and violence in spaces of wartime detainment. It is no doubt true that for most American detainees, the North Korean camps were deadly, torturous, liminal spaces to a different degree than the UN camps. The same frequently holds true for captivity under the North Vietnamese, Iraqi, and all manner of ‘unstructured’ non-state actors. It is worth

PART I:

Placing the Interface: Battlefield Apprehensions

The sense of death is most in apprehension.

—William Shakespeare,
Measure for Measure

In the late 1500s, the noun ‘apprehension’ described both the seizure of a person or seafaring vessel and the action of grasping with the intellect. While conceptually quite divergent, when taken together they animate the space of the slash in Foucault’s theory of power/knowledge: to know is invariably to take control of something, to limit or bound it. Seizing, too, produces what Foucault calls a “field of knowledge.”²⁰ Put to the question of apprehension, the seizure of a body is necessarily the seizure of information or knowledge, while capturing information (or military *intelligence*) necessarily shifts power relations over bodies.

About a century after the word ‘apprehension’ first appeared in the English language, another form of ‘apprehension’ emerged to describe a person’s anxiety about future events: the state of being seized, on some level, by fear. While this polysemy is common enough that it doesn’t necessarily require exposition, it is the tensing of these

noting, though, that differences also exist in the types and frequency of violence across the history of American camps. I echo Derek Gregory’s sentiment that the “objection is not to claims that ‘they’ do such things, but to the disingenuous implication that ‘we’ do not.” In war, *things*—horrific and brutal and awful things—are done, full stop. See Gregory, “War and Peace,” fn. 20, p. 182.

²⁰ Of this field, Foucault writes: “We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.” Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 27.

apprehensions to which I wish to draw attention: one is apprehended in the present, just as one apprehends information in the present. But one is apprehensive about the future, about the potential tomorrow, about *virtually* anything that one cannot, in the present, know. Through this lens, apprehension is an epistemological question about forms of knowledge, yes, but it is also an ontological status, a mode of being that is tensed between the times of knowing, seizure, and fear.

In his recent work, Ben Anderson elaborates on the complexity of this tensing with regards to the performance of counterinsurgency, writing that for the counterinsurgent—for whom being able to distinguish between friendly civilians and enemy insurgents is a key to ‘victory’—the population “as a collective is presumed to be tensed between their present status and their future status as friend or enemy.” Indeed, the call from the dreaded future effectively repositions the population on the battlefield, whose lives become caught between these temporalities. Anderson continues by noting that what “becomes important to face is the present *tendency* an individual or group possesses to become an enemy or friend in the future.”²¹

This apprehension is two-faced. It is a primary engine for security initiatives themselves: activated by a fear of the alien other and his potential to disrupt networks of security, the counterinsurgent must act now. Yet it can just as easily be applied to the captive, who, upon seizure, is thrust into a state of apprehension marked by an unknown whose perils have been articulated in propaganda (you will be killed if

²¹ Anderson, “Facing the Future Enemy,” 222. (Italics in original) On the centrality of distinguishing civilians from combatants, see the recently revised counterinsurgency field manual. Army, *Counterinsurgency Field Manual (US Army Field Manual No. 3-24/Marine Corps Warfighting Publication No. 3-33.5)*.

captured) and historical fact (many have been killed when captured). As how war is performed and how bodies are captured changes, these meanings and tenses begin to blend and blur into one another. Again, Anderson's perspective is useful:

“[i]n counterinsurgency the enemy cannot be faced for two reasons: because he/she only appears in punctual events of violence before disappearing again and because he/she has not yet become an enemy. This means, however, that new categories of people outside of a civilian/combatant distinction emerge, sometimes with catastrophic consequences.”²²

The inability to *face* the future enemy, to see the true extent of the danger with which one is engaging, requires the counterinsurgent to explore and develop new tactics of visibility—like surveillance regimes, censuses, checkpoints—and lay the foundations for a future control. In short, apprehensions about an invisible but possibly dreadful future require the development of diverse and technologically sophisticated technologies of apprehension in the present. Forms of battlefield knowledge production are currently geared towards identifying, describing, and taking control of this invisible-yet-potential intent, marking it in the present, and acting on it straightaway. Such tenting subjects the ‘enemy’ population to a host of different techniques—statistical probabilities, pattern-of-life analyses, digitally coded algorithms—that not only pre-classify them as ‘enemy’ before any violence takes place but also offers a justification for future military intervention.

Preemptive classification is not unique to counterinsurgency, but rather dates back to the earliest iterations of urbanized war, in which, according to Paul Virilio, it was “no longer enough to be quickly educated about one's surroundings; *one must also*

²² Anderson, “Facing the Future Enemy,” 222.

educate the surroundings. In other words, one must try to preserve, *on that very spot*, one's *head start* over the enemy."²³ Preserving this head start means establishing the ideal situation for the observation and exposure of the enemy—authoring (and increasingly, automating) the landscape—and introducing new tactics to guide and control the movement and velocity of the battlefield. To arrest, to understand, and to fear the possibilities of an unwanted future: all three of these apprehensions merge in the ways in which populations in a warzone are imagined, managed, and singled out for detention.

Capture, too, is a slippery term. A person can be captured, that is, arrested or detained, but one can also capture the essence of an idea, or harness, translate, and encode information in the form of data capture or motion capture. The first iteration is a performance of the police and legal apparatus, while the second is the enactment of a technological process. Yet capture, while chiefly considered something that happens at a point, an instant fixed in space and time, is nearly always an undertaking that draws in and relies on myriad technical, political, economic assemblages. A camera, for instance, can capture light with the click of a button; however, the mechanisms of human action, environmental contingency, and mechanical configuration that freeze, represent, and reproduce that moment are largely removed from the analysis of the photographic object. A picture is typically an image, and rarely a camera-body-light-action assemblage.

Bruno Latour draws attention to the opacity surrounding attempts to disambiguate these levels of mediation between actors and artifacts. He calls this

²³ Virilio, *Popular Defense & Ecological Struggles*, 15. (Italics in original)

'blackboxing,' a spatial concealment that, like Heidegger's hammer, begins to unravel an object's singularity precisely at the moment when it ceases to function as anticipated.²⁴ Latour gives the example of a film projector that breaks during a lecture. As the sequence unfolds, the projector moves from a "silent and mute intermediary" in a singular process (the lecture), to a series of actors (lecturer, repair-person, the projector itself), objects (the individual parts of the machine and the tools necessary to fix it), and performances (the bodily movements of the actors involved) that are each their own black boxes. "Whereas a moment before," he writes, "the projector scarcely existed, now even its parts have individual existence, each its own 'black box.' In an instant, our 'projector' grew from being composed of zero parts, to one, to many."²⁵ It has unseen and unsee-able capacities lurking within its material shell. How do we face these? How do we apprehend them?

As "something that *does something*, that one does something to, and that does something back—a partner in...a dance of agency," these black boxes are ubiquitous.²⁶

²⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*. See also: Harman, *Towards Speculative Realism*.

²⁵ Latour, "On Technical Mediation," 36. Latour later (and again with reference to Heidegger) complicates the idea of the black box, thinking through the results of momentary associations not as objects, but as *gatherings*. Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 114. Latour's outlining of the capacities that exceed the simple registration of an object in space resonates with Bill Brown's disambiguation of the object and the thing. Brown writes that we "look through objects...yet only catch a glimpse of things." Objects, in his rendering, are the material entities that occupy the landscape—the bricks and stories and tools—by which and through which 'we' become legible. He asserts that we "begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us." The thing, as his example of the broken drill (or film projector) demonstrates, is that which exists in the beyond of the object: the object's capacities and networks, but also its potential to fulfill altogether different roles than it does as a 'functioning' object. Things exceed what is implied by their materiality and assert themselves as a particular subject-object relationship. See Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.

²⁶ Pickering, *The Cybernetic Brain*, 20,21. On this ubiquity, Pickering quotes British cybernetician Ross Ashby from his 1956 *Introduction to Cybernetics*: "What is being suggested now is not that black boxes behave somewhat like real objects but that the real objects are in fact all black boxes, and that we have in fact been operating with black boxes all our lives."

In a public lecture in New York City, for example, war photographer Simon Norfolk meditated on the nature and capacities of an Internet router located on an American military base in Afghanistan. He notes that the router is central to the functioning of contemporary military violence—connecting outposts to bases in the US or sending the coordinates for a lethal strike to an unmanned aerial vehicle in the air over the battlefield. But, he adds, “...this type of war cannot be photographed...you can document the outside ... but the guts—the terrain of warfare—remain hidden.”²⁷ The router works by performing connections, by establishing an interface between information and action, by distributing power/knowledge: in military parlance it operates as part of a logistical system. Quite literally a black box, the router draws attention to our inability to capture the capacities of myriad *things* on the battlefield—improvised explosive devices, dense urban corridors or winding residential compounds—as well as to the uncertainty generated by the relationships between these things and to their destructive potential. But it also draws attention to the odd human/non-human synergies with which the war fighter is confronted: bodies on the battlefield, like routers, conceal their connections and affiliations, only revealing them through actions which otherwise remain outside of systems of legibility and representation. Capturing a body, then, is not simply a question of restraining it, but of unearthing its potential for deviance, for violence, or for nothing at all. It is a question of locating the relationships of that body in a system.

Additionally, the router draws attention to the fact that one of the primary

²⁷ “Conflict/Cities: Simon Norfolk and Noah Shachtman in Conversation,” 13 September 2011, Studio-X NYC.

terrains of late modern warfare is in fields of information, and information capture, too, is vital for the enactment of global security. Unlike bodily arrest, Philip Agre notes that captured information is “not spoken of as fleeing, escaping or resenting its imprisonment.”²⁸ This apprehension is organized into what he calls a specific “grammar of action,” an arrangement, sequence, or pattern that facilitates specific ends. “One might refer to a cash register in a fast-food restaurant,” he writes, “as ‘capturing’ a patron’s order, the implication being that the information is not simply used on the spot, but is also passed along to a database.”²⁹ Not simply sequestration, capture here is a mode of movement and reconfiguration that makes certain things—the product, its price, sales tax, and the total cost of the purchase—representable in real time and for specific ends, both at the point of sale as well as in regional supply chain management centers and beyond. It is also about assembling certain actors and objects in particular ways in order to “‘cleanly’ express particular semantic notions or distinctions,” in a way that erases the distinction between the thing captured and its informational presence in the database: object and data are synchronized.³⁰

Stepping through the cash register and back onto the battlefield: both the biological body and the data body are increasingly interchangeable in the eyes of the apparatuses of wartime spatial control. Once captured, for instance, the biological body must be treated and managed in accordance with the law, and new ways of managing it must be exploited within international law. But the information-body, the data-

²⁸ Agre, “Surveillance and Capture,” 744.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

double—all of our traces and residues in the information network—must also be managed, manipulated, coaxed; hence the ever-growing number of rules governing the proper handling of battlefield information to ensure it is sent through the correct channels, classified, and defended. Improperly handled information can lead to the siloing of data: its undesirable sequestration away from the tightly scripted flows enabled by war’s contemporary information architecture. Captured data must be handled properly, or new risks and vulnerabilities may emerge.³¹

Battlefield apprehensions (capturing bodies *and* information), then, are processes of encountering black boxes and enacting logistical interfaces that seek to maximize the surfaces of encounter and collision between the body material and the body informational, extending and multiplying the availability of interfaces they share.³² Given that capture is a process, rather than a fixed point, then any consideration of its performance should surely evaluate the means and not just note the end result generated by those means (camp locations, prisoner populations, capture rates, insurgent hot spots, etc.). Capture is a question of how we interface with black boxes. It is a question of apprehending both the body and the discursive registers within and through which that body circulates.

Such discursiveness occurs at the level of translation: capture is a moving across, a

³¹ The information silo was, among other things, seen as a contributing factor to US security personnel missing critical data in the lead up to September 11, 2001. The silo in this particular example was frequently referred to as the ‘firewall’ between Central Intelligence and the FBI. See Perrow, “The Disaster After 9/11: The Department of Homeland Security and the Intelligence Reorganization.”

³² A number of geographers have recently explored the proliferation of these contact zones in/through the North American security imaginary. See, for instance: Coleman, “Immigration Geopolitics Beyond the Mexico–US Border”; Mountz, *Seeking Asylum*; Martin, “Catch and Remove”; Simon, “Suspicious Encounters.”

performance around or through a particular threshold: an interface. Far from being a simple surface or opening—a door, a window, or a computer screen—an interface is in fact, to borrow from John Harwood, “a complex apparatus... it seems to be two-dimensional, it is always at least three dimensional and rendered in-depth; although it seems to be solid and impermeable, it is always carefully perforated to allow strategically mediated interactions.”³³ In passing over or through these thresholds, the capacities of bodies and objects can be diminished, amplified, expanded, or curtailed. Rarely do they remain unchanged. Alexander Galloway suggests that an interface is “that moment where one significant material is understood as distinct from another significant material. In other words, an interface is not a thing, an interface is always an effect. It is always a process or a translation.”³⁴ Interfaces deny the easy distinction between inside and outside, between objects. Citing Francois Dagognet, Galloway writes that an interface “both separates and mixes the two worlds that meet together there, that run into it. It becomes a fertile nexus.”³⁵ To consider capture is to consider the processes involved in traversing an interface, to concentrate attention on the spaces and relations between the purportedly fixed objects (bodies, buildings, systems, technologies) that populate the battlefield rather than on the fixed objects themselves.

If we overlook the complexities of this interface, we dramatically simplify the spatiality of detainment, offering up a neat division between the performance of war’s lethal violence and the performance of detention. Imagining the process of

³³ Harwood, *The Interface*, 10.

³⁴ Galloway, “The Unworkable Interface,” 939.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 938.

apprehension as the enactment of an interface, however, enables a more complex understanding of the elision of data capture and bodily capture. Both involve the reconciliation and mediation of objects between two or more systems of power/knowledge; both involve the production of “objectified individuals” that will subsequently be classified, sorted, and differentially treated; both—and with dramatically different material consequences—involve the apprehension of life.³⁶

The transitions, interpellations, and translations that occur at and through this interface are significant. As Walter Benjamin notes in his seminal text on the politics of translation, “texts contain their potential translation between the lines.”³⁷ Warfare also inhabits a space between. It has long been dominated by linear discourse—there are military flanks and borders, insides and outsides—and the apparent solidity of these lines has often had “the effect of *veiling* the world of performance from us,” of reifying many of war’s black boxes.³⁸

Below I turn my attention to the enactment of these processes and transformations, which frequently devolve into the clear points and lines on the battlefield or the fixed walls of the camp. By tracing the ways in which thinkers have framed the utility of apprehension, I unveil the frequently paradoxical manifestations of the interface between capture and the camp.

³⁶ Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*, 86. Kitchin and Dodge, building on the work of Philip Agre, note that *capta* (derived from the Latin *capere*, meaning to take, as opposed to data which is etymologically linked to the Latin *dare*, to give) and the ‘capture model’, in distributed systems, can be used across a broad spectrum of spaces and aimed at a broader population. See Agre, “Surveillance and Capture.”

³⁷ Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” 82.

³⁸ Pickering, *The Cybernetic Brain*, 20.

Capturing the Wartime Interface: The Collusion of Violence and Care

The captured body has long been part of the calculus of war. From the earliest days of organized warfare, those apprehended on the battlefield were retained as slaves and forced to work for their captors. If allowed to return home at war's end they were often killed for being captured and failing to fight to their own death. As forms of warfare shifted, prisoners were used as bargaining collateral to generate ransom or in exchange for captured officers.³⁹ The captive's expendability did not mean that they were considered unimportant, or beyond the scope of military strategy. Early 19th century military theorist Carl von Clausewitz labeled prisoners and captured weapons as the "objects by which victory is mainly personified," such that the military engagement "will most likely be planned so as to obtain them." In this, he saw "the destruction of the enemy by killing and wounding ... only as a means" to achieving war's desired ends.⁴⁰

Capturing prisoners has tactical and intelligence value, has at times led to the production of a vital labor force for the captor, and has been a central aspect of propaganda and counterintelligence.⁴¹ According to John Hickman, over the long and shifting history of war these 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' uses for prisoners of war and captured non-combatants have ranged from so-called legitimate goals of preventing prisoners of war from rejoining their comrades-in-arms or giving material support to

³⁹ A full historical accounting of the state of prisoners of war is beyond the scope of this project. For an international historical perspective, see Krammer, *Prisoners of War*. For three excellent accountings of American handling of EPWs, see Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands*; Springer, *America's Captives*; Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*.

⁴⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 233.

⁴¹ Davis, "Prisoners of War in Twentieth-Century War Economies," 624.

combatants still in the field, to questionable or illegitimate uses like punishment, display, ideological indoctrination, and aggressive intelligence exploitation.⁴²

Yet warfare has rarely, if ever, been conducted with capture in mind. Rather, war is consistently understood with reference to lethality, and detainees are seen as a complicated remainder or a distraction from war's true objectives. Consider a recent well-received book by Rupert Smith. In making his central argument—that the version of war with strategic fronts and uniformed troops (he terms this industrial war) no longer exists—Smith makes the claim that the sole utility of military force is to “kill people and destroy things.”⁴³ And yet, in spite of this destructive focus, the performance of both industrial war and its replacement, so-called ‘wars amongst the people,’ have utilized detainment, not as an effect of force, but as a specific manifestation of it. In other words, force has as an element of its utility that which *is not* life threatening and destructive, but is in fact life sustaining.⁴⁴

So central was the use (and abuse) of captives to the functioning of war's violence that in the middle of the nineteenth century, a series of international legal provisions were seen as necessary in order to assure that the captive “be held in *protective* custody, the only purpose being to prevent him from further participating in the war.”⁴⁵ The

⁴² Hickman, “What Is a Prisoner of War For?”.

⁴³ Smith, *The Utility of Force*, 8.

⁴⁴ Ben Anderson, for instance, notes that the performance of counterinsurgency is not simply destructive, but a matter of choreographing population control: “the means for the destruction that is at the heart of counterinsurgency—the ending of an insurgency—is through ‘controlling’ a population that is only contingently related to insurgency (through ‘order’, ‘good governance’ and so on).” Force here is neither materially destructive or deadly. See Anderson, “Facing the Future Enemy,” 223.

⁴⁵ Prugh, “Prisoners at War,” 124. Italics mine.

Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Geneva Convention of 1929, and the Third Geneva Convention (GPW) each engaged with ever-more particular questions of who and how persons could be detained in wartime and addressed the conditions under which the enemy body could be forced to labor.⁴⁶ Each of these treaties sees wartime detainment not as a disciplinary tactic, nor as spaces geared towards the production of docile bodies, but as a space to *protect* war fighters from the excesses of violent retribution. The emergence of these regulations coincides with the simultaneous attempt to render war itself as an occurrence between legitimate states and to banish the forms of violence that exceed or contradict this territorial imaginary as illegitimate or criminal. In an effort to limit the use of unsanctioned individual deadly violence, for instance, the Hague Conventions famously place the responsibility for the wellbeing of the prisoner in the control of the capturing government, “not in that of the individuals

⁴⁶ For the purposes of this dissertation, Geneva III *Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* is the most relevant. Some of the issues relating to more contemporary modes of war—such as guerrilla war and wars for ‘national liberation’ were addressed in the Additional Protocols I, and II from 1977. Perhaps keen to the complexities of humanitarian violence, however, the Reagan Administration rejected Protocol I on the basis of what it saw as flaws that would endanger civilians. The provisions to which the Administration was most adamantly opposed were those that:

“would automatically treat as an international conflict any so-called ‘war of national liberation.’ Whether such wars are international or non-international should turn exclusively on objective reality, not on one's view of the moral qualities of each conflict. To rest on such subjective distinctions based on a war's alleged purposes would politicize humanitarian law and eliminate the distinction between international and non-international conflicts. It would give special status to ‘wars of national liberation,’ an ill-defined concept expressed in vague, subjective, politicized terminology. Another provision would grant combatant status to irregular forces even if they do not satisfy the traditional requirements to distinguish themselves from the civilian population and otherwise comply with the laws of war. This would endanger civilians among whom terrorists and other irregulars attempt to conceal themselves.”

Further, he concluded, “the repudiation of Protocol I is one additional step, at the ideological level so important to terrorist organizations, to deny these groups legitimacy as international actors.” See: Reagan, “Message to the Senate Transmitting a Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Conventions.” They remain ungratified.

or corps who captured them.”⁴⁷ This displaced the culpability of actions at the point of capture from the individual to the state and helps to explain why the US military has focused time and resources developing new forms of training and management that target soldiers’ bodily and emotional control.

These new legal frames, however, also opened up the distinct possibility that specific forms of violence would be created that took advantage of the spaces in the laws themselves. The Third Geneva Convention stipulates six criteria that must be met in order for one to qualify as a lawful combatant and, thus, for prisoner of war status and the resultant protections. They are: being organized; fighting under a responsible command; belonging to a Party to the conflict; wearing a fixed distinctive sign; carrying weapons openly; and acting in compliance with the customs and law of war. In a paper on the combatant struggles for legitimacy, Kenneth Watkin highlights the lack of precision that one is confronted with when viewing these criteria through a contemporary lens.⁴⁸ One of the major contentions is that these qualifications are typically left in the hands of the capturing Party, who does the work of interpreting, describing, and documenting the types of activities that occur at the point of capture through their reports, field notes, and interrogation files. Thus one’s status as a lawful or legitimate combatant remains distinctly outside of one’s own power to define. This also means that the captor also writes justifications for apprehension into the military

⁴⁷ See: International Conferences (The Hague), *The Hague Convention (IV)*.

⁴⁸ Watkin, *Warriors Without Rights? Combatants, Unprivileged Belligerents, and the Struggle Over Legitimacy*.

record. The question of the enemy in your hands is also the question of the enemy's legitimacy in your hands.

Beyond this, these provisions are modeled on the type of symmetrical, idealized form of state-on-state warfare that was dominant in the early-twentieth-century. But this idealization of course never really took shape. Even before the GPW were ratified by the US, they were already in the midst of a war on the Korean peninsula in which no party to the conflict had directly ratified the treaty: The UN joint command itself—as a coalition of 16 states fighting under US leadership—was a declared belligerent; the US itself had signed but not yet ratified the treaty; neither the UN or the US recognized the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a sovereign state; and the southern end of the peninsula was still itself undergoing to processes of decolonization.⁴⁹ Perhaps because of this mismatch between the legitimacy offered through IHL and the transformations of war technologies and practices, by 1975, legal scholars were already lamenting that “[t]hose present at Geneva...hoped that prisoner treatment could be improved. A quarter century later, the bright optimism of Geneva has faded.”⁵⁰

The captured body, then, is in many ways a reflection of the paradoxical underpinnings of late modern war—that deadly violence is often used in the name of the preservation of the life of humanity (as imagined by specific populations in light of a state-centric view of war) itself.⁵¹ With the power to annihilate places and populations,

⁴⁹ Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960,” 169.

⁵⁰ Zillman, “Political Uses of Prisoners of War,” 237.

⁵¹ Dillon and Reid, *The Liberal Way of War*. Dillon and Reid refer to this as a paradox of liberal war, though as Chandler notes, they are never clear ‘which’ version of liberalism they are deploying in which war, and thus the practices and peoples involved in war’s prosecution are reified under a

war in the shadows of the atomic bomb began to focus even more on issues of the maintenance of certain forms of human life. A type of war-for-peace, late modern war is framed around an ontological condition that depends on the simultaneous performance of war *and* peace.⁵² This fluid and often-paradoxical topology of violence is conveyed in Rupert Smith's claim that "[y]ou are acting on behalf of your enemy; you are even co-operating with him."⁵³ The "ultimate image" of the *bare life* that emerges through this blending of humanitarianism and warfare is described succinctly by Slavoj Žižek, who highlights the paralyzing ambiguity accompanying the contemporary "American war plane flying above Afghanistan: one can never be sure whether it will be dropping bombs or food parcels."⁵⁴

Within the detention compound itself, this form of humanitarian violence is perhaps best illustrated in the mobile force-feeding chair photographed at the Guantánamo Bay Strategic Internment Facility (SIF) by Edmund Clark [Figure 3.1].⁵⁵ A far cry from spaces of administrative disorder and abject violence that are often conveyed by images of war prisons, this image of the clinical chair presents a vision of Guantánamo as a medically sterile and environmentally controlled institution. Yet it

single term 'liberal'. I thus use 'late modern' war, as it is less encumbered by the definitional requirements of specific liberalisms. See Chandler, "Liberal War and Foucaultian Metaphysics," 87.

⁵² On this interrelationship, Rey Chow writes "Rather than being irreconcilable opposites, war and peace are coexisting, collaborative functions in the continuum of a virtualized world. More crucially still, only the privileged nations of the world can afford to wage war and preach peace at one and the same time." Chow, *The Age of the World Target*, 38. See also Gregory, "War and Peace."

⁵³ Pfanner, "Methods of Warfare: Interview with General Sir Rupert Smith," 727.

⁵⁴ Žižek, "Are We in a War?". See also Anderson, "Facing the Future Enemy."

⁵⁵ For a gallery of Clark's photographs from Guantánamo, see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/gallery/2010/nov/03/Guantánamo-photographs-edmund-clark-gallery/#/?picture=368316593&index=0>

also highlights a form of control in which ‘care and custody’ of the human body, performed by way of a series of medical processes and procedures is nonetheless, for the detainee, still physically debilitating and mentally abusive. US detention policy and IHL dictate that prisoners should not be allowed to starve themselves to death, foreclosing one of the main avenues for political resistance that remain available to the indefinitely sequestered body.⁵⁶ If the state loses control of the terms of death, the risk is that the prisoners, in some form, are given space to take control of their prison/bodies. This excess meaning generated by claiming the terms of one's own corporeal death (as opposed to their political death, which ostensibly occurred with their indefinite detention) can circulate in uncontrolled ways within and beyond the prison walls, and thus poses a unique threat that must be managed.

The result is an object that is determined entirely by state necropolitics: the sovereign authority over the “power to kill, to allow to live, or to expose to death.”⁵⁷ The force-feeding chair is a technology of violence that seeks to preserve the life of the prisoner population so as to control the contours of their geographies of death. This is a clear manifestation of what Weizman calls the humanitarian present, one that sees the collusion of “technologies of humanitarianism, human rights and humanitarian law with military and political power.” It is in these complicated contact zones that “all

⁵⁶ For a detailed exploration of prisoners’ use of their own bodies as a form of spatial and political resistance, see Allen Feldman’s discussions of hunger strikes and dirty riots in Northern Ireland. Feldman, *Formations of Violence*.

⁵⁷ Mbembe, “Necropolitics,” 12.



Fig. 3.1: Camp 6: Mobile Force Feeding Chair by Edmund Clark

political oppositions are replaced by the elasticity of degrees, negotiations, proportions and balances.”⁵⁸ The lack of clarity between the maintenance of life and the prevention of death, between sustenance and violence, is mirrored by the blurred spectrum of threats that trace across the continuums of war and crime, military and civilian space, and what Bigo has referred to as the Mobius ribbon of internal and external security(ies).⁵⁹

Some scholars overemphasize these blurring borders, quickly jumping from an overlap or problematic synergy between various spatial formations of violence to erasing scalar distinctions altogether.⁶⁰ While being mindful of the dangers of overstating the effects of these analytical lenses, it is nonetheless important to note that the image of Western nationhood built around what Stephen Graham calls “Westphalian binaries” is eroding, that there are increasingly parallels between removing the enemy from the battlefield and removing them from the space of the globe.⁶¹ This effects how capture is imagined and enacted. Who is an enemy of *global* space? Killing a body in a global war dispenses with the threat of the enemy Other—real

⁵⁸ Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, Kindle Location 141–143.

⁵⁹ Bigo, “The Mobius Ribbon of Internal and External Security(ies).”

⁶⁰ For instance, Leerom Medovoi, in his otherwise-excellent article “Global Society Must Be Defended,” notes that “there is no distinction to be made between internal and external threats. Everyone who threatens the globe’s civil order is, at this point, conceived as internal to it but simultaneously also as fair game for the open warfare formerly declared only against external enemies.” This denies that the internal threat is still *imagined* and *treated* differently than the external threat, even if they are conceived of in similar ways. As the broad ranging public debate about the imprisonment of supposed Wikileaks leaker Bradley Manning demonstrates, in order for an internal threat to be, for instance, indefinitely detained, a considerable amount of discursive work must be done to externalize them. The legacies of colonialism are still very much present in the governance of global insecurity, and the alien other is still an other in the prosecution of security initiatives. See Medovoi, “Global Society Must Be Defended,” 55.

⁶¹ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 70.

or perceived. But the methods and techniques for identifying, isolating, and managing a captured body change significantly in each conflict, even within the duration of a single one. How and where is a person to be detained if the territorial limits of war are in question? In performing capture and evacuation, then, the space of the battle and the space of detention speak to and through each other, a performance of battlefield violence *and* a logic of care. They are inseparable: the two registers exist as a single, unified phenomenon.

Despite this imbrication, the machinations of war's violence and the administrative governmentality of the camp are still understood as distinct spatial operations. Even as military discourses that were once dominated by division, line, and flank give way to the more fluid image of the network, the swarm, and the surge, detention is still imagined as a monolith or a series of monoliths: an archipelago of discrete disciplinary enclosures—the camp itself is a black box. These spatial imaginaries are so powerful—and largely uncontested—that popular media rarely acknowledge the patterns of flow between them. When a criminal is apprehended on a popular crime drama, for instance, they often appear in the back of the police car only to reemerge in the next scene in a prison cell. When the public television show *Frontline* recently explored the kill/capture raids in Afghanistan, a village elder was simply escorted off screen to symbolize his arrest.⁶²

Media theorist Alexander Galloway, in his explorations of allegories of control, alludes to this disappearance, noting that “the political sleight of hand” of

⁶² Edge, “Kill/Capture.”

contemporary media is that “the audience is rarely shown the boring minutiae of discipline and confinement that constitute the various apparatuses of control in contemporary societies.”⁶³ But this is not purely an abstract or allegorical relation. What makes this an important political site in the study of war is that this ‘sleight of hand’ has effectively erased this threshold space as a matter of concern. The mechanisms and techniques of arrest are highlighted, the connections between those mechanisms and an imagined endpoint are downplayed. But in the violence and disorder of war, these invisibilities themselves become sites for the deployment of distinct forms of violence and control.

By accepting the spatial simplicity of a point-of-capture, we deny these momentary associations as being simultaneously part of the *doing* of war and the *doing* of detention. We are in effect stabilizing the unstable, and freeze-framing both the spatial and temporal processes and human and non-human forces that come together in this provisional performance. One result is that the spatial performance of capture and evacuation is simplified into two fixed spatial points: the point of capture and the camp. But in the evacuated interface between these points the structure of violence is redefined. The point of capture is a vulnerable and deeply emotional space, where combatants trained to deploy lethal force against an enemy body are suddenly tasked with caring for and defending it.⁶⁴ In passing through this threshold of control, the state’s monopoly over the use of deadly force meets one of the limits of liberal political

⁶³ Galloway, *Gaming*, 89.

⁶⁴ As the 2008 iteration of doctrine notes, this vulnerability extends to the capturing forces as well, labeling capture as the “most vulnerable period of detainee operations.” See: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*, V-2.

philosophy. That is, while it is acceptable to kill the enemy on the battlefield, it is not similarly acceptable to kill them once they are disarmed.⁶⁵ This much Rousseau was aware of, noting in the *Social Contract* that “object of the war” was destroying a political State, and thus:

“the other side has a right to kill its defenders, while they are bearing arms; but as soon as they lay them down and surrender, they cease to be enemies or instruments of the enemy, and become once more merely men, whose life no one has any right to take. Sometimes it is possible to kill the State without killing a single one of its members; and war gives no right which is not necessary to the gaining of its object.”⁶⁶

The idealism of political philosophy, however, cannot target the blind spots of Enlightenment governmentality, and it has proven extremely difficult across the history of war to get combatants to cease to view their captives as ‘enemies or instruments of the enemy.’ Wartime narratives are full of stories of surrendering troops ambushing their would-be captors, of groups of surrendering forces being assassinated by opposing troops, of those same surrendering bodies being attacked by members of their own military who object to their ‘betrayal’, by combatants hiding amongst fleeing refugees—exposing civilians to deadly violence.⁶⁷ Animating the moment of capture—from either end of the gun’s barrel—is the question of whether the encounter will result in death, detention, or continued freedom.

⁶⁵ For a brief exploration of the political implications of this question in a recent context, see; Elliott, “Was Osama Captured Before Being Shot?”

⁶⁶ Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, 8. He goes on to ground these ideals not in the “authority of poets,” but in the natural order of Enlightenment Reason.

⁶⁷ Though surrender is, for one side, a choice that alters the landscape of capture, for the purposes of this dissertation I consider surrender to be largely synonymous with capture. For the captor, as is detailed at various points in this dissertation, apprehending a surrendering body brings with it many of the same apprehensions that occur when capturing a resistant one.

The military needs to prepare, to discipline, and to mold soldier's behavior in light of the eventuality that they encounter, detain, and move other bodies. "Between combat and surrender," writes Gabriel Palmer-Fernández, "between the right to kill enemy soldiers and the duty to protect them, lies a zone of ambiguity wherein it is not clear whether that right or that duty is paramount."⁶⁸ Whether to kill or capture, the "captor's dilemma," is entwined with and complicated by the unknowability of enemy's will to fight on or surrender.⁶⁹

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Above I have offered an exploration of the concept of battlefield apprehension. I did so by first engaging with the very stark distinctions between the use of lethal force and the practice of capturing bodies, between killing and capturing. I considered questions about what happens, in epistemological terms, when a body is captured. I also engaged with the idea of battlefield apprehension as a relationship between the unknown black box of the physical body and the whirlwind of information that forms its geographically extended data-body. In doing so, it becomes clear just how quickly the simple idea of taking one body into the control of another is made more spatially and temporally complicated by the shape of the battlefield and discursive framings of the enemy. I argue that in relegating the process of capture to the spatial location of a point, much is missed.

A productive way, then, to *think* battlefield capture is to consider it as the

⁶⁸ Palmer-Fernández, "White Flags on the Road to Basra," 144.

⁶⁹ Ferguson, *The Pity Of War*, 367. Ferguson offers an historical description of this complexity in the First World War. For a discussion of this dilemma from a Political Science perspective, see: Wallace, "Welcome Guests, or Inescapable Victims?"

processes and techniques of crossing an interface—understood as a relational effect and as a set of rules and practices by which the thing captured comes to be made legible to the captor. In the pages and chapters that follow, I return again and again to the ideas that frame the production and management of the spaces between capture and the camp, to the military thinking that makes capture possible.

First, however, I engage in the next section with the writing and enacting of this captor's dilemma on the battlefield. What types of things happen at this interface? How are they understood, how have they been performed and imagined, and how have these spatial imaginaries been introduced into military doctrine? What can we learn about the interface between capture and the camp by reading the geographic imaginaries presented in military doctrine? In other words, I move from thinking the interface to a consideration of writing and performing it.

PART II:

Writing the Interface: Battlefield Space in Prisoner of War Doctrine

In the practical art of war, the best thing of all is to take the enemy's country whole and intact; to shatter and destroy it is not so good. So, too, it is better to recapture an army entire than to destroy it, to capture a regiment, a detachment or a company entire than to destroy them.

—Sun Tzu,
The Art of War

The idea of the battlefield, as Frederic Mégret notes, is a normative concept that “shapes the activities that are conducted within it.”⁷⁰ Military doctrine, itself a normative text, is the writing of this battlefield imaginary into a set of rules and responsibilities for militarized actors. The narrative construction of the battlefield as a distinct space in doctrine is a process that itself allows for certain violent encounters to be classified as battles, part of a larger structuring discourse of war, while others are ostensibly off the battlefield—safely removed from hostilities.

As a set of texts, military doctrine “erases the broken bodies that lay at the core” of war’s ontology, rendering warfare as a systematic set of rules and structures within which state violence will be deployed and managed.⁷¹ These forms of knowledge production present military action as disinterested, purposeful, and rational. In the Foucauldian sense they seek to discipline, to generate through training the production

⁷⁰ Megret, “War and the Vanishing Battlefield,” 3.

⁷¹ The quoted phrase is adapted from Catherine Lutz’s interpretation of Elaine Scarry’s work in her seminal book, *The Body in Pain*. See: Lutz, “The Military Normal.”

of militarized-yet-docile bodies.⁷² Doctrine's generic battlefields and enemies, and its systemic organization and structure, distance the reader from the lived precarity of war. Carolyn Nordstrom has written that the "myth of orderly war is more bearable," yet the underlying aim of doctrine is in service of this myth.⁷³ The very reliance on doctrine itself generates a mode of rationality by which every event that occurs on the battlefield that is located outside of its mythological structure is thus anomalous, exceptional, or illegitimate.

Doctrine is also a site where various forms of knowledge and non-militarized social scientific research go unattributed, where the military appropriates the thinking of others—often those seeking to understand cultures and populations in order to *prevent* military intervention—into its own vision of violent space.⁷⁴ Further, torture, domicide, large-scale civilian death, and prolonged or administrative detention, despite their repeated appearance in the landscape of nearly every war—are all positioned *outside* of doctrine's military normal. There is, in other words, a yawning gap between the spatial and ethical frameworks of doctrine and the practices of war.

While mindful of these problems, it is also worth noting that doctrine is a place where military priorities and spatial imaginaries are authored, reproduced, and

⁷² Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

⁷³ Nordstrom, *Shadows of War*, 33.

⁷⁴ The Network of Concerned Anthropologists, *The Counter-Counterinsurgency Manual*; Anson, "Spirits of War." Noting the practice of *targeting* that is an inevitable result of 'scientific' and 'objective' knowledge production, Rey Chow questions the very possibility of a neutral or non-violent area studies. Language training, anthropology, political science, and economics, for example, easily and often become "part and parcel" of a "politics and ideology of war." See Chow, *The Age of the World Target*, 40–41. Of course, recent work that highlights the military's appropriation of Deleuze into doctrine demonstrates that it is not simply works in area studies that are absorbed into the processes of state militarization and the production of the military normal. See Weizman, "The Art of War."

circulated. As Ansoorge notes, because doctrinal “utterances are explicitly performative and constative,” they “both describe and make the world.”⁷⁵ Focusing on the ways that capture and evacuation have been outlined in doctrine will offer an illustration of how the spaces between an initial battlefield encounter and the walls of the camp have changed and begin a discussion about the ways that the military has gone about implementing a new set of objectives for detainee capture and detainee operations in general.

Over the course of the last sixty years, detainee doctrine has expanded to include more forms of life within its normative frame while the clarity of the battlefield as a spatial concept has become increasingly fluid and ambiguous. Below, I describe the ways in which the expanding geographical imaginary of the battlefield, what Derek Gregory has called the everywhere war, is also at the same time a complete disavowal of the battlefield as a distinct place at all. How have these blurring distinctions between spaces of war and not war made their way into the writing of the practices of the contact zone. If the battlefield is everywhere/nowhere, how and where are prisoners captured? Where are they to be taken? A close reading of doctrine reveals a site in which these spaces of contact are imagined, and offers a view of the problems that they engender.

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In the contemporary operating environment, the space between capture and the camp is considered “the most critical point in the detainee operations process” as it

⁷⁵ Ansoorge, “Spirits of War,” 362. This quote has important resonances with Elaine Scarry’s book about the relationship between language and the bodily experience of pain, which she explores as the making and unmaking of the world. See Scarry, *The Body in Pain*.

requires soldiers to “disarm, search, and guard detainees in an unsecured environment” that leaves them exposed to reprisals from other potential belligerents or sympathizers.⁷⁶ For the military, this space is incredibly productive: documents and personal items are removed and catalogued and initial tactical interrogations are performed in the hopes of rapidly gleaning important information about enemy movements, location, and morale. It is through the performance of the encounter that the prisoner begins his evacuation to the camp. Capturing troops are also responsible for beginning the administrative paperwork that follows the detainee throughout their detention.

These processes are the initial steps in producing the new form of life, the first steps turning mobile and disruptive actors operating in a violent landscape into a nascent body of legible information: the war prisoner. This administrative paperwork plays a significant role in the day-to-day workings of both detainee operations, and increasingly, the governance of the general war effort. Indeed the reams of paper that capture and detention generate illustrate in stark material terms the complexity that emerges when moving a body across an interface of control into another regime of power. The ways that this administrative work is performed, as Bowker and Star remind us, is *work*, and “...people do not always do the ideal job, but the doable job. When faced with too many alternatives and too much information, they satisfice.”⁷⁷ These compromises can have dramatic effects that shape the narrative of detainment for an individual or group.

⁷⁶ *Detainee Operations at the Point of Capture: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (FOUO)*, 1.

⁷⁷ Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 24.

During the Vietnam War, for example, capturing troops rarely accomplished the routine procedure of filling out a Detainee Card—a small piece of paper on which the prisoner’s name; the location, time, and date of capture; capturing unit; and circumstance of capture were documented. One study of US EPW accountability in that war noted that out of over 3,000 records reviewed, only *one* Detainee Card was filled out.⁷⁸ These simple cards have historically been both the first step in a convoluted administrative process and a key node in the quantification of the capture and evacuation process. The inability to begin the administrative regime in the space of encounter—owing mostly to the chaos of battle—added a significant amount to the confusion at the collection points (temporary holding areas used to gather evacuating detainees en route to the camps) and made subsequent prisoner handling more disorderly as the prisoner made their way through these processes and towards the camp.⁷⁹

A chart [Figure 3.1] from the same report illustrates the work required in the thick interface between the battlefield and the camp in order for the individual prisoner to become legible and manageable within a detainee population—an expansive grammar

⁷⁸ Department of the Army, Army Concept Team in Vietnam, *Final Report: Accountability, Classification, and Record/Reporting System for Captured Enemy Personnel*, II-41.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, II-3. Filling out the Detainee Card—USARV Form 365—was required by AR 633-50 *Apprehension and Confinement, Prisoners of War Administration, Employment, and Compensation*, 15 October 1969. The importance of identification on the battlefield, when coupled with the problems generated by these administrative gaps, can be seen in the broad range of identity management products that the military tested during the war. One rubber-coated wristband, for instance, was pitched directly at detainee operations, yet outlined an expansive secondary ‘market’ for the product, to include “the identification of US Army military prisoners, casualties, stragglers, civilian internees, and under certain counterinsurgency operations, *the entire civilian populaces of villages, cities, and territories.*” See: “Enclosure 1, Department of the Army (DA) Approved Small Development for Prisoner of War Name Identification Kit, page 6,” No Date, 1971, Box 32, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). Italics mine.

EPW/DETAINEE HANDLING AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN SOUTH VIETNAM

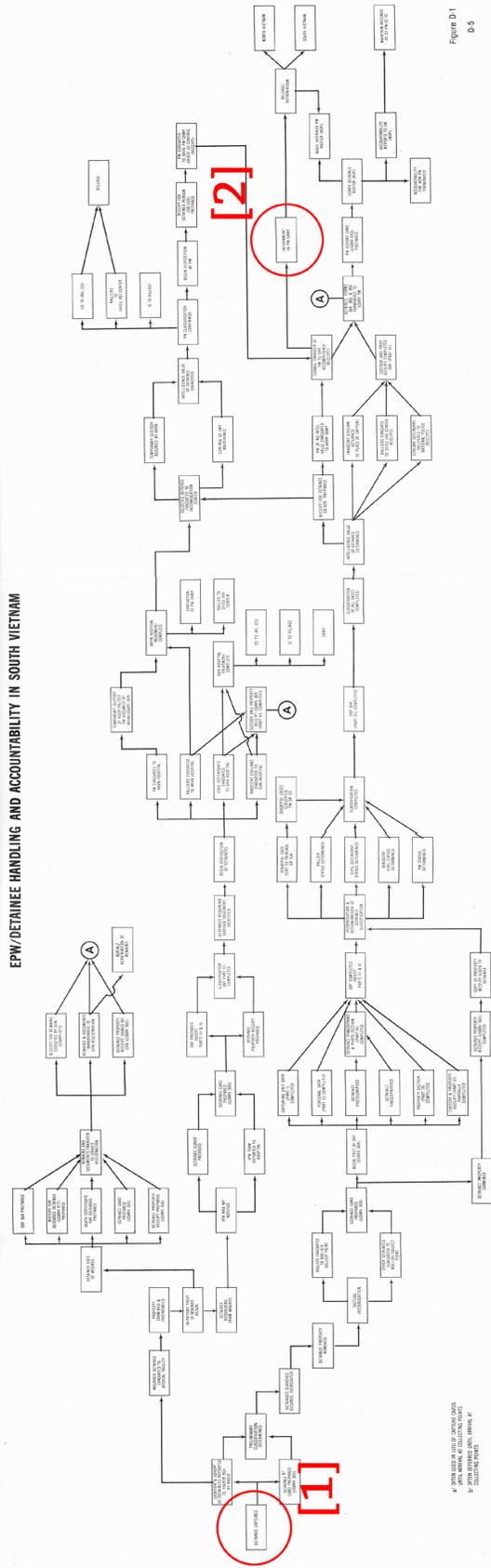


Table 3.1 EPW Handling And Accountability In South Vietnam

of action. The point-of-capture (Circle 1) is imagined as the beginning of military accountability, but the internment camp (Circle 2) does not appear until well-over half way through the detention process. These practices, from property removal to evacuation to photography to prisoner interrogation and classification, manifest the space between capture and the camp as a series of distinct practices.

Much of what goes on in this evacuated interface disappears from view, and as such, the military has gone to great lengths to use doctrine and training manuals to govern the tactics used by combatants. Instructions detailing what to do upon encountering and taking prisoners have appeared in doctrine for all service-persons working in theater—not just those carrying weapons or going out on raids—since before the signing of the GPW. Beginning in the Vietnam War, however, combatants were required to take a two-hour training class on the rights of detainees and the laws of war. While there hasn't been much change in the general tasks set forth, the text has changed significantly, with the past sixty years of doctrinal development boiled down into the recent use of a simple acronym, the STRESS Technique:

S: SEARCH, look for concealed weapons, documents, and all items out of the ordinary

T: TAG, using form DD 2745 and capture kit. Generate inventory of all detainee belongings

R: REPORT, numbers of detainees to higher eschelons.

E: EVACUATE, move quickly out of harm's way.

S: SEGREGATE, keeps detainees from conversing and conspiring

S: SAFEGUARD, the body of the detainee is to be protected from harm⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Another variation of the STRESS technique appears in 2010's *Internment / Resettlement Operations*, called the 5 Ss and T technique: search, silence, segregate, speed, safeguard, and tag. One can only speculate that this has something to do with the aural proximity between STRESS techniques and stress positions (the torture techniques used on detainees): two very different forms

Manuals often contain a diagram for the safest arrangement of the bodies performing the various steps of the STRESS Technique, urging combatants to maintain an unobstructed line of site and situating the guard and interpreter in a protective perimeter around the detainee.

With the passage of time, these disciplinary tactics have targeted extremely subtle micro-practices and exceedingly specific technical objectives. Recent Military Police training guidebooks, for instance, outline the most effective bodily arrangements and procedural sequences that dictate such things as the proper line of approach (from the front at 45°), the correct time to document medical issues (before sending the prisoner on to the collection point), where to position guards on trucks, buses, and aircraft.⁸¹ All of these seek to assure that, as Foucault reminds us, through training and proper military discipline, the American soldier in the field will have their judgments normalized and their bodily actions efficiently regulated.⁸²

Further, as the division between war and policing has blurred, so too have operations at the point-of-capture increasingly come to be so disciplined as to resemble a crime scene, with forensic technologies, assorted digital ‘jump-kits,’ and portable riot control devices used to assure the rapid and consistent handling of the detainee.⁸³ Each of these devices targets the captor and the captive, introducing for the captor a host of

of detainee handling. Department of the Army, *FM 3-19.40 Internment / Resettlement Operations*; Department of the Army, *FM 3-39.40 Internment / Resettlement Operations*.

⁸¹ *Detainee Operations at the Point of Capture: Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (FOUO)*.

⁸² Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

⁸³ These kits include such items as “latex gloves, surgical masks, flexi-cuffs, earmuffs, capture tags, and property bags along with property custody documents.” See: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*, IV-6. For a discussion of forensic warfare, see Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*.

procedural steps and mediations meant to generate not only legibility and control, but also to produce evidence that might be required to protect the military against claims of abuse or mismanagement. For the captive, these steps and technologies are ostensibly meant to assure consistent treatment or to determine a verifiable degree of culpability. By 2008, the Detainee Card and Capture Tag were supplemented with the command to rapidly collect and store the subject's digital biometrics, which is "a crucial step that must be conducted as soon as possible after detention."⁸⁴ As I will discuss in Chapter Six, this incorporation of digital identity data management tools reflects an effort to imagine a technologically precise and virtuous landscape of war in which battlefield capture becomes synonymous with data capture.

Having briefly described what happens when prisoners are brought across the threshold from battlefield to camp, I next begin a close reading of how detainee doctrine itself conveys a specific spatial imaginary of what and where the battlefield is, and who the captives are. These mappings also reveal that the military itself is struggling to articulate the political and spatial limits of the wars that it fights.

Doctrine's Disappearing Prisoner: Towards the Everywhere War

The language and techniques of capture have broadened significantly in the past sixty years to include a wide variety of media and technologies of surveillance—absorbing more forms of life, and aiming to apprehend a wider array of objects and events. Yet the doctrinal language that refers to the captured body has had all life

⁸⁴ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*, IV–I. This had long been the task of 'processing companies' that worked along the evacuation channels but primarily in the camps.

removed from it. Simply looking at the titles the military gave to each doctrinal revision reveals both an expanding definition of who is to be detained and an increasing distance from the singular status category 'Prisoner of War' enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. To begin, the November 1952 issue of FM 19-40 was titled *Handling Prisoners of War*.⁸⁵ There are clearly two actors represented in the title: the handler and the prisoner of war. The use of the present progressive places the responsibility for the life of the prisoner in the hands of a singular handler who must *do* (or fail to do) something. In response to the increased presence of civilian non-combatants on a battlefield whose spatial clarity was eroding, this handler was replaced by 1964, and the type of detained person was broadened to include two nouns: *Enemy Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees*.⁸⁶ Again in 1976, doctrine was rewritten to more closely reflect the prisoners taken in Vietnam. Often, sweeps of the Vietnamese countryside would result in captives whose belligerent or non-belligerent status was unclear. One of the resulting problems that plagued the Provost Marshal's office (the office in charge of military police and detainee operations) throughout that war was determining the political classification and legally required treatment afforded to these variously coded people. The title *Enemy Prisoners of War, Civilian Internees, and Detained Persons* reflects this expanded scope and a general acceptance that the battlefield upon which persons were being captured was indistinct from the spaces of civilian life.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Department of the Army, *FM 19-40 Handling of Prisoners of War*.

⁸⁶ Department of the Army, *FM 19-40 Enemy Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees*.

⁸⁷ Department of the Army, *FM 19-40 Enemy Prisoners of War, Civilian Internees, and Detained Persons*.

By 2001, following twenty five years of US involvement in wars that were not officially declared, operations other than war (OOTW), and military operations that were billed as humanitarian interventions, FM 3-19.40 did away entirely with references to either war or prisoners: *Internment / Resettlement Operations*.⁸⁸ Rather than functioning as evidence of an implied subject that does the handling, ‘operations’ are systemic manifestations wherein the individual actor is subsumed within two fields of tasks: internment, resettlement. These titular shifts are indicative of a general abrogation of responsibility in spaces of encounter: a handler can do things poorly, unethically, egregiously. But can operations? Operations here seem to have their own agency, as if the handler of 1952 has himself been absorbed into an automated set of processes whose actions are not to be addressed through ethical judgments, but instead modified and tweaked in order to improve performance.

Finally, after about a decade of drafts, revisions, and reissues, the current Joint Command doctrine from 2008 is simply called *Detainee Operations*, while the updated military police manual, 2010’s revised *Internment / Resettlement Operations* (now FM 3-39.40) is applicable today for Army MPs.⁸⁹ The detainee appears here as a form of life disconnected from any politics, political grievances, or geographic location. The evolution of these doctrinal titles marks a shift in attention from the relationship between bodies—specifically engaging with them as persons—to the contemporary iterations, which highlight an abstract and largely administrative set of operations

⁸⁸ Department of the Army, *FM 3-19.40 Internment / Resettlement Operations*.

⁸⁹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*; Department of the Army, *FM 3-39.40 Internment / Resettlement Operations*.

divorced from the implications of the human encounter. The military can and will find itself detaining *things*, but those things will not necessarily be granted the legitimacy that comes from the status 'prisoner of war'.

Thus, as their titles and intended scopes work to address more and more types of targets and forms of political life, the texts themselves mark an important erasure. The language of 'the prisoner' has, over the course of the past sixty years, all but disappeared from what is nominally war prisoner doctrine. In the text of 1952's *Handling Prisoners of War*, for instance, the 'prisoner' appears well over one hundred times while the abstract and politically ambiguous 'detainee' is nowhere to be found. FM 19-40 from 1964, which stands at fifty-five pages, the word prisoner is used 180 times while the 'detainee' is still absent. The detainee makes its first appearance in 2001 with thirty mentions, while *enemy* prisoners still appear over 40 times. There are indeed over 375 references to prisoners in 2001's *Internment / Resettlement Operations*, but these prisoners are importantly *Americans* who have broken military regulations and must be entered into the military's correctional apparatus. They are granted immediate legitimacy as military actors and as prisoners. In its most recent iteration, this division is made explicit: all American interned personnel are 'US Military Prisoners', all others—including civilian internees, retained personnel, and enemy combatants—fall below the heading 'Detainees'. In Joint Doctrine from May of 2008 the word *prisoner* appears twice as part of a sentence (28 times total in glossaries, treaty titles, etc.), while the word *detainee* appears 484 times. The enemy prisoner of war, once the focus of doctrine, is

now subsumed into a broad and depoliticized field of bodies that are all equally subject to battlefield internment.

This sharp rise in detainees at the expense of prisoners is not merely a semantic shift that can be removed from the political geography of war planning and war fighting. Judith Butler notes that the “epistemological capacity to apprehend a life is partially dependent on that life being produced according to norms that qualify it as a life or, indeed, part of life.”⁹⁰ In order to know, we must be able to recognize, on some basic level, a shared humanness. The prisoner of war holds a special place *as life* in discourses of war and violence, enshrined most famously in the Geneva Conventions. It is reflective of a specific status that has legitimacy and is deserving of protections in the eyes of liberal international law. Like the ‘body count’ or the term ‘collateral damage’, detainee is a linguistic abstraction that sanitizes the political violence of war by erasing evidence of the widely recognized subject identity of the prisoner of war. With the transition from the idea of detaining a human ‘prisoner of war’ subject to sequestering the administrative classification of ‘detainee’, the distance between Butler’s recognizable form of human life and the body-object that is detained increases. By eliminating the ‘prisoner’ you remove that element of political legitimacy and humanity from the captive’s body.

With the increased distance, much is lost. By deleting not only the prisoner, but also ‘war,’ you abstract the militarism that undergirds doctrine and re-classify the material formations of its violence—an erasure of both personal grievance and the

⁹⁰ Butler, *Frames of War*, 3.

organizing clarity of the distinction between spaces of war and peace. Detainee operations can happen everywhere—at war or not. Fewer and fewer bodies meet doctrinal criteria, while more and more space does.

This lack of geographical grounding seems to have been a deliberate focus of doctrinal authors. The version of doctrine that was in effect at the beginning of the invasion of Afghanistan and the commencement of the War on Terror was published in August 2001. In its expansive scope, *Internment / Resettlement Operations* addresses a vast array of possible detainment scenarios. However, while the doctrine that preceded it had been in effect for a quarter century, with the attacks on the World Trade Center the following month, subsequent wars, and several ICRC reports of prisoner abuse and torture at Abu Ghraib in 2003, *FM 3-19.40* and EPW standard operating procedures (SOPs) were soon under review.

Beginning with the 2004 draft of *Detainee Operations in a Joint Environment: Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures*, used by joint operations commanders, authors introduced into EPW doctrine for the first time a description of *where* capture might happen. In earlier MP manuals this siting is self-evident: capture happens on the battlefield, while engaged with the enemy. Heinz Guderian famously quipped that “[w]here we find tanks, there is the front.” To this we can add that historically, near the tanks is also where battlefield capture was likely to occur.⁹¹ But in each draft leading up to and including the 2008 version of *Detainee Operations*, attention is given to just how to describe this space, because its location was becoming less clear. In the 2004 draft,

⁹¹ Quoted in Virilio, *Desert Screen*, 3. Virilio himself comments on the outdated nature of Guderin’s 1940s aphorism, updating it to “Where we find the satellites, there is the fourth front.”

the space is describes as follows:

“The initial point of capture (IPOC) can take place in combat, on an objective, during a raid operation, a cordon & search mission, a temporary checkpoint (TCP), at border crossing points, on base camps, and even with local nationals attempting to gain information on US/Allied/or coalition forces.”⁹²

There is little that ties these spaces together, other than that they approximate the places of movement and exchange near military installations. In the 2005 final coordination draft, the description expands to include more spatial variation and introduces the requirement that military commanders must *anticipate* that battlefield apprehension may happen anywhere and thus be versed in the roles that the GPW play in governing the encounter:

“A point of capture may occur during any military operation: on an objective, during a raid, at sea, near an air base, during a cordon and search mission, at a traffic control point, at border crossing points, on base camps, or even as local nationals attempt to gain information on US, allied, or coalition forces. Commanders must anticipate this reality, and plan and train accordingly, to ensure their forces are prepared to meet the needs of the mission and respect all applicable law and policy related to detainees.”⁹³

Here, the text expands the spatial variability and contingency associated with capture. Further, the passage now outlines specific personnel who must, through planning and training, prepare for the eventuality of capture. This form of distributed preparedness is encouraged not just in combatants, but also in higher echelons within the military apparatus.⁹⁴ For the final draft, the authors settle on the following definition:

⁹² Air Land Sea Application Center, *Detainee Operations in a Joint Environment: Multi-Service Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures: Draft*, II-1.

⁹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Joint Doctrine for Detainee Operations: Final Coordination*, IV-I.

⁹⁴ Collier and Lakoff, “Distributed Preparedness.”

“Capture or detention may occur: on an objective, during a raid, at sea, near an air base, during a cordon and search mission, at a traffic control point, at border crossing points, or in base camps. Commanders, their staffs, and subordinate forces must anticipate this reality, and plan and train accordingly.”⁹⁵

The subtle revision is worth comment specifically for what it removes. Gone is any reference to the fact that these events will happen “in combat” or “during any military operation.” Capture can occur anytime—it need not be associated with military operations at all. Further, the short passage adds something to understandings of the space of capture as well: not only can capture happen anywhere, *but so can detention*.

This textual transformation, over sixty years, has done little to refine the clarity of the military’s spatial imaginary. If anything, it has done the opposite. As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, doctrine has long been tied to a linear understanding of war that linked capture at a front to the EPW camp in the rear. Yet, years after numerous investigations questioning the legality of extraordinary rendition and the use of black sites and other secret detainment facilities, rather than strengthening the clarity of the normative detention system, *Detainee Operations* seems to make space for these furtive and temporary sites and performances. Even as it attempts to describe the space of capture, the text has moved further away from clarifying the spatiality of any battlefield at all. Not described here as a point with a self-evident geography, capture and detention are for joint commanders imagined as but one of many emergent events in the “contrapuntal geography of the everywhere war.”⁹⁶

Thus, in recent years, with the recent reemergence of counterinsurgency warfare

⁹⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *JP 3-63 Detainee Operations*, IV–I.

⁹⁶ Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” 239. Bruno Tertrais has similarly referred to what he calls a ‘Global Theater of Operations.’ See: Tertrais, *War Without End*, 51.

(along with its slow and complicated decline)—a form of war fought in and amongst the civilian population—the language and terminology of capture in military doctrine has enlarged to occupy an evolving, event-ful concatenation of space and time that exceeds the limits of traditionally conceived territorial ‘war’.⁹⁷ For Derek Gregory, these processes present a link between discourses that posit late modern war’s infinite temporalities—the *forever war* and the *unending war*—and the globalized, neoliberal spatial formations that have come to describe their violence, what he terms an everywhere war. While Afghanistan and Iraq are hot spots in the everywhere war, as Gregory notes, the “shadow of US military violence” also falls in Iran, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen.⁹⁸

In this expansive, crisis-prone environment, “threat is endemic, uncertainty is everywhere; a negative can never be proven. Positive military response must then be ever at the ready.”⁹⁹ Here (if such a spatially specific word can be used), as Dillon and Reid note, there is no existential enemy, “only a continuously open and changing field of formation and intervention: the very continuous and contingent emergency of emergence of life as being-in-formation; becoming dangerous.”¹⁰⁰ This ‘field of formation’ that is always in-formation is corporeal and territorial, but it embodies and territorializes in unstable and frequently paradoxical ways. As Mégret notes, the idea of an everywhere war “is an implicit disavowal of the very notion on which it purports to

⁹⁷ Gregory, “Seeing Red: Baghdad and the Event-ful City.”

⁹⁸ Gregory, “The Everywhere War,” 238.

⁹⁹ Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency,” 158.

¹⁰⁰ Dillon and Reid, *The Liberal Way of War*, 44.

rely.”¹⁰¹ Everywhere, then, is also nowhere.

Doctrine’s Disappearing Battlefield: Towards a Nowhere War?

As violence in this type of war can occur everywhere, the notion of a battlefield has come to be replaced in doctrine by that of the battlespace. Naval Doctrine describes the future of this militarized environment as being “characterized by rapid, simultaneous, and violent actions across all dimensions—air, land, sea, undersea, space, time, and the electromagnetic spectrum.”¹⁰² Information is the prime mover and basic ontological unit enabling the radical relationality between these spectra—often discussed by the military in biological terms as a complex, adaptive ecosystem.¹⁰³ The space of the battlespace encompasses all and each, such that nothing can be imagined as its stable outside. There is, for the military (and the civilian petty sovereigns that determine its action), no comparable *peacespace*, *civilianspace*, or *domosphere*.¹⁰⁴ The homeland itself can and does frequently devolve into a central terrain of the battlespace. The battlespace concept denies the spatial fixity of a constitutive other to a state of war, a state of war that, as Foucault has noted, is immanent to the State itself.¹⁰⁵

Beyond housing the military bases from which unmanned aerial drones are piloted and deploy their lethal force and the military-academic facilities where digital biometric

¹⁰¹ Megret, “War and the Vanishing Battlefield,” 16.

¹⁰² Department of the Navy, *Naval Doctrine Publication* 6, 4. Cited in Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*, 1. This echoes Cold War admiral Gorchkov, often cited by Paul Virilio: “The victor of the next war will be the one who knew best how to exploit the electromagnetic spectrum” See: Virilio, *Desert Screen*, 55.

¹⁰³ Dillon, “Network Society, Network-Centric Warfare and the State of Emergency.”

¹⁰⁴ For Butler, petty sovereigns are the unelected administrative officials and bureaucrats who have been granted the power to decide over matters of life or death. See Butler, *Precarious Life*.

¹⁰⁵ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

databases of occupied populations are stored, the territorial United States has on several occasions been a site where battlespace enemies have been captured. These encounters problematize the distinctions between civilian arrest and battlefield capture. At a routine traffic stop in Peoria Illinois, for example, Ali Saleh Kahlah al-Marri was detained and subsequently indicted for credit card and identity fraud. Following sixteen months of criminal proceedings and months before he was to stand trial, the Bush Administration declared al-Marri an ‘unlawful enemy combatant’. On June 23, 2003 the government—citing supposed ties to an al-Qaeda sleeper cell, ties that he admitted to in 2009—took al-Marri into military custody and shipped him to a military brig in South Carolina, where he was kept in solitary confinement for over five years.¹⁰⁶

These forms of homeland intervention frequently occur as part of the performances of making the border—both in the interior and at the state’s territorial limits.¹⁰⁷ On September 26, 2002, for instance, what was then the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) at JFK Airport in New York detained Majer Arar, a citizen of both Canada and Syria, as he sought to make a flight connection while attempting to return to his home in Canada after a family trip to Tunisia. The reason for his detainment was his alleged connection to an international terrorist organization and his relationship with two other Syrian-Canadians who were also suspected of being

¹⁰⁶ Mayer, *The Dark Side*. See also: Liptak, “In Terror Cases, Administration Sets Own Rules.”

¹⁰⁷ Mountz, “The Enforcement Archipelago”; Mountz, *Seeking Asylum*; Coleman, “U.S. Statecraft and the U.S.–Mexico Border as Security/economy Nexus.”

terrorists.¹⁰⁸ Arar was held incommunicado in Brooklyn for thirteen days and was then rendered to Syria, where he alleges he was kept in a dark, rat-infested, coffin-sized cell, deprived of food and beaten on his hands and stomach with fists and a two-inch-thick electrical cable for ten months. In October 2003, Syrian intelligence released Arar to the Canadian consulate in Damascus without filing charges, at which point he was flown to Ottawa and reunited with his family.

al Marri and Arar were both apprehended while performing tasks indistinguishable from many others in the landscape of globalized everyday life. Where they were captured frames a central component of the everywhere war. If the insurgent enemy “blends and blurs with the complex environment it disperses into,” only becoming visible through its violence—suicide bombs, car bombs, and improvised explosive devices—so too are the activities of the counterinsurgent similarly episodic: mobile security checkpoints, unmanned aerial drone attacks, freezing financial assets.¹⁰⁹ Violence in this everywhere war is thus marked by an effervescent topology of insurgent and counterinsurgent intensities: a complex set of overlapping layers and spatial mappings in which the geometric logics of fronts and rears are joined by a series of simultaneous ‘environments’: the operational environment, the civilian environment, the information environment.

¹⁰⁸ The story of one of these other men, Ahmad Abou el-Maati, is nothing short of fascinating for political geographers. el-Maati, a truck driver, was originally put on the U.S. border patrol’s watch list in August of 2001 when he attempted to cross the border on a shipping run, and a map detailing a Canadian nuclear research facility was found in the cab of his truck. With his identity on the terror watch list, he was detained in Syria while attempting to finalize his marriage. It eventually became known that the map was actually government produced, as a tourist map, for those who visit the compound. See Shephard and MacCharles, “Arar Report Prompts New Torture Inquiry; Former Supreme Court Justice to Probe Cases of Three Others Detained in Syria.”

¹⁰⁹ Anderson, “Facing the Future Enemy,” 221.

These environments are always in a process of becoming, of unfolding, of emerging. Made up of these distinct environments, the battlespace is imagined as a multi-dimensional spatio-temporal field that expands to include all that makes up the life of the population: “species being, logistical life, ways of life and perceptual life.”¹¹⁰ As total control is impossible, efforts must be made to guide disorder and work to establish the positive conditions amongst the population that will hopefully yield desired outcomes.¹¹¹ While these various environmentalities effectively militarize all space and time (Samuel Weber even explores the militarization of *thinking*), in their performance, they ebb and flow in anticipation and response to the violence of the insurgent enemy (both imagined and real).¹¹² The “self-synchronizing swarm of independent, but cooperating cells” that for counterinsurgency theorist David Kilcullen describe the violence of the insurgent require a counterinsurgency that is “more unpredictable and even less linear.”¹¹³ The counterinsurgent responds to these punctuated eruptions of disorder and conflict with spatially and temporally fragmented actions of its own.

Capture in this “battlespace multiple” is as much about theater and perception as it is about security.¹¹⁴ Rather than being driven by statistical indices derived on a ‘conventional’ battlefield, capture in the battlespace is about crafting a certain narrative and generating a certain discourse about the efficacy and ethics of the counterinsurgency itself. The war prison is a key actor in the *theater* of war. As “a visible

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 232.

¹¹¹ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*.

¹¹² Weber, *Targets of Opportunity*.

¹¹³ Kilcullen, “Counter-insurgency Redux,” 117.

¹¹⁴ Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*.

expression of strong governmental effort to contain [a] problem,” these processes are embedded in the production of a narrative of power, of a way of authoring the narrative of battle to achieve certain ends.¹¹⁵ The 2008 Strategic Communications Plan for Task Force 134 (the task force in charge of detainee operations in Iraq), for instance, contained text noting that “successful counterinsurgency ‘inside the wire’ can mean the difference between winning and losing the war in Iraq”, and that “detainee operations...is the battlefield of the mind, and one of the most important fights in counterinsurgency.”¹¹⁶

Returning to the question posed above about the point of capture, here the removal of the body from the space of the everywhere war is but one of a host of perceptually driven techniques in the quest for narrative control. Excessive detention or the capture of the wrong people can ultimately cause offense and work to generate more enemies, and thus, capture must always be considered across multiple strategic environments. Indeed, counter to Clausewitz’s claim that military engagement is planned to obtain prisoners, one Marine recently highlighted that, in terms of message control, the opposite may in fact be true, saying that there “is no point in having an unnecessary build-up of detainees; no one wants an Abu Ghraib situation on their hands.”¹¹⁷

The performance of apprehension in the everywhere battlespace is, in the most straightforward of ways, at odds with Article 19 of the GPW. That article describes the

¹¹⁵ Mountz, *Seeking Asylum*, 75.

¹¹⁶ Task Force 134, Detainee Operations: Multi-National Force-Iraq, *Strategic Communications Plan*, 1.

¹¹⁷ Sengupta, “Lock Them up Then Let Them Go.”

requirements for effective and humane prisoner of war evacuation. Given the Convention's articulations of the spatial formations of military violence, even if the detained body were to be considered an EPW (as opposed to an unlawful enemy combatant), the topology of the everywhere war would necessarily render battlespace capture as discordant with the aims of IHL:

Article 19: Prisoners of war shall be evacuated, as soon as possible after their capture, to camps situated in an area far enough from the *combat zone for them to be out of danger*.

Only those prisoners of war who, owing to wounds or sickness, would run greater risks by being evacuated than by remaining where they are, may be temporarily kept back in a danger zone.

Prisoners of war shall not be unnecessarily exposed to danger while awaiting *evacuation from a fighting zone*.¹¹⁸

This practice is premised on the idea of an industrial war, a linear war with fronts, rears, and communications zones, but if the battlespace is conceptualized as everywhere and always, exactly *where* can the prisoner be? Where can a camp be placed that is 'situated in an area far enough from the combat zone' when that zone is described as encompassing 'air, land, sea, undersea, space, time, and the electromagnetic spectrum'? Implied in the text of the Conventions, then, is a spatial logic that describes battlefield capture that, as understood in current military doctrinal framing is not simply obsolete, but seemingly impossible. The human rights questions at the center of indefinite detention can be seen as hinging not only on issues of prisoner treatment, on the doing of detention once detained, but on the very act of capturing the body in the first place.

¹¹⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Geneva Convention)." Italics mine.

Yet, despite its totality, when viewed through the analytical lens of capture this global everywhere war is also paradoxically deterritorializing and disappearing. This is not to grant any unnecessary credence to theories of globalization's deterritorializing or flattening of the earth, but rather, to highlight the paradox that as the war's spatio-temporality expands, it is somehow, even in its material and metaphorical centers of Iraq and Afghanistan, becoming harder to find. In other words, while Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Michael Mullen is no doubt correct when he says that we're "living in a world now where targets are fleeting," it is undoubtedly the case as well that in response, as a strategic objective, the geographical extension is just as true: we are living in a world in which the battlefield is fleeting. Mullen highlights the connection between effervescent violence and its expansive spatial formations: "I don't care if they're on the ground, in the air, on the sea or under the sea -- you don't get much of a shot, and you've got to be able to move quickly."¹¹⁹

To illustrate this, it is useful to briefly return to the development of the most recent iteration of EPW doctrine, *Detainee Operations*. In addition to the above-noted transformations in each draft's descriptions of the point of capture, the revisions also point towards an internal discussion about how best to diagram the battlefield on which such a process might take place. The first draft, from 2004 contains an updated version of the evacuation diagram that appeared in previous manuals dating back to 1976 [Fig. 3.2, 3.3]. That diagram outlines a generic battlefield in which the number of detainees increases the further one gets from the fighting front. Little changed between 1976 and

¹¹⁹ Warrick and Wright, "U.S. Teams Weaken Insurgency In Iraq."

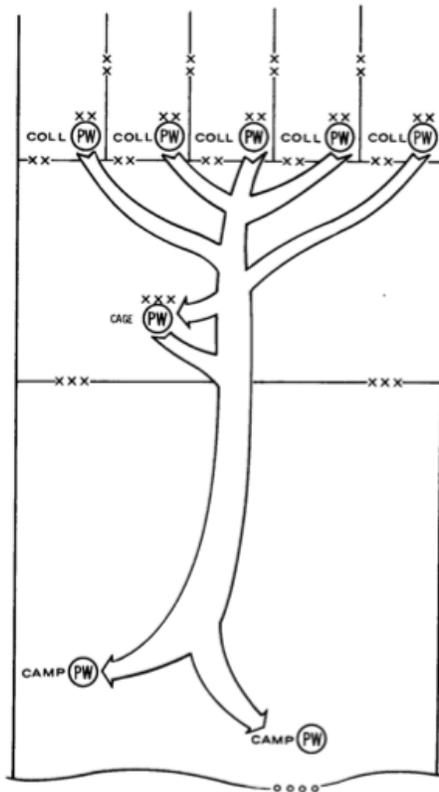


Figure 3.2: Detainee Flow Diagram: 1976

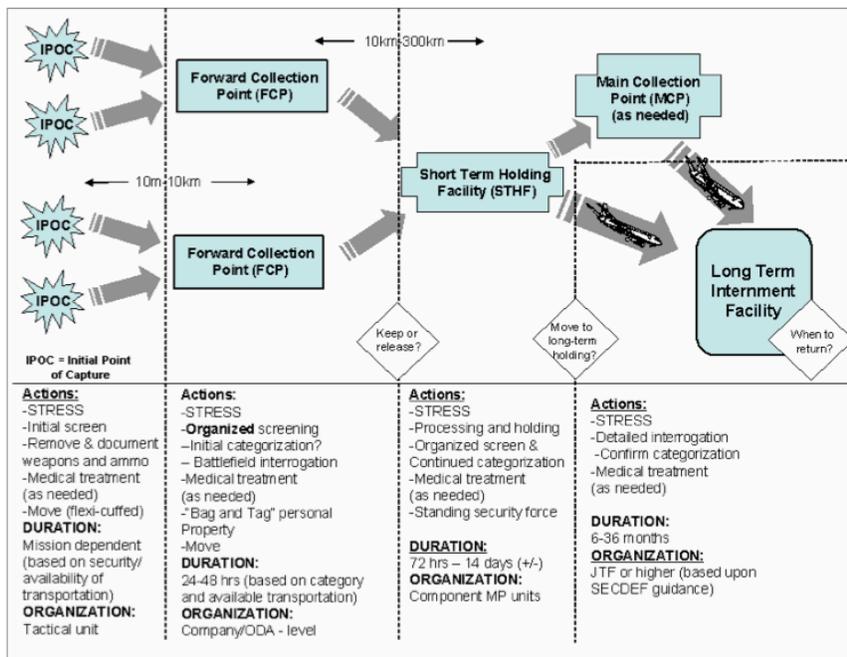


Figure 3.3: Detainee Flow Diagram: 2004

2004, though the draft version does note the appropriate distances each type of facility should maintain from the initial point of capture (including images of airplanes to denote the increased distance). Additionally, the diagram outlines a temporal dimension to detention, describing the length of time a detainee should remain at any one stage of evacuation. Lastly, the diagram also includes critical questions that should

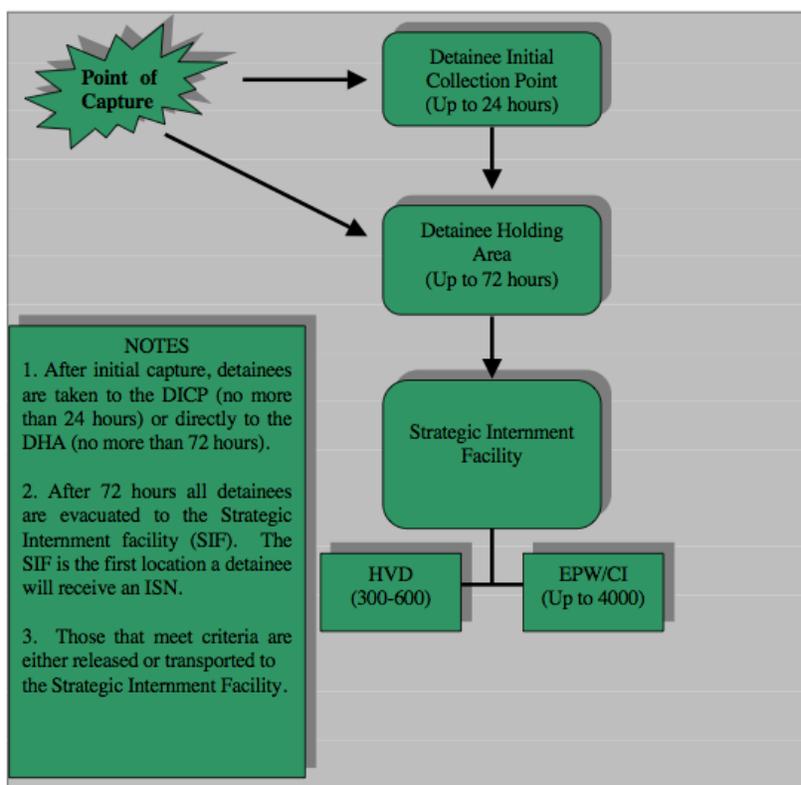


Figure 3.4: Detainee Flow Diagram: 2005

be asked before moving the detainee on to the next detainment scale: Keep or release? Move to long term holding? And finally, perhaps the most vexing question of battlespace detainee operations, When to return the indefinite detainee?

In the next draft, from 2005, the diagram is abstracted even further. There is only one point of capture here, implying the elimination of the front altogether [Fig. 3.4].

Distances from the front are removed, as are any implied hierarchies of scale denoting the military organization of the battlefield. What is imagined here is not a battlefield in any conventional sense, but a generic set of relationships of time and space—a landscape of potential violence that can occur anywhere. The approved draft from 2008 dispenses entirely with any attempt to map the evacuation sequence using any type of

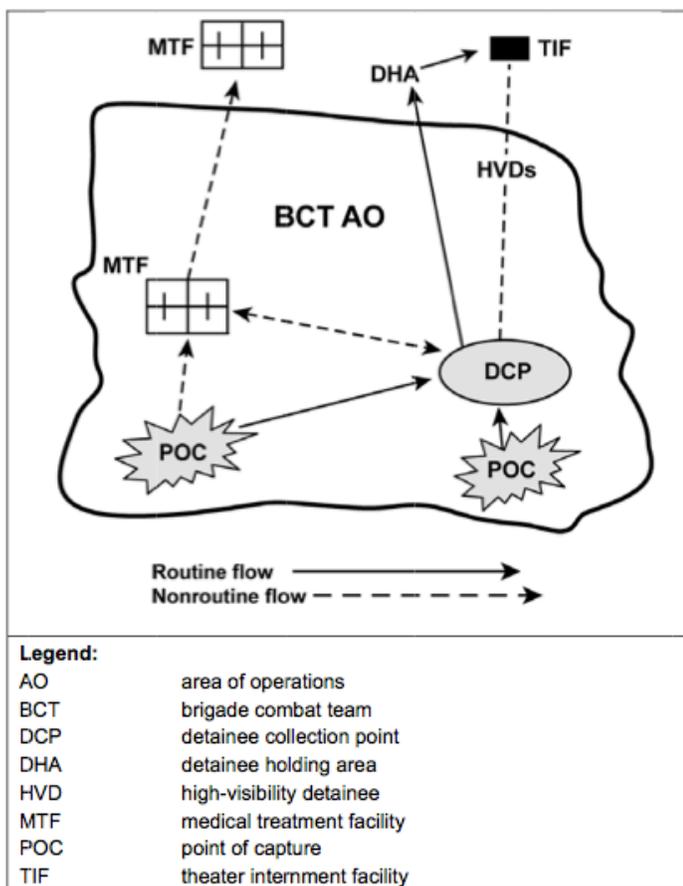


Figure 3.5: Detainee Flow Diagram: 2010

spatial or temporal referent. Instead, it focuses on describing the nodes and relations between sites in greater detail. The proximity to airports, the geometric arrangement of holding areas, and the various capacities of each node in network; these relationships take precedence over any imagined battlefield, a concept mentioned only a handful of

times in the entire manual. 2010's MP doctrine—*Internment/Resettlement Operations*—includes a map that diagrams routine and non-routine detainee flows in an 'area of operations' that is decidedly less linear than previous iterations [Fig. 3.5].¹²⁰ The line surrounding the diagram is not seen as a front on a battlefield, nor does it denote the stable limits of a traditional 'theater of operations', but simply describes the spatial extent of a generic place—in doctrinal parlance they are referred to as areas: the Area of Operations (AO), Area of Responsibility (AOR) and Areas of Influence (AOI)—where a brigade combat team is operating. In an era strongly influenced by net-centric war in battlespace, the US fights in fluid swarms of violent areas. What type of logistical infrastructure is in place in these areas? Is it a battlefield?¹²¹

The space of the everywhere war is here imagined as a relational series of nodes, an emergent field of violent events and intensities. Yet these intensities can recede as easily as they can flare up. Contemporary doctrine's embrace of a largely undifferentiated landscape of potential war simultaneously opens the everywhere war up to the distinct possibility that everywhere is also nowhere.¹²² This "destructuring" of

¹²⁰ *Internment / Resettlement Operations* refers to the battlefield far more often than joint command doctrine. However, as a spatial parallel to the discursive divide between prisoner and detainee, the battlefield concept is almost exclusively used to describe the space where US military prisoners (those servicepersons accused of breaking military or civilian law) are apprehended and is largely absent from the sections of the doctrine devoted to non-US captives and detainees. The tacit assumption revealed in the language of doctrine is that 'our' soldiers will be occupying a battlefield, and thus detained on a battlefield. The same legitimate space for violence, however, is not granted to those who are not US personnel.

¹²¹ Arquilla and Ronfeldt, "Swarming and the Future of Conflict."

¹²² Positing that the battlefield is nowhere is not intended to minimize the very real violence and destruction by which more than two million battle deaths which have occurred across the globe in almost every decade since the end of the Second World War. These numbers reveal that in the landscape of so-called old wars and new wars, those inhabiting the terrain of 'their' new wars are doubly exposed—to the types of violence that occur there—resource access, gendered violence, etc.—*and* to the technologically sophisticated flashes of lethality that define 'our' new wars. They

the battlefield concept has dramatic effects on the “very possibility of the laws of war, and of war itself.” If the battlefield is uprooted as a spatial imaginary distinguishing war from not war, than the struggle over what constitutes “a *legitimate* battlefield and, with it, legitimate forms of war” remains unresolved.¹²³ In paradoxical coincidence with Gregory’s everywhere war, then, is its troubling mirror, a dystopia of doublespeak wherein legal analysts are hard-pressed to locate the battlefield anywhere at all.

In conjunction with lawyers Mark and Joshua Denbeaux, the Law School at Seton Hall University has published an investigation exploring just this—one titled *The Empty Battlefield*—interrogating the Defense Department’s continuing use of the phrase ‘battlefield capture’ as a spatial referent that justifies the indefinite detention of prisoners at Guantánamo Bay.¹²⁴ Former President Bush, for instance, claimed that “[t]hese are people picked up off the battlefield in Afghanistan. They weren't wearing uniforms ... but they were there to kill.” Here the President’s description of a set of actors’ violent intents is enough to classify Afghanistan-as-battlefield. This battlefield discourse is not uncommon, that same week former Press Secretary Scott McClellan would argue that “[t]hese detainees are dangerous enemy combatants....They were picked up on the battlefield, fighting American forces, trying to kill American forces.”¹²⁵

Using only Defense Department statistics and categories, the Denbeaux’s analyses

also point to a form of precarity that marks a lived reality in which one need not be in a ‘warzone’ to be exposed to war’s violence. See: Gregory, “War and Peace,” 158.

¹²³ Megret, “War and the Vanishing Battlefield,” 1.

¹²⁴ Denbeaux and Denbeaux, *The Empty Battlefield and the Thirteenth Criterion*. This report is one of a series that this Seton Hall legal team put together exploring the confounding legal issues at the center of the Bush Administration’s detention policies.

¹²⁵ Taylor Jr., “Opening Argument - Falsehoods About Guantánamo.”

reveal, among other things, that out of the 516 ‘enemy combatants’ detained at Guantánamo, “*exactly one* detainee was alleged to have been captured on a battlefield by United States forces,” and that only 21 of the men detained at the island camp were found to even have been on a battlefield at all.¹²⁶ These numbers are juxtaposed with the fact that eighty-six percent of the Guantánamo prisoners were captured by either Pakistan or the Northern Alliance and handed over to the United States in return for large bounties, and that, rather than ‘unlawful enemy combatants’ they are more accurately ‘enemy civilians’.¹²⁷

In response to the Seton Hall study, the Defense Department subsequently requested that the Combatting Terrorism Center at West Point put forward a critical retort. Among their critiques, the West Point analysts pointed to the Seton Hall report’s use of a distinction between a safe house—an ostensible battlefield space—and a guest house, which in the Seton Hall report was not just a civilian or domestic space, but compared to a generic hotel or tourist accommodations.¹²⁸ Seton Hall would later counter that this distinction was present in the Defense Department data, and that is why they used it in their study.

The shape of the battlefield, from the entry point of either analysis, is drilled down

¹²⁶ Denbeaux and Denbeaux, *The Empty Battlefield and the Thirteenth Criterion*.

¹²⁷ Ibid. Emily Gilbert has presented a number of outstanding papers exploring the subject of bounties in recent American-led wars. See Gilbert, “The Financialization of the Battlefield: Cash, Compensation and Conflict”; Gilbert, “The Calculation of Value and the Management of Contingency.” It should also be noted that bounties have a longer history in American counterinsurgency. They were part of the Phoenix Program in Vietnam, though they were ultimately abandoned. See, for instance: “High Value Rewards Program: Telegram from the American Embassy in Saigon to the Secretary of State,” Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; September 1971; Box 2.

¹²⁸ Felter and Brachman, *A Response to the Seton Hall Study: An Assessment of 516 Combatant Status Review Tribunal (CSRT) Unclassified Summaries*, 4.

to the scale of the home, and more precisely, the language used to describe out buildings and architectural additions to residential compounds. This is important on a number of levels, not least of which is that these semantic distinctions do much of the work of classifying the violence that may occur on any particular site and legitimate forms of violence relative to international law.¹²⁹ A police arrest is acceptable in a civilian space, while a military capture leading to indefinite detention is not, calling on a host of legal and performative restrictions that modify the legitimacy of state violence.¹³⁰ Thus, either the capturing team must include members of the national police, or the space itself must be rendered as battlefield. As will be expanded in the chapters that follow, these civil-military police hybrids are often used by the US in its foreign wars, often with troublingly violent effects.

Distinguishing an arrest from a military capture moves well beyond the legitimate ‘inside’ of normative doctrine. It becomes a descriptive project tied not solely to a framework of spaces of war/not war or to supposedly clear military/civilian or friend/enemy distinctions, but rather to the discursive work required to construct a body—any body—as a potential enemy body. Further, the process of making these sites part of a battlefield requires writing them as such, tying specific homes to a war narrative while preserving the image of a secure civilian space that may in fact be just next door. Or perhaps, in a nod to the spatio-temporal complexity of the battlespace

¹²⁹ Megret, “War and the Vanishing Battlefield.”

¹³⁰ Gregory alludes to tensions in this rhetorical organization of war’s violence: “The slippage from ‘troops’ on one side (our side) to ‘targets’ on the other is part of the same rhetorical gesture. So too is the claim that ‘they’ kidnap people, hold them hostage and torture them – somehow a world away from extraordinary rendition, secret prisons and water-boarding – whereas ‘we’ arrest suspects, treat prisoners humanely, and subject them to a legal process (of sorts).” See “War and Peace,” fn. 20, 182.

concept, the very same space that is classed as civilian one day becomes a battlefield event in the everywhere war the next. No formal declaration of war is required to transform these spaces—no lasting material evidence of violence at all—for a battlefield to emerge where there once was none. Viewed through the lens of capture and evacuation, the battlefield emerges as a violent chimera. Indeed, one of the central points of encounter in the everywhere war is the fight over the various categories and classifications of things, for the legitimacy of military violence hinges on these particular discursive practices.

Within what can be imagined as an effervescent topology of the battlefield, even the act of running away from a security encounter (no longer a pitched battle or something clearly understood as ‘war’, but an intensely militarized policing operation) can be militarized and rendered as a threat, so long as it is written as such:

During clearing operations, the combined force encountered a man after entering a compound courtyard. The man started to flee, but then responded to initial commands to raise his hands and stop. Quickly thereafter, he suddenly ran toward an open doorway. Based on available information from CCA (Close Combat Attack), the man's prior attempt to avoid capture, and then a second attempt to flee, a member of ODA (Operational Detachment – Alpha) assessed the man's actions as hostile intent and fired four shots. One shot wounded the man. A medical officer treated the man and he did not need MEDEVAC. After additional assessment, the man was released to village elders.¹³¹

What turned this compound into a ‘legitimate’ place to deploy lethal force was here simply the presence of armed troops who could subsequently write the spaces of violence as part of a ‘clearing’ operation.¹³² Though this man was not ultimately deemed

¹³¹ Wikileaks, “(Friendly Action) Escalation Of Force Rpt (Small Arms): AFG20091211n2504.”

¹³² This practice of resonates with earlier attempts to partition the space of war in order to liberalize the use of violence like the Strategic Hamlet Program in Vietnam and subsequent

threatening enough to be detained, fleeing the encounter turned out to be enough to fire four shots as soon as his behavior deviated from the narrative authored in advance by the occupation's objectives to 'clear' the terrain of hostile actors.¹³³ However, the authoring of a legitimate battlefield that is both everywhere and nowhere also requires the translation of lethal force into abstract notions of friendly fire and collateral damage:

Shortly after the incident, the combined force discovered a woman who had been shot and killed in the same building. The initial assessment was that a shot fired by FF (Friendly Fire) killed the woman. Commandos and SF (Special Forces) personnel met with the family and conducted an immediate KLE (Key Leader Engagement) with the elders. A condolence payment was offered and accepted by the family of the deceased woman. Both the family and the village members indicated that they believed the shooting death was an accident.¹³⁴

One of the most troubling aspects of this report is that the battlefield here is retroactively made real through writing violence. However, this is a very different type of military text, written not through the deliberative processes of doctrinal authors, but through the justificatory lens of individual military actors.

The killing of an innocent civilian is transformed here by the rationalizing

designation of areas outside these sequestered villages as 'free-fire zones.' See Greiner, *War Without Fronts*.

¹³³ Within the international legal cannon a security officer is lawfully allowed to deploy lethal force against a person in order "to prevent the perpetration of a particularly serious crime involving grave threat to life, to arrest a person presenting such a danger and resisting their authority, or to prevent his or her escape" under the 'fleeing felon doctrine'. It should be noted that this doctrine itself stipulates that the person at whom force is directed is to be a suspect in a crime or future crime. In the cited example above, this suspicion relies on the assumption that *all* bodies that find themselves near military actors are by location alone necessarily suspects of future violence and thus are legally apparently justifiable as targets. On application of the 'fleeing felon doctrine' in the War on Terror, see O'Connell, "To Kill or Capture Suspects in the Global War on Terror," 330, f.n.17. O'Connell cites the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, Havana, Cuba, at 112, U.N. Doc. A/Conf. 144/28/Rev. 1 (1990)

¹³⁴ Wikileaks, "(Friendly Action) Escalation Of Force Rpt (Small Arms): AFG20091211n2504." See also Gilbert, "The Financialization of the Battlefield: Cash, Compensation and Conflict"; Gilbert, "The Calculation of Value and the Management of Contingency."

powers of bureaucratic paperwork into the utterly inhuman language of late modern war: condolence payments, friendly fire, key leader engagement. The aim of this writing is to “subtract affect and spontaneous reasoning” from the processes of war-making, and to “shift responsibility away from those who act,” allowing for “a discharge of business according to calculable rules.”¹³⁵ This is a retrospective battlefield, one that only becomes legible to the civilians who are condemned to live through it *after* it has descended upon them. As noted above, in response to the blending and blurring of insurgents with their complex environments, the counterinsurgent explores a similarly episodic violence: there are clearly similarities between these events and the sudden, explosive violence of an IED. The key distinction between the violence aimed at populations by insurgents and counterinsurgents seems to be the authorship of the battlefield through “after action” reports and other military paperwork.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have used a number of entry points to trace a series of spatial provocations exploring the idea of battlefield capture. First, I described a way of thinking capture itself, placing apprehension into a theoretical frame that drew out the complexities of thinking capture in both space and time. I positioned the process of capture as a way of interfacing with a black box, an object whose relations and capacities to act in the future are unknown in the captor’s present. In doing so, I challenge the neat division between the performance of war’s lethal violence and the performance of detention. Capture is a question of apprehending both the body and the discursive

¹³⁵ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 150.

registers within and through which that body circulates. Next, I noted the ways that the idea of battlefield capture has been situated in military history, describing the tenuous position that it has relative to the broad spectrum of wartime force.

In the second part of the chapter, I turned attention to the historical revisions of military doctrine that sought to establish the rules for soldiers' normative conduct in actually performing capture and evacuation. What happens in and through the processes of capture and evacuation, and how do these processes relate to military spatial framings as drafted in doctrine? Over the course of the past sixty years, the space of war, as articulated by the military in its detainee doctrine, has transformed, leaving the concept of the prisoner aside in favor of linguistic and spatial abstractions. War-fighters who perform capture are faced with a battlefield that they cannot actually place, and thus the performance of legitimate battlefield encounters and their lethality becomes a process of writing, retrospective description, and bureaucratic administration.

My primary objective here has been to both describe and complicate the singular vision of the limits of battlefield apprehension. That capture has come to be broadly understood as occurring at a spatial point has effects on both how we understand the geography of the battlefield and on just what (and where) detainment *is*. Wartime detention does not begin once a prisoner finds themselves behind the walls of the war prison, but with an encounter on the disorderly battlefield—however defined. Far from being simply a 'blinding revelation of the obvious,' capture and evacuation, as outlined above, mark a mobile, contingent and frequently contradictory interface between the

machinations of battlefield violence and the administrative bureaucracy of the camp. The practices that occur with *The Enemy in Your Hands* hinge on this threshold, on how the captor, the captive, and the battlefield are imagined, located, and performed.

As the logics of the battlefield have shifted, so too has the performance of the interfaces between inside and outside. Across the next three chapters, I expand upon this initial engagement with the space between the battlefield and the camp by detailing its spatial and performative transformations across the past sixty years of American war. These practices are bound up not just in the geographies of the various battlefields, but also in the emergence of specific technologies that altered the landscape of encounter between friend and enemy. The performance of these interfaces highlights the complexity and adaptability of violence—what Croser, after John Law, calls the mess of security practice.¹³⁶ Specifically, in the next chapter, I highlight the distinctions between the ways in which the Cold War battlefield was imagined and the way it was performed by describing transformations in the doing of capture.

¹³⁶ Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*, 2.

**CAPTURING THE COLD WAR BATTLEFIELD:
Apprehending the Bipolar Interface in Korea and Vietnam**

But perhaps disorganization, noise, and uncontrollability are not the greatest disasters to befall us. Perhaps our calamities are built largely from our efforts at superorganization, silence, and control.

—Peter Galison,
The Ontology of the Enemy

In an April 1954 press conference shortly after the end of the Korean War, US President Dwight Eisenhower was asked to comment on the strategic importance of Vietnam. His answer, which was a basic recapitulation of the Truman Doctrine, included a passage that came to be seen as one of the Cold War's most famous strategic metaphors:

"...[Y]ou have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the 'falling domino' principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences."¹

It was not, according to the President, because Vietnam *itself* posed a threat that American interests were at stake. Rather, he claimed, the US needed to increase its military presence in Vietnam—funding, training, and deploying of hundreds of military advisors—in order to prevent the country from being taken under Communist control. If the United States did not intervene, Eisenhower seemed to suggest, then a cascade of states would fall, one after the other, bringing the demise of American power and freedom one step closer.²

Eisenhower's invoking of the domino effect offers not only a justification for military intervention in Vietnam (and, indeed all subsequent military intervention into "peripheral states" through the 1980s), but also a window into how space was conceived after the Second World War. Each discrete national state space is a domino:

¹ Eisenhower, "The President's News Conference, 7 April 1954."

² Eisenhower elsewhere does note the economic importance of Vietnam's natural resources, but this concern is subsumed within the 'broader considerations' of the communist threat.

whole, solid, recognizable from the outside, and unique in its location within the international system. With a push from either internal subversion or external attack, it might teeter on its unstable foundations and fall, inevitably bringing others down with it.³ One of the reasons the domino metaphor is so effective is that it clearly articulates the fact that international relations, which de facto involves a multiplicity of parties, is still almost wholly reducible to a clear binary logic.⁴ A black and/or white domino can only be positioned up or down; there is no ambiguity, no in-between.

One of the central tenets of 1950s American foreign policy was that the world, like the domino, was neatly divided between two poles—the capitalist and communist states—and that the latter’s “expansive tendencies” needed to be spatially contained.⁵ That logic of containment, famously articulated in George Kennan’s pseudonymously published article in the July 1947 issue *Foreign Affairs*, is only made possible through the existence of a clearly articulated inside and outside, friend and enemy. Thirty years earlier, during the lead-up to the Second World War, German jurist Carl Schmitt had used similar terms to suggest that the distinction between ‘friend’ and ‘enemy’ was that

³ Vietnam scholar George Herring would claim that in the Johnson-Kennedy era, the domino theory was replaced by a theory of ‘credibility’, or “the idea that the United States must stand firm in Vietnam to demonstrate its determination to defend vital interests across the world.” I would argue that the spatial framework that guided strategic credibility was still very much based on the linked precariousness of territorially imagined (and *trapped*) individual state dominos. See Herring, “America and Vietnam,” 104.

⁴ Political cartoonists still frequently utilize the diagrammatic clarity of the domino theory to represent broad shifts in cultural or political economic landscapes—like the Arab Spring or the European financial crisis—as clearly defined, rectangular polities. But, despite the general accuracy of an ‘ecological’ interrelationship between spaces, it remains nonetheless important to point out that these imagined limits of the political state are not, in fact, so rigid or monolithic.

⁵ X. [George F. Kennan], “The Sources of Soviet Conduct,” 570.

to which all “political actions and motives can be reduced.”⁶ According to Schmitt, both “friend” and “enemy” receive their “real meaning” specifically because “they refer to the real possibility of physical killing.”⁷ Clearly, this resonated with the stark bipolarity of Cold War geopolitics: friend, enemy; capitalist, communist; up, down; inside, outside.

Schmitt, for whom this distinction underpinned the political activity of states, went on to note that “[w]ar has its own strategic, tactical, and other rules and points of view, but they all presuppose that the political decision has already been made as to who the enemy is.”⁸ State declarations were evident on the battlefield, too, because “[i]n war adversaries most often confront each other openly; normally they are identifiable by a uniform, and the distinction of friend and enemy is therefore no longer a political problem which the fighting soldier has to solve.”⁹ And yet, in the reality of war, this has long been something that soldiers have had to do.¹⁰ One of the more troubling aspects

⁶ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 26. The collapse of this distinction is, in security studies, often cited as the reason for the twentieth century upsurge in civil wars and internal violence, for the rise in terrorism and unlawful ‘new’ wars. The argument frequently made by military thinkers and security scholars is that unlike the enemies in industrial war, the enemies in ‘new wars’ cloak themselves, denying the implementation of straightforward regimes of calculability and blurring the distinction between friend and enemy by operating ‘amongst the people’.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 34.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ This distinction was, somewhat surprisingly, made *more* difficult when soldiers had been removed from the battlefield and sequestered in war camps. During World War II, for instance, American MPs were often unable to understand either the military hierarchy or the political affiliations of German detainees. The process of managing camp space during that war was similarly compounded by the fact that it was “impossible to look at a man or talk to him and determine whether he is a Nazi, an anti-Nazi, or merely a German.”¹⁰ Acknowledging that the classification of a detainee’s political identity relied on continuous and time consuming observation, Fort Benning’s Commanding Officer Colonel George Chescheir stated that “[w]e must be careful to withhold our judgment, for a prisoner may claim to be an anti-Nazi but we should hesitate before accepting his claim. His classification should be held up until he can be checked from several sources.” See Colonel George M. Chescheir, Commanding Officer, Prisoner of War Camp, Fort Benning, GA, “Intelligence Activities at German Prisoner of War Camps - Detection and Correction of Undesirable Activities.”

of this distinction between friend and foe is that even after it has been clearly drafted in geopolitical space in the form of ostensibly discrete states engaged in a territorially trapped image of bipolarity, its *enactment* is often a particularly complicated performance, done not by states as unified political or territorial actors, but by diverse individuals on an ever-shifting spatial terrain.

Rather than occurring solely at the scale of the state or along clearly demarcated military fronts, then, these performances frequently happen at the interfaces that emerge when agents of the US military apparatus encounter and subsequently seek to move or manage a detained population. During the Cold War, major security narratives may well have been constructed around the containment of a clear ideological and territorial foe whose actions had the capacity to generate a cascade of negative effects; the complexities of life in these contact zones, however, often blurred the friend/enemy distinction if not rendered it completely illegible. (Re)producing the bipolarity-as-justification upon which containment hinged in the civilian imaginary required a significant amount of discursive work, for “[o]nly if the Soviet Union was understood as a wholly distinct space, containing a wholly distinct society, could it be treated in the stark terms of enmity.”¹¹

In this chapter, I turn attention to the places and practices, both material and discursive, which made the enemy prisoner in two Cold War conflicts: Korea and Vietnam. These are the sites of contact, capture, and evacuation. While in the previous

Box 14, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

¹¹ Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War*, xv.

chapter I framed the ways that the interfaces between capture and the camp have been written and imagined in military doctrine and discourse, I here turn my attention to the more historically specific ways that they have been designed, performed, and managed. A critical engagement with wartime practices through and around the doing of capture causes the imagined limits of the bipolar Cold War battlefield to blur and fade.

I explore the disorderly landscape in which images of bipolarity were literally made and unmade by way of spatial practices that occurred on both sides of the barbed wire fence. These practices were bound up not just in the geographies of the various battlefields, but also in the emergence of technologies that altered the landscape of encounter between friend and enemy. Attention to the enactments of these interfaces highlights the complexity and adaptability of violence—what Croser, after John Law, calls the mess of security practice.¹² I seek to highlight the distinctions between the imagination of the Cold War battlefield and its performance by describing transformations in the doing of capture.

I begin by discussing the landscape of apprehension in the Korean War. It was then that detention, as well as the war prisoner-as-subject, began to take on a central role in the framing and prosecution of war. So challenging was the prisoner of war that the armistice negotiations to end the conflict dealt in large part with issues of EPW repatriation, and the disorder and prisoner violence in numerous camps generated enough complications that the duration of the conflict was drawn out an additional

¹² Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*, 2.

eighteen months.¹³ It was also, importantly, the period in which 'prisoner' ceased to be simply a wartime status category and emerged as a subject position and a political population through which the very idea of the enemy was made visible and circulated.

The Korean War saw physical capture become far more than simply the one-for-one removal of a body from the field of war. The detainee body now circulated in a mediated political milieu: in international law, at the negotiating table at the Panmunjom armistice meetings, in newspapers, and as a subject of social scientific enquiry. Through these mediations, the prisoner of war in Korea became a "contested political subject on the world stage" and a key site in the struggle to control the Cold War narrative.¹⁴

The process of capture and evacuation would come to be seen as one that required governance, mediation, translation, and a host of techniques of 'truth' production that aimed to turn the illegible body into a technical, rather than human, object that could be effectively classified and managed by US forces. At the same time, war planners sought to develop a new set of rules and techniques that would help US troops effectively manage their fears, move the population, and be dissuaded from the use of excessive and unlawful deadly force. Such processes inevitably revealed tensions that played out in the sites of capture, and worked to complicate linear war narratives constructed around a clear territorial divide between friend and enemy.

¹³ These lengthy negotiations were punctuated by two large-scale prisoner releases: *Operation Little Switch* and *Operation Big Switch*

¹⁴ Kim, "Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960," 7.

The second part of the chapter turns to the Vietnam War, and to the spatial and technological transformations that shaped capture and evacuation practices during that conflict. In Vietnam, the military's attempt to frame the battlefield as a terrain with clearly defined fronts and rear areas was upended by a localized and fragmented insurgency in which the enemy population, as Mao Zedong famously observed, had to "move amongst the people as a fish swims in the sea." This insurgency forced war planners to reconsider both the role of the battlefield and the national police force in decrypting and apprehending the enemy. Like in Korea, the Vietnamese war prisoner was also highly politicized, and rather than being the inevitable and faceless extension of violence at the fighting front, many detainees were now sought out by name, surveilled, targeted, and apprehended through a host of new tactics and technologies.

Such technologies included the helicopter and the computer, both of which became fundamental to the process of capture and dramatically altered the "spatial operation of violence," leading to significant changes in the performance of bodily apprehension.¹⁵ Furthermore, both expanded the military's organizational capacity to include a hitherto non-existent degree of administrative complexity. Though both were tools that could improve the speed and accuracy of the apprehension of enemy bodies, their application was anything but orderly. I focus on the ways in which such developments and complications at the interface altered not only the routes and trajectories of bodies from encounter to camp, but also exposed prisoners to new forms of violence.¹⁶

¹⁵ Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*.

¹⁶ As noted in the previous chapter and explored in much greater detail below, these prisoners were not necessarily—nor necessarily *often*—enemies at all. Many detained in this bipolar conflict

Matthew Farish's call "to move beyond the overarching metanarrative of a singular Cold War, explained solely through a series of mobile terms such as *containment* and *domino*"¹⁷ is overwhelmingly relevant here. I view the space of encounter as a stage on which certain types of relations—between actors, states, strategic visions, and technological artifacts—play out, making "visible the ideological work" that is enacted "in a specific moment and a specific set of locations, demonstrating...the need for historical contingency when creating global narratives."¹⁸

were simply civilians or political dissidents, and their lives were dramatically altered by their detainment.

¹⁷ Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War*, xvi.

¹⁸ Ballantyne et al., "Introduction: Bodies, Empires, and World Histories," 8.

PART I:

Apprehending Linear War On The Korean Peninsula

“If the First World War was a true war of soldiers and the second also a war of civilians and deportees, the war in Korea has been largely one of prisoners. On the assumption that wars between Communism and its opponents are somewhat like religious wars, involving the doctrinal allegiance of men’s minds, this new role of the prisoner makes sense. He is a man who must be converted to a new truth and made to serve that truth.”¹⁹

—*The Economist*, 20 August 1955

To understand the spatiality of apprehension in mid-century Korea, we must first map the overlapping structures of violence that were unfolding there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. One, premised around first the rollback and then the containment of the Communist enemy, is the dominant historical narrative of this violent conflict in the Cold War. I trace the contours of this conflict, which was governed by official military doctrine and performed by a host of ‘traditional’ military actors, in the section below. I then engage with another iteration of conflict on the Korean peninsula in which the US played a defining role, an unnamed one that occurred around what Monica Kim calls the “politics of decolonization.”²⁰ The complications that emerged in and between both created a space of violence in which the lines between internal and external war were fluid, and the very idea of the enemy was in a near constant state of flux.

¹⁹ “A Nightmare of Prisoners” 600.

²⁰ Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960.”

As described in *FM 19-40: Handling Prisoners of War*, mid-century capture and evacuation were underpinned by a linear war imaginary, as they had been in EPW doctrine since the Second World War. *Handling Prisoners of War* details the responsibilities of personnel overseeing the capture and movement of battlefield prisoners. The text offers clear instructions for the interrogators (MI) and Military Police (MPs) responsible for moving prisoner bodies across a generic, geographically sanitized battlefield. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 reflect what Caroline Croser identifies as the imagined “spatial operations of violence” that, accurately or not, have long been dominated by discourses of division and line.²¹ This is the space of large-scale ‘conventional’ or ‘industrial’ war, with troops arranged in clear hierarchies of scale that increase in number from a ‘front’ to a ‘rear’ area. On this linear battlefield, the capture and evacuation of a detainee is diagrammed as a one-way path weaving through the combat zone to the relative safety of the communications zone or rear area.

The performance of this process sees the detainee shift hands from the capturing troops to MPs at a series of collection points, temporary holding areas that are secured some distance away from the violence of the front. Each stage of the process brings the prisoner in contact with a higher echelon of military command, and each of these encounters produces new information and intelligence via both field interrogations by MI and the accumulation of ‘pocket litter’ and other personal property. This subsequently yields reams of administrative

²¹ Croser, *The New Spatiality of Security*, 1. See also: Gregory, “Seeing Red: Baghdad and the Eventful City.”

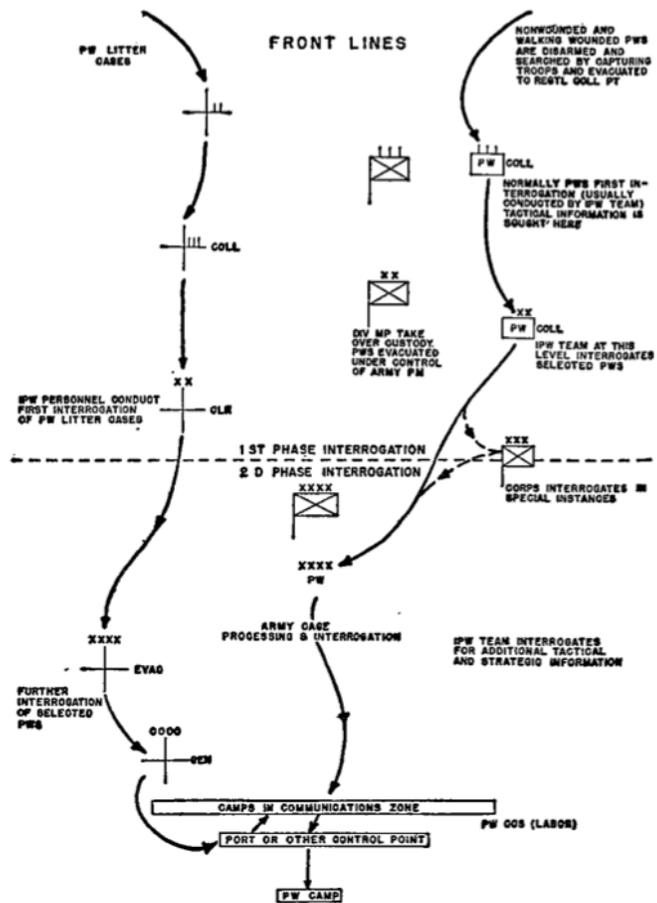


Figure 4.1: Evacuation and Internment of Prisoners of War, 1952

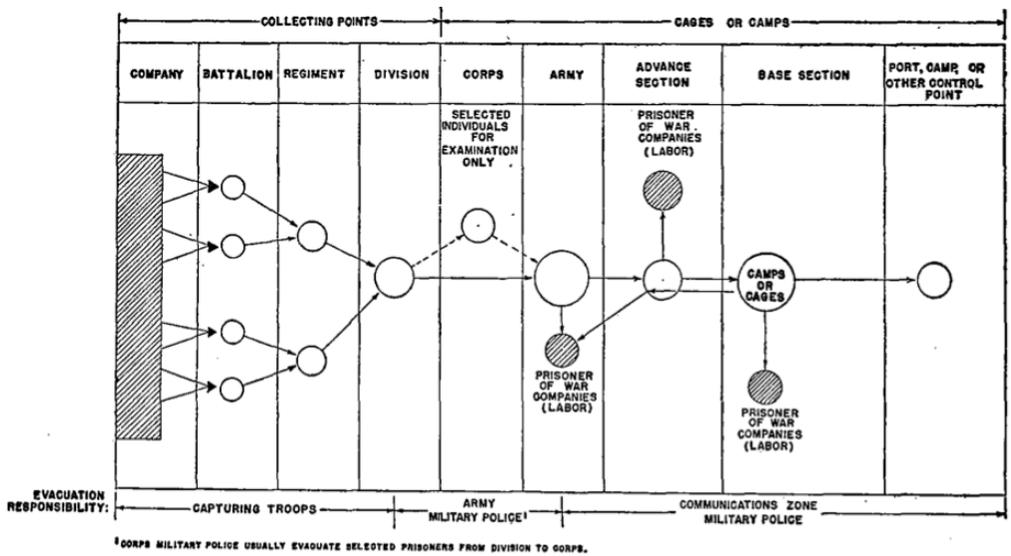


Figure 4.2: Schematic Diagram Of Evacuation Of EPWs, 1952

paperwork, tactical intelligence documents, and cultural knowledge. The movement and management of the detainee body in the course of evacuation shapes and is shaped by the terrain, the discursive framing of the volatility of the enemy, and the local or military transportation technologies available during the war.



Figure 4.3
Captured Soldiers Awaiting Evacuation



Figure 4.4
Evacuation of Communists

During the Korean War, the moving of a prisoner's body from the front lines often took the form of large numbers of soldiers—sometimes hundreds at a time—marching through the cities and countryside that made up the battlefield [Figs. 4.3 and 4.4]. The scope and scale of this movement are inseparable from the spatial practices of 'total wars' such as the First and Second World Wars, which called on the political and economic mobilization of all levels of social life.²² In total war, capture and surrender were seen as "part of a collective action by a unit or a whole army, rather than individual actions."²³

²² This typology of total industrial war "as a battle in a field between men and machinery" and "as a massive deciding event in a dispute in international affairs," is for Rupert Smith, something that no longer exists. Smith, *The Utility of Force*, 3.

²³ See Ferguson, "Prisoner Taking and Prisoner Killing in the Age of Total War," 153. Quite distinct from his questionable work attempting to offer a more positive framing of British imperialism, this is one of the few military historical studies to engage with the space of surrender and capture.

Indeed, IHL has placed the responsibility for the wellbeing of the prisoner in the control of the capturing government, “not in that of the individuals or corps who captured them” since the Hague Conventions.²⁴ Capture and culpability have been collectivized, with the hope being that states will consider how they instruct their soldiers to handle enemies to be part of a broad landscape of restraint rather than simply an additional site for deploying lethal force.

As war prisoner narratives from the two World Wars have suggested, such marches saw the recently disarmed prisoner body exposed to the harshness of the climate (especially the harsh Korean winter), the terrain, and the violence that erupts from prolonged contact with an enemy captor who is under extreme duress himself. In many

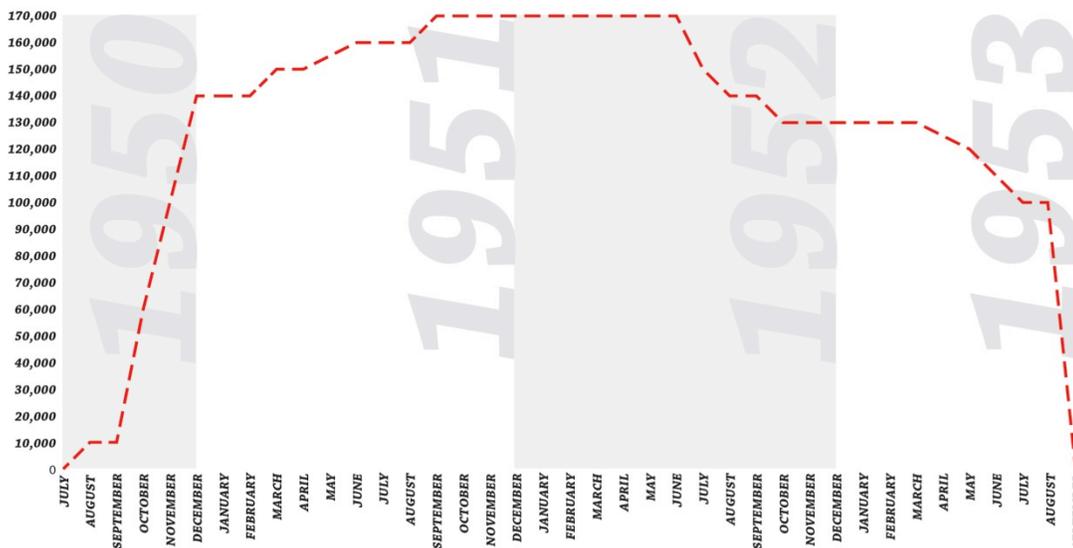


Table 4.1: EPW Quantities in South Korea from July 1950 to September 1953

cases, evacuation brought with it extremely limited food and water supply for both captors and detainees, as well as increasingly insufficient clothing, and the collapse of formal and informal group cohesion within the prisoner population.

²⁴ See: International Conferences (The Hague), *The Hague Convention (IV)*.

As for the journey itself, soldiers used the existing infrastructure of the Korean battlefield to the greatest extent possible, employing roads and train lines used to deliver troops and ammunition to the front to 'backhaul' prisoners back to collection points and camps: a respirational ecology of military force. There were interrogations at nearly all truck transfers and handoff locations, and relatively little advanced coordination was required to make the process function. At times, surrendering soldiers were simply disarmed and told which direction to walk to get to the EPW collection point. Official records from the Korean conflict state that around 170,000 PWs journeyed to one of the nine EPW camps; over 70% were apprehended in the three-month period between September and December of 1950 [Table 4.1].²⁵

The movement and management of Korean War detainees was severely complicated by the speed and scale of the North Korean invasion of South Korea. Just two weeks after the invasion, on 10 July 1950, a location for the first EPW site in Pusan was chosen, and two weeks later, the enclosure had been built and was already full, necessitating a move to a new location by 6 August. In the war's earliest days, detainees were frequently moved within and between enclosures and camps by multiple units—often outrunning the nascent administrative system meant to keep track of them. In the confusion wrought by camp construction, detainee population growth, prisoner relocation, and administrative disorder, no “reliable method of keeping track of

²⁵ The rapid influx of detainees is related to both the US landing at Inchon and to the subsequent arrival of Chinese Forces on the peninsula. For prisoner counts, see Meyers and Bradbury, “The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis,” 214.



Figure 4.5: United Nations Command EPW Facilities as of October 1953
 (Squares represent main camps; triangles are branch camp extensions)

individual PWs existed” from the war’s beginning.²⁶ [Figure 4.5 shows the final locations for EPW camps in 1953] As early as December 1950, the military was already attempting to rectify the “unsatisfactory nature” of a reporting system that had “resulted in cumulative totals far in excess of the number actually taken” by troops from the United Nations Command (UNC).²⁷

During this period of intense fighting and territorial gains and losses, General MacArthur’s military strategy was geared towards the rollback of communist territorial control and the elimination of the North Korean ruling regime through ‘conventional’ territorial war with “extended and secure rear areas.”²⁸ When fronts would collide, large numbers of EPWs were subsequently detained. The first eight months of conflict were thus “geographical,” in that the dominant military-spatial frame was one of territorial acquisition organized around violence at strategic fronts.²⁹ Capture was a process punctuated by ruthless brutality—a disturbing *quid pro quo*. Upon learning that North Koreans had murdered many of the Americans they captured, for instance, US troops responded with beatings and murders of their own.³⁰

In 1951, US strategy in Korea shifted from annihilation (through spatial expansion) to attrition: from rollback to containment. Just when the rollback strategy had seemed to be succeeding, thousands of Chinese troops entered the conflict from the

²⁶ Ibid., 238.

²⁷ U.S. Army, Pacific Command, *The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War*, 9.

²⁸ “Addendum 1 to Annex L: Analysis of Current Prisoner of War/Civilian Internee System,” No date, Box 33, RG 389, L-I-1. Box 14, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

²⁹ The use of ‘geographical’ here is taken from Thayer, *War Without Fronts*, 4. Cited in Gartner and Marissa Edson Myers, “Body Counts and ‘Success’ in the Vietnam and Korean Wars,” 380.

³⁰ Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie*, 101; White, *The Captives Of Korea*.

north, forcing the US back to the Pusan perimeter. In this period of strategic transition, “inflicting maximum losses on the enemy replaced acquiring real estate as the primary objective of the United States forces.” This shift was reflected in a reduction in the volume of enemies captured, as the metric of battlefield success shifted from measuring the ground gained to counting the enemy killed. No longer ‘geographical,’ the war became statistical, its success or failure determined by whether or not the US Army had “inflicted enough pain upon the communist forces to bring them to the negotiating table.”³¹

Both US military planners and the prisoners themselves assumed that the war was going to be relatively short.³² But as battlefield strategy shifted and prisoners began to understand that their internment might endure, their docility began to give way to violent struggles for power, most notably in the camp at Koje Do. During that May 1952 episode, detainees took Brigadier Francis Dodd hostage in an attempt to bargain for, among other things, better camp conditions and an apology for previous incidents of violence in the camp.³³ As a result of this increased hostility in Korean camps, where prisoners were using lethal violence against both each other and UNC guards, and

³¹ Gartner and Marissa Edson Myers, “Body Counts and ‘Success’ in the Vietnam and Korean Wars,” 381. Contrary to most discussions of population and the politics of ‘body counts’, Garner and Myers continue here by noting that in “response to this fundamental shift in its mission, the army appropriated body counts as its dominant means of assessing success or failure in the Korean War”

³² “Memo from M.J. Fitzgerald to the Chief of the Division of Protective Services,” 22 November 1950; and “Memo from Harry W. Gorman to the Chief of the Division of Protective Services,” 8 November 1952, Box 14, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

³³ For a detailed exploration of the ‘Dodd incident,’ see Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960,” 216–261. See also: General Staff, United Nations Military Intelligence Section, *The Communist War in POW Camps: The Background of Incidents Among Communist Prisoners in Korea*, 11.

increasing organizing within the camp along communist and anti-communist lines, the US Eighth Army Command recommended that the camps be segregated, and Communist leaders removed if and when identified by the internal identity screening process.

Capitalizing on the effervescent violence in the camps, Communist authorities sent people to be purposefully captured and brought to the enclosures. Once there, they were tasked with disrupting the UN mission, organizing the captive Communist resistance, targeting and killing anti-Communist detainees who had been coerced into fighting for the Communists. The hardening of political identity within the camps that emerged at this time was due to the prisoners' unknown futures, and happened despite the lack of ideological clarity that existed beyond the concertina wire.

The practice of using the camps as a continuation of battlefield violence was a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, and one that placed an increased amount of pressure on UNC troops to 'fix' the identity of their captives as quickly as possible into a coherent set of political classifications:

RM-CP – Reported Member of Communist Party

KM – Known Member of Communist Party

PM-CP – Probably Member of Communist Party

A-C – Anti-Communist

U – Communist Affiliation Unknown/Political Affiliation Unknown³⁴

As Monica Kim notes, however, these classifications were difficult to ascertain, and the extensive use of the classification (U) in the camps was as much an indication that political affiliations were not clear as it was that “all Koreans along the political

³⁴ U.S. Army, Pacific Command, *The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War*.

spectrum were potentially suspicious.”³⁵ In this landscape of indiscriminate suspicion, the variability and precarity of these classifications reveals that “there is no such thing as a natural or universal classification system,” and that those who “appear natural, eloquent, and homogenous within a given context appear forced and heterogenous outside of that context.”³⁶ Nonetheless, attempts to clearly identify an enemy were made, and this narrative of a bipolar war playing out on a linear battlefield, despite the borders between groups that materialized in the camps, would lead to a very particular representation of the pathological nature of the Communist captive.³⁷

The conditions described above are situated within the ‘conventional’ narrative of the Korean conflict, which saw an interface between friend and enemy defined primarily by the strategic objectives of the military apparatuses of the United States (exercised through the United Nations) and the Communist North Koreans (with the aid of Communists from China and the Soviet Union). As it was told until very recently by both American and South Korean historians, this conventional narrative states that the Korean War began with Communists crossing the 38th Parallel in 1950 and ended in 1953 after nearly eighteen months of armistice negotiations in the city of Panmunjon. Pinning causality for the war exclusively on the assault from the North and locating the conflict as the first significant conflict of the Cold War, this account requires a

³⁵ Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960,” 94.

³⁶ Bowker and Star, *Sorting Things Out*, 131.

³⁷ See, for instance: Hagerty, *The Handling and Treatment of Future Communist Prisoners of War*; Guelzo, “What to Expect from a Communist Prisoner.”

significant amount of erasure and simplification.³⁸ As Tirman notes, this account is not necessarily false, but it is incomplete. In considering the space between capture and the camp, the most notable deficiency is this narrative's minimization of the effects of Korea's internal political conflict and the role that the US military occupation played in determining the shape of wartime police and detainment practice. It is my argument here that in order to understand the contours of wartime detention and the landscape of apprehension, we must also comprehend the ways in which the United States played a role in the establishment and funding of a much less orderly space of violence on the Korean peninsula.

Indiscriminant Violence in the Making of the Bipolar Narrative

For the Japanese, defeat in World War II meant relinquishing control of Korea. To facilitate decolonization, the Korean peninsula was divided, with the transition overseen in the North by the Soviet Union and in the South by the United States. When the US arrived in 1945, they set up a military government and implemented a series of policy decisions—about the army, police, bureaucracy and judiciary—that would set the terms for both the post-WWII Korea and for the war to come.³⁹

The Americans initially chose to utilize the same Korean National Police (KNP) structure that existed during the Japanese colonial period. This particular choice was based largely on KNP's opposition to the Korean political Left—seen by Washington's emerging Cold Warriors as facilitating the incursion of communism into the southern

³⁸ Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 82.

³⁹ Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1, 136.

part of Korea—and the widely held opinion that “in the absence of an army, the police were the only instrument of power.”⁴⁰ Charged with overseeing the transition of a former colony to democratic rule, the Americans ended up replicating the colonial hierarchy they were ostensibly there to dismantle, particularly when it came to repressive state policing. By deciding to retain the enforcers of Japanese colonial power, the U.S. demonstrated that while they might consider the Koreans ready for decolonization, they did not believe them capable of managing their own state. Furthermore, while the Americans might have raised the occasional objection to the repressive secret police and intelligence apparatus of the KNP, it remained in place.⁴¹ As it had in the Philippines, the U.S. relied on the spatial ordering and security provided by a proxy national police force.⁴²

In 1948 the Soviets left the northern portion of the Korean peninsula and in June of that same year, the US ceased its military occupation of the South. Political turmoil and violence descended on the peninsula, with locational conflicts over land use and resource distribution setting the stage for the rise to power of anti-communist president Syngman Rhee in the South. In an attempt to quell the growing disorder, Rhee deployed the KNP and the newly formed Army of the Republic of Korea (ROKA) to

⁴⁰ Ibid., 162.,

⁴¹ Ibid., 168.

⁴² Despite the fact that host-country national police strong-armed tactics worked to alienate many in the population and against long-term strategic interests, the US military has continued to train and utilize proxy police forces in nearly every foreign conflict since. See, for instance: McCoy, *Policing America's Empire*; Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*; Anderson and Killingray, *Policing and Decolonisation*. The role of national police and host-country military has become a pressing issue again in Afghanistan. See: United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Arbitrary Detention in Afghanistan: A Call for Action, Volume 1*; United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Treatment of Conflict-Related Detainees in Afghan Custody*.

arrest and intimidate members of leftist political groups.⁴³ In December 1948, his government passed the National Security Law, which officially granted the police and the army the authority to imprison citizens who criticized the government or its policies. The crisis resulting from the power vacuum saw South Korea frequently taking “extreme measures” in dealing with political dissidents.⁴⁴ Between the winter of 1948 and the summer of 1950, the line between mass arrest and mass killing became increasingly blurred.

The financial and administrative support of American military advisors and counter-intelligence services was key to establishing this detention infrastructure.⁴⁵ By 1950, more than 100,000 Koreans had been killed or “disappeared,” and well over 17,000 political prisoners were in custody. Survivor testimony has indicated that the KNP played an instrumental role in detaining political prisoners (making preventive arrests during the state of emergency) and passing the detainees on to the military.⁴⁶ In fact, the KNP’s use of preemptive detention and police violence as a form of social control earned South Korea the distinction of being called a “republic of prisons.”⁴⁷ Even after the North Korean invasion, the police force continued to execute Martial Law, and

⁴³ Chalmers Johnson wrote that South Korea was the *first* postwar location where Americans installed an anticommunist dictator to rule. See Johnson, *Blowback, Second Edition*. Cited in Kim, “Forgotten War, Forgotten Massacres—the Korean War (1950–1953) as Licensed Mass Killings,” 525.

⁴⁴ Kim, “Forgotten War, Forgotten Massacres—the Korean War (1950–1953) as Licensed Mass Killings,” 528.

⁴⁵ Johnston, “Political Jailing in Korea Denied: Authorities Say 17,867 Held Are Accused of Theft, Riot, Murder, and Other Crimes.” Cited in Kuzmarov, “Modernizing Repression,” 196. Other sources cite that South Korea had close to 50,000 political prisoners at the start of the war. See Kim, “Beneath the Tip of the Iceberg: Problems in Historical Clarification of the Korean War.”

⁴⁶ Kim, “The War Against the ‘Enemy Within’: Hidden Massacres in the Early Stages of the Korean War.”

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

the boundaries between war, internal policing, security pacification, and the politics of decolonization blurred beyond recognition.

It is important to note the role that this internal security policing played in both setting the stage for the war, and for the events that emerged during it. What had begun as a violent internal political struggle around land redistribution and the politics of decolonization was eventually imbricated with a war that, at least in American parlance, mirrored the ‘free world’ versus ‘communist world’ dichotomy of the Truman Doctrine.⁴⁸ Such a collusion of discourses led to the neat reclassification of a wide range of Korean political affiliations and broad popular desires for autonomy under US occupation as the effects of communist infiltration and Soviet agitation. In demanding that the war take this particular structure, both ‘sides’ willfully manufactured a landscape of apprehension that seemingly justified all bodies being violently forced to declare their location on one side or the other, despite favoring neither.

This overlap between the spatial dynamics of civil conflict and the implied framework of bipolar war subsequently played out in the space of capture during the ‘official’ Korean War, often refracting manifestations of violence. For instance, when a South Korean Army soldier destroyed his captive’s UN-issued surrender leaflets—paper cards dropped from airplanes that were meant to grant the holder safe passage—he was asserting that “only the civil war, a conflict that had its origins in the Japanese colonial period and its escalation during U.S. military occupation, could be the legitimate

⁴⁸ Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War*, Vol. 1.

template” through which a particular surrenderer would become visible.⁴⁹

Many who occupied these spaces of disorderly violence—where surrender through the channels of one iteration of the conflict could expose them to the violences of another—had been drawn into the fight against their will. They simply had been biding their time waiting for the right moment to safely turn themselves over to *someone* in order to avoid exposure to violence. Though many believed that their unwillingness to fight would keep them from being apprehended and detained, or at least grant them special treatment, this was not usually the case. “I had been preparing for this [surrender] all along,” said one prisoner in a UN camp. “When I walked across...I had maps and everything...Walking over with maps, guns, and knowledge...is quite different than being captured on the battlefield.”⁵⁰ Many would thereafter consider their detainment unjust: “I expected that I would be treated differently. I never expected that I would end up behind barbed wire.”⁵¹ And yet, because of the near-universal suspicion directed towards all Korean bodies, that is where he was to end up, despite his belief that there was a real difference between the “battlefield” and a space that was, while on contested ground, explicitly *not* the battlefield, into which he could safely be moved. His case was not unique. For this prisoner, capture is the reframing of the space of violence: he exited the battlefield on one side of the prison fence merely to enter another, more violently organized version on the other.

⁴⁹ Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960,” 184.

⁵⁰ Meyers and Bradbury, “The Political Behavior of Korean and Chinese Prisoners of War in the Korean Conflict: A Historical Analysis,” 231.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

Others would attempt to blend in, to assume a collection of potential identities that would curry them favor with their potential captors. Monica Kim tells the story of the capture of Oh Se-hui, who was attempting to return to his home in the north by foot when he was apprehended. On his person, he had several forms of material evidence that he hoped would save his life if and when he encountered UN troops, ROKA soldiers, or the KPA.⁵² Stashed in various places on his body were his student papers from a university he had studied at in the South, a UN surrender leaflet, a handwritten ‘patriot certificate’ illustrating his loyalties to the KPA, and a student roster from his time as a teacher. All were meant to be signs to different capturing parties that he was, in fact, not suspicious, not a threat, not to be killed. By carrying these objects, he was attempting “to barter for another moment of life with four pieces of paper” that established his personal connections to the myriad violent actors that surrounded him.⁵³

When an ROKA soldier eventually encountered him and asked “What are you?” none of his answers or evidence was satisfactory. The soldier scoffed at the UN leaflet and challenged the validity of the other two documents. The Communist certificate would—to Oh’s great relief—remain hidden in the lining of his hat. It was this hat, though, that held the key to his survival, for when it was removed it revealed long messy hair—explicitly not the close-cropped hair worn by guerrillas. Despite his

⁵² In the current security landscape, the destabilizing impacts of multiple or simultaneous identity practices are themselves a source of risk and threat. As explored in Chapter 6, every technological effort has been taken in order to fix the identity of a person to its singular biological body. This delimitation of the politics of identity has and continues to expose civilians to new forms of violence and targeting.

⁵³ Kim, “Humanity Interrogated: Empire, Nation, and the Political Subject in U.S. and UN-controlled POW Camps of the Korean War, 1942-1960,” 166.

preparations, it was his body, not barter, that kept him alive.⁵⁴

The UN Command's attempts to manage these multiple identities and limit the ruthless brutality that occurred between capture and the camp included making strategic staffing decisions that avoided putting ROK soldiers in places in which they could shift the framing of the war's violence from civil to Cold War. Thus they were tasked with manning guard towers or managing detainee processing in the camps. According to one document prepared during the negotiations at Punmanjon, for instance, the "average ROK soldier did his time in combat before joining his present unit and bears no love in his heart for his ex-adversaries" and therefore would have had to have been "restrained, on occasion, from performing his duties too *enthusiastically*, and as a result there is invariably a mixed guard, US and ROK."⁵⁵

Yet despite such internally combustible performances of violence, the Korean War was nonetheless still imagined largely as a bi-polar war fought between the US interests and a brutal and lawless communist enemy.⁵⁶ However, given that four-fifths of the South Korean prison population were political prisoners who had violated the National Security Law, it is impossible to sever the forms and processes of apprehension of EPWs from the disorderly backdrop against which they took place. The disorder that would plague many EPW camps in the three years of 'conventional' war was no doubt related

⁵⁴ Ibid., 164–166.

⁵⁵ "Command Conference on the Subject of the PW Command," No date, Box 14, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). RG 389 / 290 / 76 / 6 / Shelf 3. Italics mine.

⁵⁶ Report of the Military Police Board, "Report 53-4: Collection and Documentation of Material Relating to the Prisoner of War Internment Program in Korea, 1950-1953, Chapters 1-6," 20 September 1962; Records of the Provost Marshal General; RG 389; Records of the Corrections Division; History File, 1920-1963; Box 18, page 14; (NACP). RG 389 / 290 / 76 / 6 / Shelf 3

to this politically contentious landscape of civilian killings, police repression, and combatant brutality unfolding outside the walls.

While those captured by UN troops and brought to EPW compounds were entitled to the protections of the Geneva Conventions, those apprehended in violent sweeps by the KNP were sent to provincial jails as political prisoners, part of the repressive penal apparatus the US helped set up, fund, and train. One population was entered into the UN camps, while the other was cast off and “disappeared” from historical narrative and not seen again until the recent South Korean Truth and Reconciliation Commissions hearings. Rather than reflecting any kind of stable communist or anti-communist enemy, the EPW population was, to a significant degree, a reflection of where, when, and by whom they were apprehended.

Recalling the chaotic performance of violence that played out in the encounters of the Korean War, medic Stanley Weintraub notes:

“Everything was provisional. It was difficult to distinguish friendly but fleeing South Korean troops from the enemy, and even more difficult to identify civilians from either. Soldiers trying to escape further action ripped off identifying garb and posed as refugees...To curtail guerrilla operations in the sector, the UN forces were ordered to shoot anyone in civilian clothes seen moving at night.”⁵⁷

Here, the confusion of war couples with the illegibility of a clear friend/enemy distinction in a way that seemingly justifies a form of indistinct violence. Yet in spite of all of the confusion, disorder, emotional complication, spatial movement, and uncontrolled violence that accompanied capture and evacuation, military analysts have

⁵⁷ Weintraub, *War in the Wards*, 8.

long sought to imply an order and controllability that could then be extended into the camps.

Social and behavioral scientists were key contributors to this particular will-to-order, and during the Cold War they sought not only to calculate and quantify the vagaries of all aspects of the battlefield, but also to repackage them as controllable spaces that neatly reproduced the “overarching metanarrative of a singular Cold War.”⁵⁸ In the next section, I turn my attention to a series of reports that sought to frame the space of capture in such concrete ways, attempting to assure the optimal performance of American soldiers and gauge the efficacy of psychological operations (PSYOPS) on the battlefield. Even in the face of complicating and compelling evidence to the contrary, these reports all rely explicitly on the conventional narrative to build their cases and construct their truths.

Making the Enemy from Inside Out: Behavioralist Science Calculates the Interface

The Korean War captive was largely anonymous—a blank slate.⁵⁹ Despite the three years of military occupation that preceded the war “proper,” the Americans still had little knowledge of the Koreans’ language or customs. The detained Asian body, then,

⁵⁸ Farish, *The Contours of America’s Cold War*, xvi.

⁵⁹ There are, of course, exceptions. For example, a Chinese prisoner identified the names and specific location of twenty-nine members of his platoon that were holding a small ridge near the front. PSYOPs assembled individually addressed letters to each of the men, and included a map directing them to secure surrender locations and a time window before their superiors would be notified of their desire to surrender (this would assure that they would be killed by their own side were they to remain at their military posts). These letters were then fired in ‘leaflet shells’ across enemy lines. See Barrett, “Personal Notes to Reds in Foxholes Urge Them to Surrender in to the U.N.”

served as their introduction to a new knowledge system, a new subject identity.⁶⁰

Troops learned truths about the enemy from singular events on the battlefield. Rumors (of the arrival of a train full of passive Chinese prisoners with no military escort, say) reinforced, as one postwar review of the wartime internment program noted, the American “attitude of complacency in regard to the docility of prisoners of war.” Such an attitude can be put down to the widely-held belief that Asians all exhibited a “politeness and acquiescence to [their] host (captors?) or superior that is not present to the same degree in U.S. culture.”⁶¹

At the same time, however, the use of UN camps as a violent extension of the battlefield, like the Communist takeover on Koje Do, coupled with the UNC’s inability to effectively manage the camp compounds, worked to further entrench a contradictory Orientalist narrative, one that pathologized Asian culture and practice. In the same report, for instance, the Military Police Board noted that there was a “sadism and brutality in many Orientals which was not common in men of better educated areas of the world.” Their “own lives were held so cheaply,”⁶² and their “vigor and drive [led] them to attack with less hesitation than other soldiers.” When coupled with their

⁶⁰ Cumings, *Origins of the Korean War, Vol. 1*; Osborne, “The Ugly War”; Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea*.

⁶¹ U.S. Army, Pacific Command, *The Handling of Prisoners of War During the Korean War*, 8.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 55. It should be noted here that this articulation of a docile Asian is juxtaposed with an image of the “uniqueness of the oriental Communist POW, a person whose indoctrination had been so thorough that capture and internment held no valid meaning.” *Ibid.*, 20. The enemy culture was described as being as servile as its ideological underpinnings were fanatical. That a subject of colonial occupation is seen as both savage and servile is nothing new, yet the degree to which each vision shaped different aspects of EPW operations adds important nuance to the ways that discourses work to construct insides and outsides.

“appalling ability to take losses and to rush forward over piles of their own dead,”⁶³ how could these reviewers conclude that it was anything but “extremely unwise to operate an Oriental communist POW camp with inadequate and unqualified security and administrative personnel?”⁶⁴ Unable to decide whether the enemy was acquiescent or brutal, the conclusion was to settle on both. When the bipolar geopolitical narrative failed as an explanation for battlefield violence, in other words, they deployed the image of an enemy who himself expressed a pathological bipolarity.

The performance of capture of this fluid enemy was the commencement of the “state’s attempt to make a society legible,” to lay out a new system of value that would associate the enemy with a name, an Internment Serial Number [ISN], an observable body, and a history onto which the captor could inscribe new meanings.⁶⁵ It was the initiation of a spatial encounter that became central to wartime knowledge production, entailing “struggles over differing forms of knowledge, over group boundaries, over moralities, over the intimate details of work and life.”⁶⁶

The challenges inherent to making a population legible are particularly evident in cases of foreign war and occupation, where the occupying power operates at an information deficit with relation to its subjects. This difficulty is reflected in the fact that in the discourse of twentieth-century American war, the use of violence has largely been justified in relation to an “inscrutable oriental” that resists “observation physically,

⁶³ Ibid., 52.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 47.

⁶⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 2.

⁶⁶ Cooper and Stoler, “Introduction Tensions of Empire,” 620.

linguistically, and epistemologically.”⁶⁷ In both material and metaphorical terms, ‘bringing in’ the enemy prisoner of war coincided with a host of practices that worked to entrench the bipolarity of the Cold War battlefield and further reify the distinction between friend and enemy.

One of the central ways in which the American military came to know the cultural landscape of the Communist enemy was through the use of detainees as a living database. EPWs were key points of exchange between the spatial and cultural imaginaries of the first world and what Henry Kissinger later dubbed the “grey areas” that lay beyond its borders.⁶⁸ The camp compounds themselves were also used as “laboratories for the testing of methods and theories originally conceived on American campuses”: teams of civilians engaged in operations research (OR) were dispatched to the camps to interview combatants and detainees.⁶⁹ For operations research historian Nigel Cummings, OR was “the attack of modern science on complex problems arising in the direction and management of large systems of men, machines, material and money in industry, business, government, and defense.”⁷⁰ Such scholars, funded by the military and affiliated with prominent organizations such as the RAND Corporation, the Operations Research Office (ORO) from Johns Hopkins University, and George

⁶⁷ Kelley, *Imperial Secrets*, 9.

⁶⁸ Kissinger, “Military Policy and Defense of the Grey Areas.” Cited in Farish, *The Contours of America’s Cold War*, 103. In his article, Kissinger was attempting to locate a strategic vision for American power that had to balance atomically destructive total war with a “memory of the Korean conflict which has come to symbolize the frustration experienced in waging peripheral wars.” See: Kissinger, “Military Policy and Defense of the Grey Areas,” 417.

⁶⁹ Farish, *The Contours of America’s Cold War*, 103.

⁷⁰ Nigel Cummings, quoted in Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare*, 138.

Washington University's Human Relations Research Office (HumRRO), became an integral part of the fledgling Cold War military-industrial-academic complex.⁷¹

A key facet of OR research was the use of behavioral scientists to better understand human activity in war and to verify the relevance of scientific research in light of sweeping developments within the military and social sciences. Behaviorists were interdisciplinary scientists who were skeptical of institutional definitions of social scientific truths and sought instead to seek out and uncover how individually acquired beliefs would translate into political action. Thus, instead of “courts or political parties, behavioral scientists spoke of the electoral behavior, or judicial behavior, of individuals and small groups.”⁷² As the case studies that follow suggest, this research also sought to make legible and control the actions of US soldiers who performed capture and evacuation.⁷³ These studies reveal the development of an art of government at the interface: the simultaneous construction of the prisoner subject, the battlefield, the enemy population, and the American warrior subject—each with a distinct role to play and tasks to accomplish. They are part of a search for what Foucault identifies as “methods of power capable of optimizing forces, aptitudes, and life in general without at the same time making them more difficult to govern.”⁷⁴ The encounter, they

⁷¹ Lowen, *Creating the Cold War University*.

⁷² Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, 24.

⁷³ Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*; Simpson, *Science of Coercion*. For research exploring the potential role of the social sciences in national defense, undertaken in the aftermath of the Korean conflict, see De Sola Pool, *Social Science Research and National Security*. See also “Illuminating the Terrain: Social Science Finds its Targets,” the third chapter of Farish, *The Contours of America's Cold War*, 101–146.

⁷⁴ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*, 141.

imagined, could be effectively controlled from a distance, if only the right disposition of things could be established.

‡ ‡ ‡

The ORO contributed two classified, hitherto ignored reports exploring capture and surrender, *A Study of Chinese and North Korean Surrenderers* and *U.S. Troop Attitudes Towards the Taking and Treatment of Prisoners of War in Korea*, to a suite of studies that attempted to understand the value of Army PSYOPS and aimed to harness the disorder at the interface between capture and the camp and turn it into a more consistent space for effective military practice.⁷⁵ Demonstrating what Rob Robin identifies as the “pervasive contempt for complexity, the uncritical acceptance of contemporary cultural mores, and the denial of its intellectual limitations” typical of Cold War behavioralists, primary investigators Lessing A. Kahn and Florence K. Nierman believed that even the most precarious of wartime encounters could be studied and its performance subsequently managed.⁷⁶ For Kahn and Nierman, capture, surrender, and evacuation, like many wartime activities, were coupled with the state drive to call on various modes of expertise and technoscientific knowledge to ‘arithmetize’ the enemy—here not as a body count but as a statistical population, something to poll in order to mine for

⁷⁵ These researchers were working against the prevailing idea that proof was simply quantity removed from all other factors. As one report put it: “so much stress has been put on the number of prisoners taken as the test of effectiveness of psychological warfare that it is difficult for many to see that this may not be the greatest contribution that psychological warfare can make in support of ground operations.” See William E. Daugherty, ORO T-10 (FEC), *Organization and Activities of Psywar Personnel in Lower Echelons of Eighth Army, 24 January – 5 April 1951* (Chevy Chase, MD: Operations Research Office, The Johns Hopkins University, May 1951), v.” See Jacobson, “Minds Then Hearts:’ U.S. Political and Psychological Warfare During the Korean War,” 94.

⁷⁶ Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, 5.

probabilities and likelihoods. This compulsion to render control probabilistic, it should be noted, arose “most strongly in opaque situations where the other appear[ed] illegible.”⁷⁷ In the camps, the captured body became a vessel not just for the articulation of ‘intel’ through tactical interrogations, but also for the production of cultural knowledge through a very particular behavioral lens that would drive the future development of doctrine: Kahn and Nierman sought to use behavioral science to tame the interface between capture and the camp.

In *A Study of Chinese and North Korean Surrenderers*, Kahn and Nierman express confidence that their methods will yield important truths because, “except for simple reflex, no behavior—surrender included—occurs in a vacuum; it is determined by the joint impact of the many factors in the immediate environment and earlier experiences of the individual actors.”⁷⁸ The study overflows with tables and graphs describing the importance of the time between the captive’s decision to surrender and surrender itself; their preferred sources of war news; the importance of ammunition supply in making their decision to surrender. Kahn and Nierman conclude that the stresses and strains of life in the warzone, the specifics of the terrain, and inadequacy of supplies all made individuals more likely to give themselves up. Low morale due to a lack of “intra-unit cohesiveness” whose causes and manifestations included language barriers, few

⁷⁷ Ansorge, “Registry, Print, Resistance,” 30.

⁷⁸ Kahn and Nierman, *A Study of Chinese and North Korean Surrenderers*, 9. While it may seem that there is nothing particularly striking about this comment, the behavioralists operated under the assumption that the use of social scientific methodologies would allow them to extract these past moments and connections and subsequently produce replicable future truths.

personal friendships, and a lack of confidence greatly increased the likelihood of surrender.⁷⁹

Appearing only twice in the study, prisoners' personal politics and individual narratives are seemingly small variables in the data. Most interviewees gave 'no answer' when asked about their ideological persuasion, which fit well with the behavioralists' "insistent denial of ambiguity in human affairs" and a general skepticism about the authority of institutions. Deeply suspicious of the unquantifiable, behavioralists ignored the nuances of cultural, political, and historical coincidences as they sought to understand "the human experience as the sum of a crisp, quantifiable, and predictable combination of sociological, psychological, and biological reactions."⁸⁰ Nowhere in these studies are there references to the political ambiguities on the Korean peninsula discussed earlier in this chapter; indeed, participants are grouped simply by national origin, a notoriously poor indicator of combatant affiliation in this context.⁸¹ Here the data is organized to reinforce the clarity of the Cold War political diagram (as viewed from the US) and to give weight to the authority of the behavioral sciences in matters of truth production.

These studies visualize capture as a space that can be brought under control, and imagine away the complexity of the repressive national police infrastructure, its violent apprehension and detention apparatus, and the destabilizing violence of internal

⁷⁹ Ibid., 3.

⁸⁰ Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, 7.

⁸¹ It is useful here to keep in mind that "populations do not come pre-formed," but rather they "arise as the populations that they are in accordance with a principle of concern or enquiry...[they] are not merely defined by 'national' features." Dillon and Reid, "Global Liberal Governance," 48.

political and ideological concerns. In an effort to 'know the enemy' and know the battlefield, these studies do much work to write them—or a version of them—into existence.

Kahn and Nierman's attempt to understand the performance of capture from the American perspective, *U.S. Troop Attitudes Towards the Taking and Treatment of Prisoners of War in Korea*, conveys a similar faith in the calculability of the interface. This study seeks to determine the relationship between the promise of 'good treatment' as outlined in anti-Communist counter-propaganda and the actual treatment of EPWs. The methodology here differs from that of the earlier study, using surveys to reveal whether or not soldiers agree or disagree with such statements as: "Sometimes I Just Feel Like Shooting a Few Prisoners" (31% of all surveyed agreed); "I'd Just as Soon Shoot the Prisoners as Look at Them" (16% of all surveyed agreed); "It's Usually Better Not to Take Prisoners Because they Can Hurt You More Than They Help You" (10% Agreed) and "Enemy soldiers would rather die than surrender" (37% agreed). When asked how seeing the enemy made them feel *about* the enemy, a striking 53% of enlisted men felt sympathy, compared to only 21% of officers, who interacted with the prisoners much less than did the common soldier.

Absent here is any discussion of whether the prisoners *were* shot instead of captured, whether or not soldiers avoided detaining surrenderers, or in what ways contact with prisoners generated sympathy towards them or their ideology. As with other OR studies, however, what is present is a quantified and quantifiable vision of the

battlefield in general and enemy culture and politics in particular.⁸² These texts transform processes of capture and surrender into the coded language of what Matthew Farish has called a “universal and general science of society and of human behavior,” that seeks to generate an image of an enemy population through a deceptive “command of data.”⁸³

In their quest to transform the contingencies of battlefield capture into a simple quantitative field, these studies reflect military Orientalism at its most transparent. “No longer does an Orientalist try first to master the esoteric languages of the Orient,” Said writes, “he begins instead as a trained social scientist and ‘applies’ his science to the Orient, or anywhere else.” This “specifically American contribution to the history of Orientalism” would become a central facet of the Cold War effort.⁸⁴ The behaviorist approach to knowledge is one that prefers “to keep the object opaque and to make all judgments based on the object’s observable comportment.”⁸⁵ To view the human subject as an object requires the belief, as Peter Galison suggests, that all people are “like black

⁸² This project would continue in Vietnam—most notably with the RAND interviews that comprised the Motivation and Morale Study—as operations research gave way to the rampant use of statistical analyses. During that war, the scope and scale of the prisoner interviews increased significantly. Between August 1964 and December 1968, RAND researchers performed over 2400 interviews with a population made up of largely captured or defected Viet Cong. These interviews led to well over 35 publications on issues as varied as the Viet Cong style of politics, a statistical analysis of the effects of US crop spraying in South Vietnam, and a series of studies on the motivations and morale of the Viet Cong. See: Davison, *A Users Guide to the RAND Interviews in Vietnam*. While the methodology was challenged at the time, and is still seen as questionable, a recent RAND overview of detainee operations still notes that the “Motivation and Morale study was a pioneering effort in its attempt to understand the adversary’s perspective...It sought to understand his will and values. This knowledge is crucial for the conduct of any war, and especially so when facing unconventional and asymmetric adversaries. Only when understanding “what makes them fight” can the U.S. military direct its best efforts to making them stop.” See Benard et al., *The Battle Behind the Wire*, 47.

⁸³ Farish, *The Contours of America’s Cold War*, 117.

⁸⁴ Said, *Orientalism*, 290.

⁸⁵ Galloway, “Black Box, Black Bloc,” 241.

boxes with inputs and outputs and no access to our or anyone else's inner life."⁸⁶ The resulting methods of apprehending these objects could thus be technical, an attempted understanding of the interface through metrics and technologies that could extend the military gaze while not addressing the underlying complications of the encounter: the inner world made visible through inputs and outputs at the interface.

Writing from the war fields of Korea, correspondent John Osborne lamented the effects of this particular aspect of American militarism; to him, the fact that the US had occupied and overseen government operations in Korea for nearly three years before the war meant that it "should have accumulated a considerable staff of military and civilian officials who came to know the country, the people, the language."⁸⁷ But this did not happen. Indeed, as case file after case file and narrative after narrative from the war camps suggests, this did not even happen well into the war. Americans could not or would not attempt to reconcile the competing scales of violence happening with and because of their presence on the peninsula. All Asian bodies were thus approached with suspicion and distrust—and this blindness generated both a newly politicized EPW subject and a new set of techniques needed to apprehend and remove him from the civilian population.

Watching UN troops approach a column of refugees, Osborne directly observes the ways in which both this lack of cultural knowledge and the excess brutality on all sides of this 'ugly war' had resulted in a reliance on various technological approaches to the

⁸⁶ Galison, "The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision," 256.

⁸⁷ Osborne, "The Ugly War," 24.

body of the Other. These technologies enabled troops to ‘see’ the enemy through a lens of potential violence:

“As the jeep comes toward them I witness something of an advance in American communication with the people of the country. A marine is passing a mine detector over the clothing and packs of the refugees. Any metal—a rifle barrel, a pistol, a clip of ammunition, maybe the parts of a radio—will presumably be spotted by the detector. Anyhow, it is better than guns and the policemen whom I have seen at work.”⁸⁸

Just as the American eye could not discern between enemy and friend, neither could it determine which body to suspect and detain and which to trust. The site of encounter required mediation via technology that could augment and extend the military gaze. In World War II, the war that laid the groundwork for how the US approached detainee operations in Korea, the enemy had been encountered on the battlefield, disarmed, and sent through linear channels back to EPW camps in the rear. But the multiple layers of violence in Korea had led to the need for new, technological forms of seeing and reading the enemy that would enable a reduction of the gap between the detained body and the ‘true intent’ of their actions and activities. This extended gaze occurred not through the advancement of overhead surveillance techniques or more traditional technologies of rule like the census, but through an increased reliance on particular devices that could ‘read’ the existence of an enemy in the moments of encounter with the population—breaking open the coded black box and harnessing the unknowns of its multiple connections. “But machines still can't talk to people,” Osborne would presciently conclude, “not as we must learn—and learn very soon—to talk to the people of Asia.”

⁸⁸ Ibid.

Out of the experience of the Korean War came an explosion of techniques and technologies meant to pin down the encounter between US forces or their proxies and the (enemy) population in order to make it controllable and productive. The multiple scales of conflict and the spatial realities of an enemy that moved amongst the population 'as a fish swims in the sea' led to pressure to increase the speed and utility of the encounter, to increase capture's logistical effectiveness in order to parse friend from enemy, to distinguish civilian from enemy target, and to move all bodies from harm's way quickly and safely in an increasingly complex battlefield. These intentions, framed as they were by the often-bypassed ideals of liberal IHL and the spatial diagram of discrete territorially trapped state dominos were frequently undercut by the brutality that played out in the interface between capture and the camp. This violence would subsequently lead to renewed calls to address the technical means by which the encounter could be governed.

In the next part of this chapter, I continue this exploration of the interfaces between capture and the camp by turning to the Vietnam War. During that war, the drive to solve the legibility and control problems that arose in contact zones was acute, and in what follows I detail the ways that the enactment of these spaces was dramatically altered by two competing infrastructures of detainment and the introduction of technologies like the helicopter and the computer, tools that extended the disciplinary gaze of the military while dramatically changing the paths bodies followed as they wove their way from apprehension to beyond the prison walls.

PART II:

The Landscape of Apprehension in the Vietnam War

The freedom of movement is an avowedly fundamental tenet of liberal rights. The extent to which liberal counterinsurgencies foreclose, limit, or entirely eradicate the freedom of movement for noncombatants crucially brings into question the tensions balanced within doctrine and the practice of such warfare. The degree of adherence of liberal powers to a set of legal—and more important, ethical—codes of practice in the detention of combatants also reveals the gaps between what is avowed and what is done.

—Lelah Khalili,

Time in the Shadows: Confinement in Counterinsurgencies

The overlapping geographies of police, security, and war were, as is typical in processes of pacification and counterinsurgency, on full display in Vietnam.⁸⁹

Inevitably, then, the detention system that was in place when the U.S. first entered Vietnam was, as it had been in Korea, deeply embedded within the political turmoil of a civil conflict. Yet, while there may have been similarities to that earlier ‘police action’ (the installation of a repressive sovereign, the role of communism in structuring the idea of the enemy, the brutal national policing agencies, the post-colonial landscape), the performance and imagination of war and detention differed broadly.

The Vietnam War saw two distinct detention systems, each with its own history and internal practices. First was the provincial and national prison system already in place when US military advisors arrived, run by the South Vietnamese police apparatus built on the skeletons of the French colonial system. This civilian infrastructure

⁸⁹ Neocleous, “A Brighter and Nicer New Life’.”

included both prisons (for convicted criminals) and jails (for those either serving sentences of less than a year or waiting for sentencing). But during the war, the forty-seven provincial prisons and four national centers also held political prisoners awaiting trial—a situation that, as I detail below, eventually caused much consternation for both American and Vietnamese administrators.⁹⁰ The second detention system developed after 1965, as American soldiers began to outnumber military advisors, and consisted of four (eventually six) US-constructed EPW compounds housing enemy soldiers (specifically, the North Vietnamese Army (NVA)) and managed by the South Vietnamese Army (ARVN). My analysis of the spatial and technological encounters by which these two detention systems took shape complicates the distinctions between them and draws attention to the “gaps between what is avowed and what is done” in counterinsurgency.⁹¹

The blurred distinctions between the operations of ‘war’ and the operations of ‘internal policing’ in Korea became even more difficult to parse in Vietnam. Once again, the US played a role in funding, training, and constructing significant portions of both detention systems. Yet one—the provincial system—would serve as a repository for discourses about the brutality and inhumanity of the Oriental Other, while the other—which the media much more directly connected to US military activity, despite its also

⁹⁰ The total number of provincial prisons is usually listed at 42, most likely due to the table in Prugh’s often-cited *Law at War* (see page 65). However in his book from 1998, the former Senior US Advisor to the South Vietnamese Director of Corrections D.E. Bordenkircher includes a final prisoner count that lists 47 centers (See his Appendix for table). Though in the book he mentions thirty-seven centers, I consider this table, which lists the names and population counts for each facility—definitive. The ambiguity and confusion, however, are illustrative of the way in which the system as a whole was imagined and managed. See Prugh, *Law at War*; Bordenkircher and Bordenkircher, *Tiger Cage*.

⁹¹ Khalili, *Time in the Shadows*, 6.

being run by the South Vietnamese—was associated with discourses of order, lawfulness, and accountability.

These were military-discursive practices that drew clear lines between us and them, between our accountable practices and lawful personnel and their ethically dubious ones, and they were often completely at odds with the images broadcast on American television screens. On 3 November 1969, for instance, network news channels showed two separate incidents of the torture and mutilation of prisoners of war. The first was broadcast by CBS, and showed the stabbing of a wounded and disarmed NVA prisoner while US advisors stood by. The second, which also occurred in the presence of US Advisors, was an NBC broadcast showing two suspects being roughed up and abused by ARVN interpreters. During his report, NBC correspondent Robert Hager remarked that although the Geneva Conventions prohibited such acts, “It is well known that [the] policy is frequently overlooked under combat conditions.”⁹²

Yet in spite of certain similarities between the two systems of detention in practice, there were nonetheless key legal, classificatory distinctions between the prisoner of war and the political prisoner in theory. Both were detained against their will, but the political prisoner stood accused of breaking a civil law while his EPW counterpart’s status as prisoner was situational, existing in part because of his violent actions and in part because of the context in which those actions took place. In a political war, however, such theoretical distinctions tend to fall apart at the seams. To the counterinsurgent, a person engaged in anti-state crime is not dissimilar to a

⁹² Hammond, *The Military and the Media, 1962-1968*, 218.

(suspected) enemy combatant: it becomes difficult to distinguish a political foe from a political foe that may use lethal force. But in Vietnam, these different classifications—EPW or political prisoner—would result in two wildly divergent paths for the prisoner.

As in Korea, it was seemingly arbitrary events and coincidences that determined who, where, and how a body was apprehended on the battlefield. There, the ease with which the different registers of violence could shift—from civil conflict to bipolar war and back again—made it difficult to *not* find oneself exposed to indiscriminate violence during a security encounter. Such was the case again in the contact zones of Vietnam, where the borders between ‘our’ capture and ‘their’ capture were unstable. Seeing scenes on television of so-called ‘Oriental’ violence performed under the watchful eyes of US advisors, however, revealed issues that the US military desperately needed to control through training and technological sophistication.

Because of the intertwining of these two systems, it is difficult to determine the number of prisoners in the Vietnam War. US records cover their own captures and those of their allies, but their reliability varies from region to region and from camp to camp. In instances where the US detained a clearly identified, weapons-bearing belligerent, they were sent through evacuation channels to EPW compounds. As of 1975, the US Army tallied approximately 100,000 detainees in EPW facilities. Of these, only 16,000 were *legitimate* PWs, while around 32,000 were classified as civil defendants.⁹³ The latter classification was a point of contention and connection

⁹³ Moss et al., *U.S. Preparedness for Future Enemy Prisoner of War/Detainee Operations*, D-22. A study conducted recently for the Center for Army Analysis claims that there were 96,687 military defections (EPW from the NVA/VC military), 47,908 political defections (also EPW, though drawn from the VC political ranks), and 17,027 non-military defections (civilian internees). This totals

between internal and external police operations in the counterinsurgency. Civil defendants were political prisoners, not necessarily belligerents, and the justifications for detaining them at EPW facilities were often beyond tenuous.

By the military's own accounting, a full 53,000 of the detainees in Vietnam—more than 50%—were ultimately classed as 'ICs' or innocent civilians—that is, they stood guilty of neither political crime nor military violence. This is a striking number if only for the fact that it demonstrates that in more than twelve years of intense fighting in Vietnam, there were far more civilians than combatants 'officially' detained. I would add that we can also link the high quantities of imprisoned innocent civilians to the chaotic filing of paperwork discussed in Chapter 3, as well as the sheer variety of levels of violence: internal war, international war, pacification, and security operations occurring all at once.

In the fight against the VCI—what has been called the 'other war' for pacification—prisoner tallies are even more elusive. The majority of arrests were performed by the South Vietnamese, who sent their political prisoners to one of the country's provincial prisons. Estimates of the number of political prisoners, for instance, range from as low as 35,000 to as high as 400,000.⁹⁴ In his work exploring war crimes allegations in Vietnam, Bernd Greiner puts the number at around 100,000,

161,622 detainees, or 73.77 bodies captured per day. The specificity of the study is striking, given the widely varying numbers circulating in official and unofficial sources. See: *Capture Rate Study: EPWs in Small Scale Contingency Operations, Phase IV*, 12.

⁹⁴ U.S. reports indicated that the number of civilian internees in South Vietnamese prisons was around 35,000, while 202,000 is the number put forward in Kuzmarov's "Modernizing Repression." A report put out by French academics noted that by their analysis, the Thieu regime had 400,000 civilian internees in the early 1970. See: Reberieux, *The Forgotten Prisoners of Nguyen Van Thieu by a Group of French University Professors*, 7.

arguing that the higher numbers were the result of Vietnamese propaganda.⁹⁵

Ultimately, the sheer complexity and contradictions evident in these quantifications point to a more troubling realization that in the camps, as in the villages, it is virtually impossible to ascertain just where, and against whom, the Vietnam War was fought.

‡ ‡ ‡

Verifying the exact number of prisoners in the Vietnam War, however, will not necessarily tell us much about the nature of violence or the management of these camps. It says nothing about *how* these prisoners became prisoners. In what follows, then, I parse out the geographies of these provincial and military detention assemblages, looking at the distinct ways in which US forces and their allies attempted to manage sites of encounter on the battlefield.

First, I analyze the performance of the EPW system, which applied to a very specific set of militarized bodies apprehended on the battlefield. After detailing the complex geography of these encounters, I next outline one of the primary means by which the prisoner body was moved in Vietnam: the helicopter. To date, the helicopter has been spatially analyzed for the role that it plays in distributing aerial control, troop mobility, and the deployment of lethal violence. Here, I argue that it also played a unique role as a space in EPW evacuation that is distinct from these other spatializations.

This is followed by an investigation into how the EPW system of detainment was paralleled by the practices of Americans and their proxies in Vietnam's 'Other War': the

⁹⁵ Greiner, *War Without Fronts*.

battle for hearts and minds through the pacification of the countryside. Here, I trace the very different contours of the counterinsurgency's 'war to build', and subsequently highlight the expanding role that the computer played in enabling the capture of specific political foes. The computer, like the helicopter, fundamentally transformed the nature of the interface between capture and the camp, and would become a primacy actant in the discourses of precision war and precision capture that are my focus in Chapters 5 and 6.

The Enemy Prisoners of War

In 1965 the US was increasingly making their presence felt in Vietnam. With the tripartite objective of (a) minimizing the number of American soldiers involved in operations off the battlefield, (b) reducing the direct economic burden of the war, and (c) entrusting EPWs to those more familiar with their religious and cultural beliefs, the military decided to turn their weapons-bearing captives, and those of the Free World troops, over to the South Vietnamese Army. However, the fact that the Geneva Conventions stipulate that capturing powers bear responsibility for the wellbeing of those that have passed through their control, even if they no longer maintain direct authority over them meant that this decision to abdicate responsibility inevitably complicated subsequent aspects of EPW practice: from maintaining multiple administrative records to problems transporting prisoners between camps to the very different treatment in interrogation rooms.

As battlefield violence increased, it became apparent that the GVN did not

consider the Viet Cong to be legitimate fighters entitled to EPW status, but rather thought of them as political criminals who had disobeyed security laws and therefore belonged in the provincial detention centers. Inspectors from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) found conditions in many of these facilities to be lacking, and some bordered on uninhabitable.⁹⁶ They urged the US to implement systemic improvements and force the ARVN to heed the Geneva Conventions. In May 1966, the GVN reluctantly agreed to segregate civil prisoners—communists and VCI—from identifiable weapons-bearing members of the North Vietnamese Army and Vietcong, openly engaged in combat, who would be classed as EPWs.⁹⁷ This would lead to better treatment for classified POWs, but fighters captured in raids, members of the VCI, and civilians trapped in the hostilities of the war would be sent to the disorderly civil prison system discussed below. Distinguishing between classifications was occasionally left in the hands of capturing soldiers and camp personnel, whose decisions were not always based on any kind of evidence. Orville Schell quotes one such soldier defiantly describing a group of Civil Defendants making their way into a camp: “These here are hard-core V.C., You can tell by lookin’ at ‘em...We don’t deal in the meanings of all these names, but we know they’re Charlie—maybe saboteurs, collaborators, and like that.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ “Memo from Department of State to Joint Embassy/MACV Message,” 1 September 1966, Box P3, RG 389. Record of the Provost Marshal General 1941- : POW/ Civilian Internee Information Center, Confidential Records; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). RG 389/290/76/6/Shelf 3.

⁹⁷ House of Representatives: Ninety-Second Congress (First Session), *U.S. Assistance Programs in Vietnam*, section 218. See also: Springer, *America’s Captives*, 180.

⁹⁸ Schell, “A Cage for the Innocents,” 29.

Of course, a major issue underlining the violence at the interface was that Americans *could not* tell political prisoner from unfortunate civilian simply by looking at them. There was an intense drive to solve this identification problem at or near the point of capture, but from a technological and doctrinal perspective, solutions were in short supply. Military analysts focused on the need to develop a method that could translate political and spatial issues of identity and representation into data that would prevent any ambiguity.

In August 1968, such a solution presented itself in the form of a proposed “Chromatographic Detection” test.⁹⁹ The test, proposed for development by the Lockheed Palo Alto Research Lab, offered “a system for the identification of personnel having recently fired a weapon,” and consisted, in part, of the “removal of skin tissue from trigger finger and hands by means of skin graft.”¹⁰⁰ The Lockheed scientists underlined the fact that the analysis “[could] be accomplished rapidly, reliably, and routinely in the field by non-professionals.” This distinction separated the chromatographic test from polygraph machinery, which, besides being scientifically suspect and too cumbersome to install in processing units, required expertise that was unattainable in the field.

However, in the back and forth between Lockheed scientists, the Office of the Provost Marshal General (PMG), and the Judge Advocate General Corps (JAG), it was determined that the test would violate the spirit of the GPW. Specifically, the skin graft

⁹⁹ “ID of Friend or Foe by Chromatographic Detection of Gunpowder Residue on Skin, 1968.” Entry 511-02, Box 33, RG 389.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

would counter provisions in Article 13 stating that “no prisoner of war may be subjected to physical mutilation or to medical or scientific experiments of any kind which are not justified by the medical, dental or hospital treatment of the prisoner concerned and carried out in his interest”.¹⁰¹ Additional concern was voiced in reference to Article 17:

“Every prisoner of war, when questioned on the subject, is bound to give only his surname, first names and rank, date of birth, and army, regimental, personal or serial number, or failing this, equivalent information...No physical or mental torture, nor any other form of coercion, may be inflicted on prisoners of war to secure from them information of any kind whatever. Prisoners of war who refuse to answer may not be threatened, insulted, or exposed to unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind.”¹⁰²

In their reading of the GPW, JAG lawyers concluded that, potential for physical abuse associated with the skin graft aside, the test’s findings could equal a form of coercion. The body, they argued, could be exploited to offer information about the EPW above and beyond what the prisoners were required to proffer by the GPW. Article 17 does, however, make specific provisions for fingerprinting and identification cards.¹⁰³ It seemed, then, that the use of the biological body to determine what an individual *had*

¹⁰¹ Geneva Convention (III) relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. Article 13.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* Article 17.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* Article 17. “Each Party to a conflict is required to furnish the persons under its jurisdiction who are liable to become prisoners of war, with an identity card showing the owner’s surname, first names, rank, army, regimental, personal or serial number or equivalent information, and date of birth. The identity card may, furthermore, bear the signature or the fingerprints, or both, of the owner, and may bear, as well, any other information the Party to the conflict may wish to add concerning persons belonging to its armed forces...The identity card shall be shown by the prisoner of war upon demand, but may in no case be taken away from him”

done was more problematic, from a legal standpoint, than using it to verify *who* an individual was—independent of whether they proffered this information or not.¹⁰⁴

Whether or not the enemy could be correctly identified and classified, the Geneva Conventions still required military commanders to construct specific EPW camps to which prisoners could be evacuated. 1966 thus saw the construction of five EPW camps—one in each of the four corps tactical zones and the fifth in Saigon [Fig. 4.6]. A sixth camp for women would be built in March 1968. The camps were initially designed to hold 1,000 EPWs, guarded by a South Vietnamese MP guard force, and overseen by American military police advisors.¹⁰⁵ By the end of 1968, a central EPW camp was constructed on Phu Quoc Island, and efforts were made to move all underage Viet Cong prisoners to the camp at Bien Hoa in order to undergo rehabilitation, education, and vocational training.¹⁰⁶ These new prisons stood in stark contrast to the provincial centers, where conditions were abysmal: they were dirty, overcrowded, lacked adequate sanitation infrastructure and were frequently the site of torture and prisoner abuse. Jailers were undertrained and underpaid, locking devices on prison doors were frequently broken, and other basic elements of penal sequestration were regularly overlooked. There were three types of prisons: those dating from the French colonial period before World War II; makeshift or converted buildings; and new Vietnamese

¹⁰⁴ This issue would be circumvented with the utilization of digital biometrics discussed in the second half of Chapter 6, a technological mode of vision by which using the body to generate data about what an individual had done, who they had interacted with, and where they had been became a cornerstone of late modern counterinsurgency.

¹⁰⁵ Prugh, *Law at War*, 67.

¹⁰⁶ The total number of EPWs in the system grew from around 4000 in 1966 to over 32,000 by 1968.



Figure 4.6: EPW Camps and National Prisons in South Vietnam, 1970
 (EPW Camps are Squares; National Prisons are Triangles; 47 provincial jails not shown)

construction. When additional prison space was needed, local warehouses were converted. In all cases the existing prison infrastructure was neither designed nor administered with the understanding that one day it would need to cope with the volume and velocity of wartime sequestration.¹⁰⁷ It was somewhat inevitable, then, that in 1967—in response to the overcrowding and dire conditions in these provincial centers—efforts were made to quickly transfer all EPWs who were placed incorrectly into provincial centers into these new facilities. This corresponded with an intensification of the pacification effort and increasing rates of arrest.¹⁰⁸ By December 1971, the Vietnamese government held 35,665 EPW in the six camps, of which a mere 13,365 had been captured by US forces.¹⁰⁹

In contrast to the imagined linearity of the Korean conflict, as a counterinsurgency, the battlefield of Vietnam was “nowhere and everywhere, with no identifiable front lines, and no safe rear areas.”¹¹⁰ Such geographical complexity meant “the hazy line between civilian and combatant became even vaguer.”¹¹¹ Army analysts considered capture in these types of conflict to be fundamentally different than in a ‘conventional war’. While contemporary EPW doctrine maintained an updated version

¹⁰⁷ Bordenkircher and Bordenkircher, *Tiger Cage*. Unless otherwise noted, the information about civil prisons in these two paragraphs is drawn from this text, pages 49-59.

¹⁰⁸ In a recent essay on security in the Vietnam War, Mark Neoclaus quotes Robert Komer, head of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), as saying that “pacification required first and foremost the restoration of security.” This idea of security itself was underpinned by the integration and blurring of civil power and military power. Neoclaus continues, noting that this “restoration was to be a civil–military joint action affecting the everyday life of the Vietnamese.” See: Neoclaus, “‘A Brighter and Nicer New Life’,” 194.

¹⁰⁹ Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands*, 272.

¹¹⁰ Prugh, *Law at War*, 62. There were, however, still elements of ‘conventional war’ like the air war over North Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89.

of the linear war diagram seen in Figure 4.1, the plurality of force structures and national armies, as well as the chaos of the war itself, meant this line was considerably more complicated: soldiers went the wrong way; sent captives to the wrong locations; and captives were lost [Fig. 4.7].¹¹²

Doctrine also included updated diagrams of collecting points [Figs. 4.8], rapidly constructed spaces that, since the sites at which violence took place were now much more stochastically arranged, were used with increasing frequency to manage detainee flow. The immediacy of counterinsurgency and stability operations also make it difficult to distinguish between the insurgent and the civilian, which means that “the taking of large numbers of civilians into custody may be a usual rather than an unusual circumstance.”¹¹³ Vietnam was no exception: detainees with EPW status (as defined in the Geneva Conventions) constituted a minority, and many civilians or ‘questionable cases’ were drawn into the detention apparatus as a matter of course. A typical encounter unfolded like this: US troops frequently received sniper fire from a village, called in an air strike to clear the terrain, and then entered the village, where anyone hiding from the violence was “automatically treated with suspicion” and “usually detained.”¹¹⁴

¹¹² “Memo from MACJ 17 on the Subject of Prisoners and Prisoner of War Camps: Detainee Evacuation Procedures,” No Date, Box 14, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

¹¹³ “Annex L: Prisoner of War and Civilian Internees,” No date, Box 33, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

¹¹⁴ Schell, “A Cage for the Innocents,” 31.

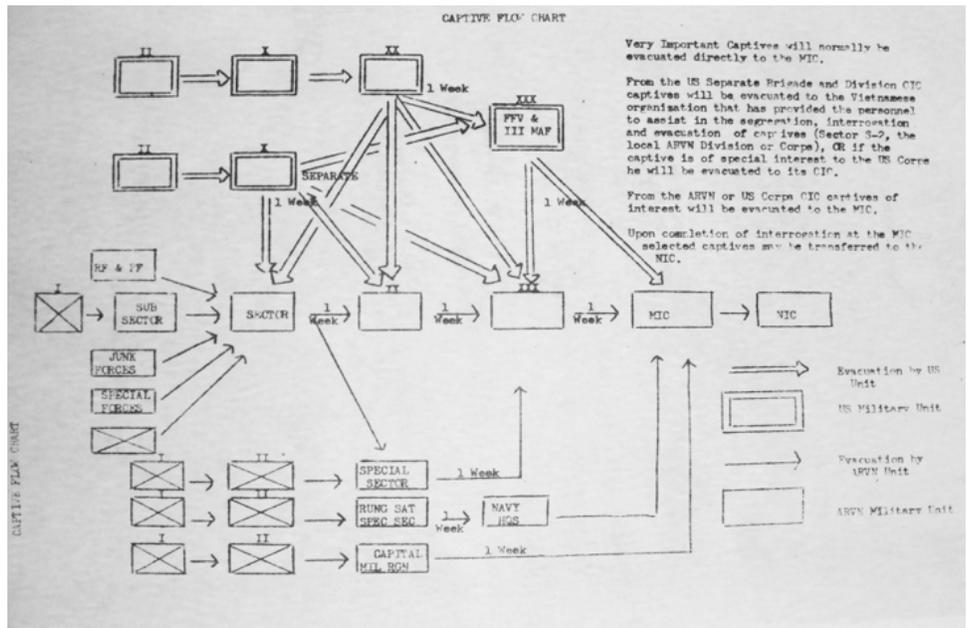


Figure 4.7: Captive Flow Chart, US and ARVN Units

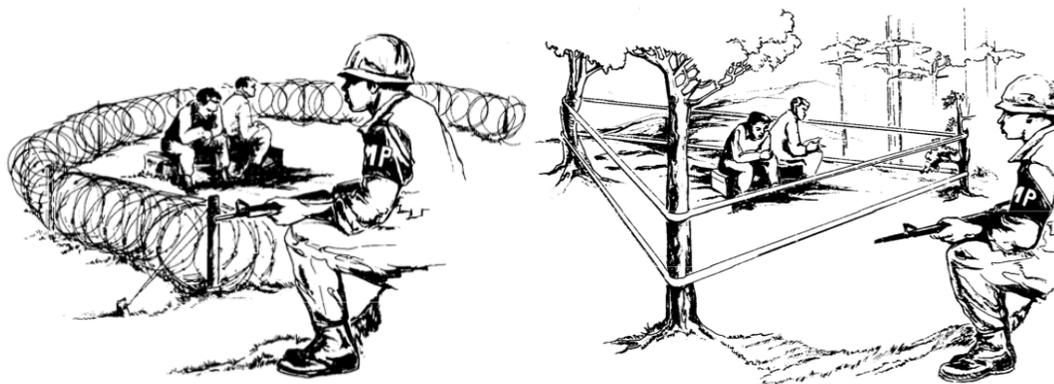


Figure 4.8: Two Forward PW Collecting Points

This practice of excessive detainment was unnecessarily violent, and it was often both strategically and tactically counterproductive. It brought more bodies across the interface, bodies that needed to be maintained: fed, housed, and looked after. Just as in Korea, the resultant financial and administrative burden affected the performance of both the camps and the war. But it also split up families, engaging the very people whose 'hearts and minds' were to be won in a precarious, violent, and economically destabilizing process. Journalist Orville Schell interviewed a civilian picked up in one of these sweeps:

Q: How were you captured?

A: I was captured in the morning time when everyone was still in the village. We began to hear some shooting and then bombs started to fall [probably mortars]. So we all ran into the shelters under our houses.

Q: Did everyone in your village have a shelter?

A: Yes, every house has one. We dug them two years ago when the bombing and artillery fire first started coming. We really need our shelters.

Q: What happened after you went into your shelters?

A: We couldn't see much or hear much. It was difficult to tell what was happening outside. I was with my wife and children. After a while we heard someone yelling into our house in a voice that we did not understand saying something about Chieu Hoi [the official name for defectors from the Viet Cong]. They fired some shots. I was very scared, but came out anyway. I thought it must be the Americans because we had seen helicopters flying over our village earlier. When I came out they pointed guns at me and grabbed me. I was afraid because I could not understand them and didn't know what would happen to me. The Americans are very kind, but these Americans were very rough and hit me. They pushed me back into my house and gestured for me to call my family out of the shelter. I had no choice but to call them.

Q: What did they do after you were all out?

A: They ran off and got a Vietnamese soldier who asked us where the V.C. kept their rice. I told them that the V.C. came through our village every four days or so to get rice. But the soldiers were in a big hurry. They tied our hands and put sacks over our heads and led us away someplace. I couldn't see where we were going.

Q: Where was your family?

A: We got separated. We were led away someplace where there were lots of other people. I couldn't see and didn't dare call out to them. They never came to the camp. Now I don't know where they are.

The US military did not see the alienation and discontent felt by the Vietnamese as an issue but rather (and rather callously) assumed they were necessary side effects of this type of war. But of course the sweeps did negatively influence the population, and significantly so. Schell echoes the issues identified by Osborne in Korea, lamenting that it was:

“...blandly assumed that somehow these small unintelligible yellow-skinned people were different, that they could live anywhere, eat anything, and not be disturbed by common American emotions and concerns for one's family, oneself, and the future. None of the Americans I met spoke Vietnamese. They were totally dependent on seven ARVN interpreters who had been assigned to them for communication with their captives.”¹¹⁵

Such oversight would disrupt many aspects of the war effort, and render the administration of camp populations extremely difficult. Despite the fact, then, that EPW operations are frequently represented as fairly orderly and accountable practices relative to those of US proxies and those of the host nation, if we focus our attention on the interface between battlefield and camp, the illusion of order begins to break down.

Both the fog of war and the US troops' inability to communicate with the population or distinguish friend from foe generated a confusion that began in the spaces of encounter and extended all the way to the camps. This disorder affected the framework shaping the line between kill and capture, with soldiers complaining that

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 33.

“war was working insane logic on us. We were learning to deny the enemy’s humanity, and because it was so difficult to distinguish the enemy from those who merely hated us, it had become easier to kill both.”¹¹⁶

Such chaos at the interface between capture and the camp also affected *how* the evacuation of prisoner bodies from the point of capture was framed. In the pages that follow, I examine EPW prisoner evacuation in Vietnam in more detail, highlighting the ways in which the role of the helicopter shaped and was shaped by the spatial organization of battlefield violence.

Truth and Violence in Airborne Evacuation

Where the Chromotographic Detection Test was unable to provide sufficient (and legally acceptable) support to the Americans, they were helped by another form of technology: the helicopter. In Vietnam, this was the primary military means of facilitating battlefield evacuation [Fig. 4.9].¹¹⁷ First used by the British in their colonial wars, the helicopter was to become one of the defining military technologies of the American experience in Southeast Asia. It had been but rarely used in earlier conflicts, but it was used in Vietnam for over 2.9 million sorties equaling over 1.2 million hours—what Spark identifies as “the compression of over 137 years of activity into one.”¹¹⁸ The

¹¹⁶ Clodfelter, *Mad Minutes and Vietnam Months*, 149. Cited in Tyner, *War, Violence, and Population*, 47.

¹¹⁷ Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*.

¹¹⁸ Spark, “Flight Controls: The Social History of the Helicopter as a Symbol of Vietnam,” 90. Cited in Blackmore, “Rotor Hearts,” 96.



Figure 4.9: Helicopter Evacuation of Two Viet Cong Fighters

helicopter redefined the speed and mobility of the Army cavalry, and allowed the military to overcome both difficulties posed by local infrastructure (which was frequently laced with landmines) and uneven physical terrain (which hindered the movement of troops). By nature of its quality as a machine—noisy, visible from a distance, and requiring the establishment and protection of a clear landing zone—the helicopter also allowed those on the ground time to prepare for its arrival.

The helicopter enabled forces to take advantage of the frictionless spaces of the sky over the battlefield, an aerial counterpoint to the NVA's jungle canopies and tunnels. "Under the ground was his," writes Michael Herr, "above it was ours. We had the air, we could get up in it but not disappear in *to* it, we could run but we couldn't hide."¹¹⁹ Imagining the possibilities and limitations of the helicopter as a war machine reflected the horizons of what James W. Gibson calls technowar, where "war was a matter of correctly managing a series of technical variables; some could be managed while others could be accepted as a 'constant' hazard factor to be included in rational calculations"¹²⁰ Thus while there was a near continuous exposure to ground fire and technical failure, the helicopter served to introduce both a new means of controlling vertical and horizontal space and a new spatial system that, in turn, necessitated the development of forms of management and control.

¹¹⁹ Herr, *Dispatches*, 14. Cited in Blackmore, "Rotor Hearts," 95.

¹²⁰ Gibson, *The Perfect War*, 105. There are clearly resonances here with what contemporary scholars, recalling Foucault, have called the problematic of security, in which "security apparatus no longer seeks to prevent, to order or to withhold, but instead to preempt, to allow to play out, to make probabilistic judgment." See Amoore and De Goede, "Governing by Risk in the War on Terror," 10.

Evacuation by aircraft was around this time written into doctrine as the preferred means of transporting prisoners, calling for it to be used “to the maximum extent possible, except when precluded by tactical or security concerns” like topography, weather, and the likelihood of ground fire.¹²¹ But while the helicopter gunship significantly changed the air-targeting process, altering the proximity and speed with which a body on the ground could be transformed into a target, it also modified the landscape of capture and evacuation.¹²²

On a purely practical level, the materiality of the helicopter came into play. Helicopters are small, and handle only a few passengers at once; while this may have suited the small search-and-destroy missions and night raids that typified military operations at the time, they would not have been able to facilitate large-scale captures such as those of the Korean War.¹²³ The helicopter’s utility, however, far outweighed its inconveniences: EPWs could now be collected at disparate landing zones by the same gunships that had carried cavalry into the field, and Medevac teams could evacuate wounded Americans right from the battlefield rather than carrying stretchers by foot or truck. An evacuation process that had been until then largely self-organizing now became, through the combination of counterinsurgency and the helicopter, much more spatially and logistically complex.

¹²¹ See, for instance, AR 190-2 “18th Military Police Brigade, Army Regulation Number 190-2,” 9 August 1967, Box 33, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

¹²² Geographers have looked at the ways in which various formations of aerial technology have altered the ways in which an evolving ‘aerial eye’ was able to target and discipline the terrain of war. See, for instance, the recent special section of *Theory, Culture, & Society* 28 (7-8) on air targeting.

¹²³ Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*, 53.

For example, while the doctrine from 1952 stipulates that the evacuation of EPWs be expeditious, utilizing the same battlefield circulation channels used for the wounded, by 1964 there is documented recognition of an increasingly complex battlefield, in which “close and continuing coordination between the provost marshal and the transportation officer” is required.¹²⁴ Such procedures as field processing and tactical interrogation, which had previously been imagined to occur along one clear line of movement away from the front, were now multiple performances by competing agencies. Each had a different implication for the detainee: in some instances, “a helicopter from higher headquarters snatched away a prisoner so quickly that the local interrogators did not have a chance to obtain much tactical information.” The reports on those interrogations were sometimes sent to other levels of command, or, “in a few instances,” the US dispatched “the actual prisoner to people in the district or province where the prisoner had been captured” rather than to a camp at all.¹²⁵

Vietnamese civilians had good reason to fear the violence of the ‘chopper’: this was the machine that carried troops on search-and-destroy missions into their villages, the machine whose indiscriminant ‘interdiction fire’ kept them from their homes and fields; the machine inside which the order to ‘shoot anything that moves’ was interpreted with such wide latitude as to have included women and children running away from gunfire.¹²⁶ For captives, being evacuated by helicopter also meant being exposed to an

¹²⁴ Department of the Army, *FM 19-40 Enemy Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees*, 7. Specific Medevac helicopter teams were deployed in Vietnam to handle the wounded American troops.

¹²⁵ Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey*, 87.

¹²⁶ See, for instance: Gibson, *The Perfect War*, 175; , *The Deaths of Others*; Greiner, *War Without Fronts*; Schell, *The Real War*; Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*.

entirely new form of violence. Evacuation was still precarious, the captive vulnerable to environmental elements and the tension that accompanies the colonial encounter. But the characteristics of the machine itself— its open sides, its speed, its height, and even its flight patterns—affected both the material conditions and the potential vulnerabilities of these encounters.

Helicopters produced vulnerability because, once airborne, they were openly exposed as targets for those on the ground. Indeed, despite the red crosses emblazoned on their chassis, more medevac helicopters were hit than all other types of flights combined.¹²⁷ The heightened sense of exposure felt by evacuees was not solely due to ground fire: the helicopter often served as a space of potential in which the performance of violence was a reality as well as a threat. Consider also the testimony of Kenneth Barton Osborn, quoted from the Congressional testimony at length:

Mr. Osborn: ... But we flew over some flat terrain, perhaps 20 miles out of Da Nang, and the two Vietnamese were bounty with their hands behind their backs and the two Marine enlisted men kept them off in a sling seat, inside the helicopter. The interrogation began, not on the individual whom I had reported, but on the extra person, and I didn't know who he was at first and found out that he was a previous detainee who had already been interrogated who had been beaten and who had internal injuries and who was not able to respond to questions. They had brought him along for the purposes of interrogation.

I found out the purpose was this: They antagonized the individual and told him they needed certain information regarding VC activities and he couldn't give it. He hadn't given the information they wanted from him and they demanded it of him and he couldn't respond or wouldn't respond. They antagonized him several times by taking him with his elbows behind his back, hands tied, running him up to the door of the helicopter and saying: If you don't tell us what we need to know we are going to throw you out of the

¹²⁷ Doleman, *Tools of War*, 67.

helicopter. They did this two or three times and refused to say anything. He couldn't respond. He wouldn't respond. Therefore, on the fourth trip to the door they did throw him out from the helicopter to the ground. That had the effect directly of antagonizing the person, I had reported, suspected Viet-Cong logistics officer, into telling them whatever information they wanted to know, regardless of its content, value or truth; he would tell them what they wanted to know simply because his primary objective at that point would be not to follow the first Vietnamese out the door, but rather to return safely to the ground.¹²⁸

Although stories about these notorious 'airborne interrogations' circulated widely during and after the war, neither military investigations nor the newly declassified War Crimes files in the National Archives ever convincingly substantiated a pattern of violence.¹²⁹ But this is, because of the privacy afforded by the helicopter coupled with the military's own uneven self-analysis in the wake of the My Lai massacre, not entirely surprising. Further, some scholars discredit Osborn and others as a source, while admitting that the rumors were pervasive amongst US servicemen and war critics alike.¹³⁰ And while it is important to verify the veracity of these rumors, it is also important to critically assess the ways in which the stories themselves informed the performance of a critical site of uneven power. As Rob Robin informs us, Cold War narratives of power were largely "derived from an uneven mixture of fragmented information and unauthenticated presumptions." They spread because they "provided a culturally compelling explanation for an uncertain predicament" which transformed

¹²⁸ House of Representatives: Ninety-Second Congress (First Session), *U.S. Assistance Programs in Vietnam*, section 171.

¹²⁹ See, for instance: "Memo from LTE Johns, Subject: Allegations of War Crimes," 29 December 1971, Box 1, RG 319. Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel: Records of the Vietnam War Crimes Working Group, Central Files, War Crimes Allegations Talking Papers; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP).

¹³⁰ Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey*, 93–96.

speculation “into a powerful working hypothesis.”¹³¹ The ‘truth’ of airborne interrogations, then, is likely located, as evacuation itself, somewhere in between these rumors and some historians’ repudiations. While Osborn’s narrative may remain suspect, it is equally as likely that the distance from the disciplining eyes of commanders in the field could easily translate into violent blank spaces in the archives of war.

The evacuee was not the only body affected by the helicopter. For the pilot and the general military apparatus, it helped reshape the landscape of power. As van Creveld notes, air mobility contributed “the principal strengths of speed, flexibility, the ability to reach out and hit any point regardless of natural and artificial obstacles, and a great potential for achieving surprise.”¹³² This is the lethal force enabled by the helicopter, its tactical military strengths. Air mobility also enabled a new geography of surveillance and a new way of seeing that enabled the grasp of a complex terrain “made legible by pulling up and away from the milieu of the ground.”¹³³

For the person on the ground, the helicopter can be read as a form of force projection, a visual delimitation of power and the performance of a “boundary drawn,” a space literally *under* control.¹³⁴ But it is also important to recognize that the helicopter also produced a new spatial formation of power via the interaction between rumor and the interior of the chopper itself. This iteration of the helicopter’s spatial power was enabled by its ability to take hold of the population: air mobility was not simply a

¹³¹ Robin, *The Making of the Cold War Enemy*, 3,4.

¹³² Creveld, *Technology and War*, 188. Cited in Williams, “Hakumat Al Tayarrat,” 515.

¹³³ Adey, “Aeromobilities,” 1323.

¹³⁴ Williams, “Hakumat Al Tayarrat.”

projection of power onto the ground and a legible form of power from the ground, it was also a lived form of power for many detained bodies inside, in the air.¹³⁵

The rumors about violence enacted in the space of the helicopter are only effective as a means of discipline because of the coincidence of geographical terrain, military technology, and prolonged contact between occupied and occupier. They rely not on fact but on the emotional instability and affective tumult of life in a warzone; further, the technological advancement represented by the helicopter transforms the spatial relationship of the encounter by introducing yet another blank space into the disorder of war. The hooding and handcuffing, the exposure to the elements, the confusion, fear, and hunger that had typified evacuation in the Korean War were now, with the advent of the helicopter, supplemented by a high-velocity private space wherein enemies sat in unequal encounter, in prolonged proximity.

Of course, the helicopter was not only used in detainee operations, but was also a vital aspect of other wartime performances: like search and rescue operations and overhead surveillance missions. Nonetheless, it was a link in the spatial chain connecting the point of capture with the EPW camp, and its use introduced a complexity and a need for a more sophisticated infrastructure to a military operation that had previously been largely self-governing.

In the next section, I turn attention to the ways in which the pacification effort in Vietnam was itself interwoven with attempts to manage this new complexity, examining the ways in which the particular objectives of ‘the other war’ were

¹³⁵ This aerial spatial disequilibrium would be replicated and extended significantly by the practices of extraordinary rendition nearly forty years later. See chapter 6.

themselves part of a process that fundamentally reshaped the spatial relations between capture and the camp.

Capturing 'The Other War': Proxy Detention and the War to Build

While the military occupation of Korea had necessitated numerous advisors and established economic connections between the national police and the US war effort, these imbrications became much more central to the prosecution of the Vietnam War. Beginning as early as 1955, the US was deeply invested in building state capacity in Vietnam through the advisement and economic support of a national police apparatus. Under the joint direction of President Ngo Dinh Diem, professors at Michigan State University (MSU), and a small coterie of CIA employees, this apparatus developed an identity card system and worked to extend the state's reach in the punishment of political dissidence.¹³⁶ The program was also marked by rampant, arbitrary arrests and surges in brutal police tactics against what was called the 'communist terror'— those with even remote ties to the political Left in Vietnam.¹³⁷ The program was soon taken out of MSU control and, in 1961, became known as the Office of Public Safety (OPS), a branch of the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

OPS was part of the Kennedy Administration's plan to refocus the Department of Defense towards countering insurgency, that "new and dangerous form of politico-

¹³⁶ Kuzmarov, "Modernizing Repression."

¹³⁷ Uneven power relations and the cultural assumptions by both US advisors and their police trainees exacerbated this brutality. As Ernst notes, the national police in Vietnam were "interested in anything technical" but resented the imposition of American criminal justice concepts and constitutional and legal norms: penal control minus normative codes of conduct. See Ernst, *Forging a Fateful Alliance*, 65.

military conflict for which the US must prepare with the same seriousness of purpose as for conventional warfare of the past.”¹³⁸ As part of this effort, \$100 million was to be allocated out of the existing defense budget towards “paramilitary and sub-limited or unconventional wars.”¹³⁹ The OPS had learned from Korea, and understood national police forces to be a flexible and economical means of generating social control. Robert Komer, then the President’s Special Assistant for National Security Affairs, noted that:

“We get more from the police in terms of preventative medicine than from any single US program...They are cost-effective...provide the first line of defense against demonstrations, riots, and local insurrections. Only when the situation gets out of hand (as in South Vietnam) does the military have to be called in.”¹⁴⁰

OPS trained over 100,000 police and 600 officers from over twenty-six countries in riot control and western law enforcement techniques at the International Police Academy (IPA) in Washington, D.C. Additional efforts were made to train cadets in fingerprinting, intelligence acquisition, and administrative order while giving them technologies like radios, small arms, and telecommunications equipment in order to implement police reform.¹⁴¹ IPA police techniques were subsequently used to entrench the power of despots, and the ‘disappearances’, torture, and other brutal tactics and

¹³⁸ McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*, 166. McClintock here cites the 2 January 1962 “Memorandum to the Members of the Special Group: Subject: Establishment of the Special Group (Counterinsurgency).” The group, which included Robert Kennedy, Robert Komer, and other members of the Security Council, saw reframing US political and military objectives in the Cold War around counterinsurgency theory and prosecution.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 163.

¹⁴⁰ Robert W. Komer to McGeorge Bundy, Maxwell Taylor, “Cutbacks in Police Programs Overseas,” May 5, 1962. Cited in Kuzmarov, “Modernizing Repression,” 200.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 204.

torture employed against Cold War political foes in Argentina and Brazil often bore the hallmark of secret CIA manuals distributed by the IPA.¹⁴²

Under the Johnson Administration, the US pushed to develop what came to be called ‘the other war’ in Vietnam. Johnson, echoing the paradoxes of liberal war discussed in Chapter 3, reportedly described this pacification effort to Robert Komer by saying that he wanted “to have a war to build as well as to destroy.” He then put Komer in charge of an “extensive mandate” tasked with “generating a massive effort to do more for the people of South Vietnam, particularly the farmers in the rural areas.”¹⁴³ In 1966 Komer oversaw OPS becoming a function of the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS), which sought to shorten the decision-making cycle, “synchronize existing US civilian agency programs in Vietnam, identify existing gaps in civilian capabilities, and develop new programs to eliminate those problems.”¹⁴⁴

As violence escalated throughout 1964 and 1965, the Public Safety Division (PSD) of CORDS and the National Police implemented an initiative called Hop Tac, or ‘cooperation.’ Hop Tac was a counterinsurgency technique aimed at regulating the movement of human and material resources in order to break contact between the population and the subversive communist enemy. The strategy was to introduce aggressive policing techniques into a region where there were no effective means of

¹⁴² McCoy, *A Question of Torture*. See in particular the CIA’s *KUBARK Counterintelligence Interrogation Manual* from 1963:
<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/torturingdemocracy/documents/theme.html>

¹⁴³ Jones, “Blowtorch: Robert Komer and the Making of Vietnam Pacification Policy,” 104. American counterinsurgency was modeled on the ‘successes’ of the British experience in the Malayan Emergency, which as part of its ‘clear, hold, and build’ strategy targeting ‘hearts and minds’, saw the forcible displacement of over a quarter of the population between 1948 and 1960. See: Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency*; Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife*.

¹⁴⁴ Jones, “Blowtorch: Robert Komer and the Making of Vietnam Pacification Policy,” 105.

surveilling or governing civilian political behavior. As pacification efforts advanced, these frequently violent uses of police power would escalate and expand under declared martial law, before reducing and stabilizing; they would not, however, disappear.¹⁴⁵

Hop Tac put pressure on the police to expand arrest rates, thereby bolstering the image of state power and social control. To that end, OPS oversaw an expansion of regional surveillance techniques: fingerprinting, ID cards, census and housing studies, and the building of a database of the political affiliations of the country's nearly 12 million people.¹⁴⁶ Far from an innocuous administrative performance, the census was constructed through interrogations performed by groups of heavily armed PSD agents. This did the work of simultaneously establishing the image of state power and entrenching it in coercion and potential violence. Broad security initiatives and the escalating and expanding war meant that these policing methods soon became indistinguishable from US military intervention.

Not that the two could logically be easily distinguished, imbricated as they were. "Direct and meager US involvement" in South Vietnam's correctional apparatus began in 1961, with a single advisor.¹⁴⁷ By 1972, that investment had topped \$2,739,000 and there were advisors not only in each Vietnamese province but also in all of the country's

¹⁴⁵ Public Safety Division: United States Operations Mission to Vietnam, *Resources Control by the National Police of Vietnam, October 1964-31 December 1965*, 19.

¹⁴⁶ As outlined below, this, along with a targeted blacklist, would be distributed via the Phoenix Program computer infrastructure.

¹⁴⁷ Bordenkircher and Bordenkircher, *Tiger Cage*, 43. Military advisors are soldiers and military bureaucrats sent abroad to train and oversee the development of various third-party military activities.

more than 200 administrative districts.¹⁴⁸ Additional State Department funds would go towards renovating the country's forty-seven provincial centers and national prisons.

In 1967, common criminals and those who committed offences while enrolled in military service made up a combined 30% of the prison population. The remaining 70% of the prison population (around 22,400) were communist criminals “who, by definition did not carry arms,” and therefore “could not be held in South Vietnam’s POW camps.” The GVN instead put them into civil prisons “where they didn’t belong either” by declaring them criminals.¹⁴⁹ These Communist Prisoners were just one of the three classes into which the civil prison population was divided, the other two being Armed Viet Cong and ‘Authentic’ Political Prisoners. Those in the communist prisoner category were subdivided again, into three more classes. In Category A were the VC political leaders poised to take over the government if and when insurgency succeeded; in Category B were unarmed members of the Viet Cong who directly supported the fighters, either housing and feeding them or producing and distributing propaganda; the third class, Category C, consisted of low-level people that were not members of the Communist Party and did menial tasks. Many of these were apolitical peasants who had been forced to choose a side, and who were willing to align with anyone other than foreigners.

¹⁴⁸ “Advisory Support by Office of Public Safety, Correction & Detention Division: Total Annual Costs,” Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; No date; Box 3. A table in Bordenkircher’s *Tiger Cage* includes a total number of \$2,791,414.85. See *Ibid.*, 208.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 49.

Armed Viet Cong members arrested during police sweeps were frequently confined in local facilities before being moved to regional civil prisons and pending transfer to PW compounds. However, Bordenkircher estimates that each month only saw around thirty-to-forty of these detainees in any prison across the entire Department of Corrections network. As for the authentic political prisoners, they were described as mafia types, anti-government activists, and religious zealots. At any given period during the war, there were between three and five of these prisoners in all of South Vietnam. Thus the only 'real' political prisoners—those whose political crimes fell outside of the framework of the war itself—were extremely small in number. The civil jail system was, for all intents and purposes, an extension of the formal EPW apparatus without the oversight.

Despite the numerous categories into which prisoners could be placed, unrest continued to grow through 1966 and 1967 with the uptick in military operations and the increased attention on pacification. The number of prisoners quickly exceeded the number of beds. In January 1967 there were 29,206 beds for the system's over 45,000 prisoners. It was not until January 1970, when the US had begun to expand provincial prisons and find and move verified EPWs out of the civilian prison system, that the bed deficit problem was solved¹⁵⁰ The overcrowding was such that prison administrators released over 193,000 people, including those it had labeled 'communist criminals' between 1966 and 1970.¹⁵¹ There were few attempts made to segregate by political

¹⁵⁰ "Civilian Prisoners vs. Confinement Spaces," Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; No date; Box 2.

¹⁵¹ "Prisoners Released to Society," Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; No date; Box 2.

affiliation, and as a result men, women, and juvenile prisoners were kept in mixed population facilities, leading to increased administrative disorder. Occasionally the prisoners' infants, pigs, goats, and sheep were also found on the prison grounds. Because these facilities were bursting at the seams, in order to detain 'new' enemies from the battlefield, other previously jailed prisoners needed to be released. One MACV study from the end of 1969 estimated that between 75 and 90% of the captured Viet Cong were released before being sentenced, or received prison sentences of less than one year.¹⁵² As the jails completely failed as a form of battlefield management, the only justification for these rates of incarceration was that the abject conditions served as a deterrent.

The US directed, funded, trained, and abetted the development of a "pervasive and repressive police network" to a degree not seen in Korea, and in fact there is evidence that they actually created the police system against the desires of the South Vietnamese themselves.¹⁵³ The creation of this police infrastructure had reverberations "at every level of South Vietnamese society."¹⁵⁴ The power of arrest was enabled by the passage of a series of exceptional decree laws, the first of which dated back to 1955. Called *an tri* laws, these decrees, often passed in irregular meetings of the Senate when opposition officials were not present, established administrative detention within an exceptional legal authority. They granted the police the power to preventatively detain persons for

¹⁵² Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 282.

¹⁵³ Branfman, "South Vietnam's Police and Prison System."

¹⁵⁴ Brown and Luce, *Hostages of War; Saigon's Political Prisoners*. Arresting agencies include: The National Police, The Police Special Branch, the National Police Field Forces (a paramilitary police unit targeting the VCI), The Official Saigon Police, The CIA, the OPS Resource Control Program, and the Family Census Program.

virtually anything, as long as three people could verify the guilt of the detained. The expansiveness of the legal language cannot be overstated. Consider this excerpt, which in itself seems to frame a landscape of apprehension that runs directly counter to that proposed by the Geneva Conventions:

In accordance with Article No. 64 of the Constitution which gives the President power to sign decrees declaring states of emergency;

And in accordance with Article No. 69 of the Constitution which gives the President as Chairman of the National Security Committee power to propose measures appropriate to the maintenance of National Security:

And because of the State of Emergency declared in 1964;

And the State of War declared in 1965;

Article 1 – This law hereby constitutes the emergency power of the Executive to temporarily detain people considered a danger to the National Security by publicizing or carrying out Communism in any form

Article 2 – The period of detention shall not exceed two years, but it is renewable on new review if the offender is considered still to constitute a danger to the National Security by publicizing or carrying out Communism in any form.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ “Emergency Detention Law,” Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; No date; An tri, Box 3. National Police Organization Memo. No Date. In a document from the same folder titled “Power to Arrest Without a Court Order,” any police officer above the rank of Deputy Commissioner was entitled to arrest any of the following without a warrant:

a. Any person whom he suspects upon reasonable grounds of having committed a felony or misdemeanor;

b. Any person who obstructs a police officer while in the execution of his duty, or who has escaped from lawful custody;

c. Any person in whose possession anything is found which may reasonably be suspected to be stolen property or who may reasonably be suspected of having committed a felony or misdemeanor with reference to such thing;

d. Any person whom he suspects on reasonable grounds of being a deserter from the Armed Forces of Vietnam.

e. Any person whom he finds in any public road or other place during the night and whom he suspects on reasonable grounds of having committed or being about to commit a felony or misdemeanor.

f. Any person having in his possession without lawful excuse, any firearm of offensive weapon, or, any implement of housebreaking

Beyond their expansive scope, such legal orders significantly empowered the police in the performance of an arrest. *An tri* was as much a technique of managing the movement of an imagined political foe on the battlefield as it was a specific method of deterrence and power retention embedded in exceptional legal authority by the captors.¹⁵⁶ “You know,” said one member of the Special Police to his captive, “I have the right to beat you to death.” He continued, using language that recalls Butler’s petty sovereign and Agamben’s *homo sacer*: “You and all the other Vietcong...There aren’t any laws here to protect you. In this place, you are mine.”¹⁵⁷

In such a landscape, especially towards the end of the war, it was impossible to discern whether the arrested had communist affiliations or if they simply opposed the President Thieu’s regime. The police, one *Time Magazine* article noted, “seem to make little distinction.” In Vietnam, the battlefield was less a site where the logic of capture was driven by a clear political project, and more one where people “were apparently seized at random” if “they just happened to have been in the wrong place.”¹⁵⁸ Locating

g. Any person for whom he has reasonable grounds to believe to be the subject of a warrant of arrest, or a court order of restricted residence and police supervision with any of the provisions of which he is failing.

¹⁵⁶ Van Bergen and Valentine, “Dangerous World of Indefinite Detentions,” 461.

¹⁵⁷ Tang, *Journal of a Vietcong*, 109. See also: Agamben, *Homo Sacer*; Butler, *Precarious Life*.

¹⁵⁸ Shanberg, “Saigon Torture in Jails Reported,” 3. By the 1970s, American newspapers and magazines would carry stories describing the excesses of this arbitrary sovereign power: “During the past 2 1/2 months, his government has ordered the arrest of thousands of ‘suspected Viet Cong sympathizers,’ including virtually the entire student body of Hué University; arrests are continuing at the rate of 14,000 per month, though U.S. and Vietnamese officials maintain that most of those detained are quickly released. Thirty-two opposition groups issued a statement denouncing the campaign, but no Saigon newspaper printed the story for fear of government censure.” See *Time Magazine*, “Signs of Unease in the Palace,” 33. Internal documents show that the military was concerned with refuting the veracity of these claims. See “Memo to Frank Seibert from Stephen

the right place and assuring security for oneself or one's family, took bribes, graft, or other extra-legal means.

In 1966, Robert Komer effused about the accomplishments of the National Police and the repressive, disorganized infrastructure they oversaw in the 'other war.' In his report to President Johnson, he argued that "police actions against the VC infrastructure were more effective than in any previous period in recent years." Indeed, police forces had arrested almost 7,000 "known or suspected VC" by mid-year, and killed 288 more. Their accomplishments also included the introduction of a countrywide communications network, the construction of Prisoner Interrogation Centers, and a bolstered civilian informant infrastructure, thanks to which one informant felt safe enough to provide intelligence leading to the arrest of twenty-seven VC. Identification cards had been issued to over 7.5 million residents, which, along with the establishment of periodic checkpoints, contributed to the detection "of 13,456 known or suspected VC, arrest of 5771 deserters, apprehension of 50,309 draft evaders, and identification of 58,988 illegal residents" between the summers of 1965 and 1966. With the goal of improving police performance in the future, Komer envisaged hiring and training staff for the National Records Identity Center "to classify, cross-reference, and search 10,000 sets of fingerprints each day."¹⁵⁹

Between 1967 and 1973, the CIA, the US military apparatus, and the South Vietnamese implemented an extension of these policing methods in the form of one of

Wintrop," Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; 28 December 1972; An tri, Box 3.

¹⁵⁹ Komer, *The Other War in Vietnam: A Progress Report*, 15.

the most controversial and misunderstood elements of the war: the Phoenix Program. Phoenix was a two-pronged initiative: firstly, it sought to bring together the various actors involved in the war effort and to promote intelligence amongst them. The increasing numbers of advisors, police functionaries, and multi-national military agents traversing the Vietnamese countryside were not yielding consistent, inter-agency intelligence and as a result, there was often confusion and administrative redundancy in the planning of battlefield operations. But it was the second element of Phoenix—its military mission—that caused the most controversy amongst the war’s critics. Funded, trained and advised by the CIA, local Provincial Reconnaissance Units (PRUs) and US Army Special Forces were deployed on small, targeted missions to destabilize and ‘neutralize’ the Viet Cong Infrastructure (VCI), the so-called shadow government working in the South. Neutralization, which many took to mean ‘assassination,’ was in truth a broad objective with the goal of killing, capturing, or ‘rallying’ the VCI.¹⁶⁰ Its success was measured, according to Phoenix military intelligence operative Michael Uhl, “not only by its ‘body count’ and ‘kill ratio’ but by the number of CDs [civil detainees] its forces had captured.”¹⁶¹

But what are we to make of these body counts and kill ratios? What type of story do capture rates tell about the Phoenix Program and its efficacy? The quantification of battlefield detainees—their transformation into data—was not without complication and obfuscation. Captured VCI were often reported as ‘neutralized’, only to be released

¹⁶⁰ While not purely an assassination program, Phoenix did ultimately result in the targeted killing of over 26,000 people. See Lewy, *America in Vietnam*, 280–283.

¹⁶¹ House of Representatives: Ninety-Second Congress (First Session), *U.S. Assistance Programs in Vietnam*, section 314.

from captivity soon thereafter—often because of systemic problems in the legal sentencing of political prisoners and the disarray in the provincial prisons.¹⁶² Further, the CIA didn't make their numbers available to the public, probably in order to avoid any negative publicity resulting from a highly disproportionate number of kills to captures.¹⁶³ Some have even noted that there was a concerted effort made to bring the number of captures close to the number of kills: "It was very hard for us to bring the number of captures above the number of kills—we *tried hard to do that*—because it was difficult to capture people. I'd say that the ratio of killed to captured generally was about two to one."¹⁶⁴ Such an uneven statistical relationship between kills and captures would likely have drawn the attention of anti-war activists and others concerned with the suspected brutality of the Phoenix campaign. The disorder, dishonesty, and inefficacy of the channels of capture and evacuation described above were matched by an intentional obfuscation of exactly how many made the trip.

Computing the Contact Zone: Pursuing the 'Rifle Shot' of Precision War

A less obvious but equally important factor in the transformation of capture and evacuation during the Vietnam War was the computer, particularly in the Phoenix Program. Like the helicopter, in Vietnam the computer became an integral part of the rational management and scientific determinism typical of technowar.¹⁶⁵ The helicopter made evacuation part of an increasingly complex system of movement and control: the

¹⁶² Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey*, 236.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Italics mine.

¹⁶⁵ Gibson, *The Perfect War*, 156.

organization and distribution of violence.¹⁶⁶ The computer, however, was a control system that could ostensibly reorganize, gather, process, and represent the efficacy of that violence. Far from instantly transforming war into a bloodless enterprise, the integration of computer systems was anything but seamless. Nonetheless, for war managers, the computer was imagined as a machine that could facilitate precision war, and these discourses of precision would buttress war well into the future. While some consider the computer in Phoenix as a simple “time-saving convenience,” others, like historian Douglas Valentine, believe it ushered in the nefarious era of the computerized blacklist.¹⁶⁷

In Vietnam, computers became part of the discourse on precision and accuracy. Computer-driven intelligence enabled the performance of ‘rifle-shot’ military precision, a stark contrast to the ‘shotgun’ approach to war. Rifle-shot operations took place when intelligence had identified specific people *and* their locations, personal connections, and daily movement patterns, whereas shotgun operations—typically associated with geographically expansive ‘cordon and search’ operations—relied on a much more general knowledge of the identity of the VCI.¹⁶⁸ In January 1967, then, the computerized rifle began to see action in Vietnam, when the Viet Cong Infrastructure Information System (VCIIS) became operational. The flow of information was

¹⁶⁶ Operating the helicopter itself relied on computers and new kinds of expertise in order to function.

¹⁶⁷ Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, 258–59. Andrade presents the “sophisticated computerized collation program” as a far more innocuous manifestation of Phoenix management systems. Andrade, *Ashes to Ashes*, 135.

¹⁶⁸ Johnson, *Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management*, 197–198; Moyar, *Phoenix and the Birds of Prey*, 149–151; Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, 150.

straightforward: Combined Intelligence Staff compiled information gathered from the interrogation of villagers and captured VC, then filled out standardized cards at regional desks.¹⁶⁹ This information—the names of and information about over three thousand members of the VCI—was plugged into an IBM 1401 computer in Saigon to then be distributed to operatives across the country [Fig. 4.10]. As part of the geometric growth of the wartime data infrastructure, this identity information would circulate through newly networked communications channels alongside translations of captured documents and interrogation transcripts.¹⁷⁰ By the end of 1967, thirty-five provinces had an ever-evolving ‘blacklist’ of VCI, and twenty-two had a ‘most wanted’ list.¹⁷¹

Perhaps the most significant transformation of the capture process enabled by “the cerebellum of Phoenix” was that VCIIS enabled the circulation of information that could tie together a particular space and time with a specific name, historical dossier, and political identity. The VCIIS was part of an emergent network of computerized administrative systems that also included the National Police Criminal Information System (NPCIS). When the latter database became operational in April of 1970, it quickly amassed records on over 32,000 prisoners—an automated “mass of useful information...to monitor and influence the processing of all detained personnel.”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ The VCIIS was renamed the Phung Hoang Management Information System (PHMIS) in 1969 to reflect, among other things, the desire to associate Phoenix with specifically Vietnamese control: the Vietnamization of pacification

¹⁷⁰ Major General Joseph A. McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 38.

¹⁷¹ Johnson, “Phoenix/Phung Hoang: A Study of Wartime Intelligence Management,” 198. Johnson cites MACV/MACCORDS, Notes for Possible Use (Summarizing ICEX Progress to 31 December 1967), dated January 1968, Accession No. 334-77-0047, pp. 1-3.

¹⁷² Rosen, LM, “Fact Sheet, MACCORDS-PS, Subject: Tracking Arrested Individuals,” 27 November 1970.

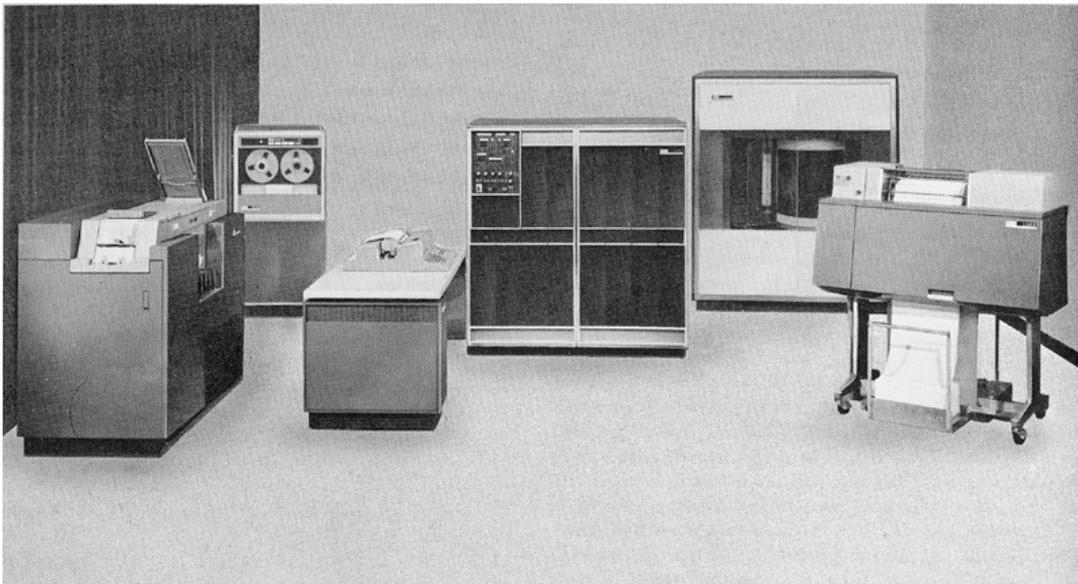


Figure 4.10: The IBM 1401 Computer

These systems “interfaced” with each other, and when read together revealed “a history of the VCI member from the time of his identification and neutralization.”¹⁷³

These networks enabled the individuation of detainee subjects and, as they were able to link records with the location of printed fingerprint files, insured that “the person arrested [was] properly identified, and that he [was] the same person who [was] ultimately tried, jailed, or released.”¹⁷⁴ The organizing effect of the computer stood in contradistinction to the administrative disorder in the EPW compounds of the Korean War.

These tools enabled the simultaneous production and utilization of a police infrastructure premised on visibility and surveillance; a form of discipline that rendered populations legible and acted upon them at the same time. What became legible through these computerized databases were not simply enemies, but enemy populations defined, organized, and located via actuarial instruments that could combat the “corrupt, graft ridden and inefficient” correctional apparatus of South Vietnam.¹⁷⁵ While the EPW was always a target in some form, the type of target changed when individual subjects were sought out, logged, and distributed via a network of computers, as did the ways in which they were identified as political actors. Capture was no longer the result of chance encounters on a battlefield as much as it was the consequence of pre-authored and individually directed targeting. These were not traditional military targets such as terrain or a munitions dispensary—they were both products and

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

producers of intelligence. The gathering and rapid distribution of intelligence—the capture of personal data—became a critical precursor to the capture of bodies.

Capture, in the Korean War, was the *beginning* of a spatial and temporal process, and the EPW was an unknown. Under the Phoenix Program in Vietnam, however, not only was the apprehension of bodies increasingly framed as the end result of a policing and surveillance process, but military operations were designed to find and neutralize *specific* people. The apparatus of visibility and surveillance that had conventionally been used in bombing and PSYOPS now allowed for the capturing and detaining of particular subjects. While, for instance, the *an tri* decrees that enabled the widespread use of preventative detention helped establish an exceptional (extra)legal space for the performance of capture, the Phoenix Program changed how preemptive apprehension actually occurred. *An tri* detainments were designed to engender population control through fear, but the computer utilized the promise of precision, creating a narrative that assured clear limits on the use of force and, at least in theory, minimal civilian exposure to violence. This use of identification technology and electrical databases sought to make a population, make them legible, and fix them in space. Similarly, while behavioralists in Korea believed that even the most provisional and precarious battlefield activity could be quantified and understood after the fact, in Vietnam, computer-driven quantification preemptively effected changes in how the battlefield and the enemy were imagined, located, and apprehended.

The VCIIS and the NPCIS were not just tools for counting and analysis; they were a distinct form of targeting—they may have analyzed both results and efficacy, but they

also enabled a new way of seeing the battlefield, one that enabled future action. The system's output was collated into a monthly statistical study and used to evaluate the methodology and efficiency of Phoenix's operations in each province, region, and in the nation as a whole. One defender of the program argued in a nationally syndicated newspaper article that Phoenix was largely an administrative performance defined by its technological capacity. He marveled at the organizational powers of the computer, which was used "to a disgusting extent" in Vietnam. While Phoenix "[had] not even solidly identified all its targets (although it now knows the *true identity* of 44,000 of the 71,000 estimated VCI)" it was nonetheless able to "gradually [complete] complex 'wiring diagrams' of VC organization." Granting a degree of subjectivity to the program itself, the author concludes, "Phung Hoang, works patiently ahead."¹⁷⁶

The question of whether or not Phoenix was a targeted assassination program is subsumed into discussions of technological sophistication and dispassionate analysis. The computer interface itself became a justification for the very violence that it enabled, as if the chaos of war could be managed through the power of networked connections alone, as if the vast "number and diversity of agencies (US and GVN) with an interest in the detention, judicial processing and incarceration of individuals, (particularly VCI)" could coexist in an unproblematic, functional relationship.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Col. Robert D. Heintz, Jr., "The War to Get Rid of the VC Cadres." [italics mine]

¹⁷⁷ Rosen, LM, "Fact Sheet, MACCORDS-PS, Subject: Tracking Arrested Individuals," 27 November 1970.

The VCIIS was soon seen as “the first of a series of computer programs to absolve the war effort of human error and war managers of individual responsibility.”¹⁷⁸ But rather than be an abstract quantifying machine, the computer also acted on the scale of the individual subject. The VCI was a target population, one whose numbers could be counted and whose attrition could be monitored. But the VCI could also be broken down into individual data points—individuals with names and political identities—and that data could arm and enable ‘rifle-shot operations’ in distinct and distanced ways. Such discourses of precision and abstraction, however, disguised the still-chaotic battlefield, the political contours of which were impenetrable to the algorithmic gaze of either the occupying military or their allies.

Indeed, if in 1966 Komer was optimistic about the promise of the ‘other war’ in his earlier report to President Johnson, by 1970 his outlook was framed by bitterness and disappointment regarding the ways in which pacification, and in particular Phoenix, had been performed. He articulated the shortcomings of what he called the ‘Phung Hoang fiasco’ in a report to the RAND Institute, stressing that there were “abysmally few carefully targeted, police-type operations against key VCI” which he deemed to have been “the whole concept of Phung Hoang.”¹⁷⁹ If one compared the inability to “build up careful dossiers on key suspects, target them individually, pick them up for

¹⁷⁸ Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, 258.

¹⁷⁹ He gets specific: “Out of the 4200 odd VCI captured in 1970 (through May 25), we credit only about 1800 to the police, excluding the PRUs. The 15,000 Police Field Force (whose primary target is supposed to be the VCI) captured only 223 of these 1800, less than half the 511 picked up by the 4000 odd PRUs (one quarter the PFF’s size).” Komer, R.W. “DRAFT: The Phung Hoang Fiasco,” 30 July 1970. Rand Institute. Douglas Valentine Collection at the National Security Archives, George Washington University, Washington DC; An tri, Box 3, 5.

interrogation and sentencing” to British counterinsurgency successes in Malaya years earlier, “it was enough to make one want to cry.”¹⁸⁰

Yet the “painful but essential” process of building the database by hand, of generating “name files on known or suspected VCI,” was beginning to yield results.¹⁸¹ But these files were not enough to facilitate the type of precision in command and action that effective counterinsurgency required. Even the “fancy National Identification Records Center in Saigon,” which had amassed over 5 million fingerprints and distributed over 2.75 million ID cards was ineffective—netting “only a few VCI.”¹⁸²

Along with the inability to determine individual political or biological identity and/or link this data to specific bodies on the battlefield, these distributed technologies of targeting were inadequate. While networked technologies could, in theory, improve the accuracy of war, the convoluted and contested political terrain of the war and wartime command meant that police infrastructure often had “as many as 10-12 dossiers on the same man.” The avalanche of information that had begun cascading through Phoenix headquarters in 1969 and 1970 was not sharpening the police effort. In fact, the drive for precision was complicating and confounding the performance of military operations:¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ van Creveld, in his treatise on the history of military command, echoes this sentiment, noting that while “designed to produce accuracy and certainty, the pressure exercised at the top for more and more quantitative accuracy ended up producing inaccuracy and uncertainty.” See: Van Creveld, *Command in War*, 259.

“The ARVN supplied us with cards on everyone they didn’t like, but we could never find them. On night operations during curfew hours, we’d seal off the exits and go after a specific guy. We’d be running through houses, one guy holding up a lamp, another guy holding pictures of the suspect and taking fingerprints. But everyone had the same name, so we’d search for weapons, maps, documents. It was just impossible”¹⁸⁴

For Komer, the most evident issue was “not that we [were] slowly attriting the VCI but that this [was] mostly a hit-or-miss result of other factors (bombing, artillery, regular military operations) rather than the result of targeted ‘police-type’ Phung Hoang operations.”¹⁸⁵ Komer expressed frustration not only with the fact that the US had spent “billions on high technology like sensors to locate enemy forces,” but with the general movement towards the electronic battlefield at the expense of “tried and tested police techniques.”¹⁸⁶ As in Korea, an inability to penetrate the cultural space of the enemy pushed the military to rely on technologies that made him *seem* legible, countable, and manageable, even when he was not.

Komer’s frustrations were at odds with the battlefield imaginary of General Westmoreland, who, after four years commanding the US military effort in Vietnam, claimed that the Army was within ten years of a fully “automated battlefield.” He continued:

“On the battlefield of the future, enemy forces will be located, tracked, and targeted almost instantaneously through the use of data links, computer assisted intelligence evaluation, and automated fire control. With first round kill probabilities approaching certainty, and with surveillance devices that can continually track the enemy, the need for large forces to fix the opponent

¹⁸⁴ Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, 398.

¹⁸⁵ Komer, R.W. “DRAFT: The Phung Hoang Fiasco,” 5.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, For a discussion of the push towards automated battlefield, see: Dickson, *The Electronic Battlefield*.

becomes less important. I see battlefields that are under 24-hour real or near-real time surveillance of all types. I see battlefields on which we can destroy anything we can locate through instant communications and almost instantaneous application of highly lethal firepower...In summary, I see an Army built into and around an integrated area control system that exploits the advanced technology of communications, sensors, fire direction, and the required automatic data processing...With cooperative effort, no more than 10 years should separate us from the automated battlefield.¹⁸⁷

There is no place in the landscape of violence articulated by Westmoreland for capture or captives. He imagines a version of war in which there is no space of encounter, or one in which this space is effectively erased.

Even aided by technology, rifle-shot operations were still elusive. Despite the disconnect between the imagined effects and the actual performance of automated targeting in wartime police work, Komer ultimately concedes that rather than abandon these efforts, “a much more intensive and sophisticated effort” would be “well nigh indispensable to a satisfactory outcome.”¹⁸⁸ Even if one considered that such tools did not work “to do pacification, but to prove that it was being done,” these changes would significantly increase the speed of spatial management and decision-making.¹⁸⁹ They not only created the powerful illusion of pacification work, they also allowed Phoenix analysts to *see* the enemy in a new way: at an increased distance, and with increased speed.

Here, the feedback loop of security power is on full display. When control systems fail to meet expectations and disorder and mismanagement pervade, security

¹⁸⁷ General Westmoreland, Address to the Association of the US Army, Oct. 14, 1969. Quoted in Bousquet, *The Scientific Way of Warfare*, 126.

¹⁸⁸ Komer, R.W. “DRAFT: The Phung Hoang Fiasco,” 1.

¹⁸⁹ Valentine, *The Phoenix Program*, 259.

practitioners use the opportunity to double down, to invest more energy and capital into developing new forms of control. Both proponents and critics of the use of computers in Phoenix granted the technology a near total capacity to reconfigure the possibilities of war. The computer either produced a dystopian blacklist that removed all human ambiguity from the practice of war, or it was touted as a technology that could penetrate, navigate, and subsequently burn off the fog of war. Both discourses blindly assumed that the precision of electronic instruments could dramatically alter the precision of war. These discourses of precision would define all American war to come.

Conclusion

The practice of battlefield capture and evacuation was modified several times between the 1950s and the 1970s. Part I of this chapter addresses the first major changes which occurred during the Korean War. I addressed the emergence of a deeply politicized enemy prisoner subject whose identity and group affiliation had dramatic effects on the outcome of the overall war effort. EPW organizing and violence within the camps of Korea worked to harden the edges of what, to that point, had been the fluid political identities of Koreans who had been engaged in a civil conflict over the political terms of decolonization. The practices of this new battle within the camps was at times cast in stark relief against the aims of the Geneva Conventions, which saw the EPW as a temporary, collective political category. At other times, the myriad forms of subjectivity that made their appearance in spaces of encounter contradicted the tidy geopolitical diagrams of the Cold War battlefield, and this—in addition to the violence

and coercion exercised by certain Communist prisoners—contributed to the disorder in the camps themselves. In Korea, then, the EPW population played a key role in shaping both the narrative of bipolarity and the trajectories of the battle outside the wire.

During the Korean War, the military began to see the space between capture and the camp as a place where both US *and* enemy personnel needed to be managed and made legible to (and shapeable by) power. The result was a constantly expanding set of rules and regulations targeting the captors' bodies, and a host of new technologies and scientific pursuits designed to extend the military gaze and turn the black box of the anonymous body into a preemptively legible friend or enemy. The battlefield interfaces in which these were manifested and deployed became sites for the development of new forms of control, and places to explore emergent social scientific methods. My close reading of two behaviorist studies, for instance, highlighted a view of the encounter that was not simply seen in terms of the GPW or an ethical responsibility towards the prisoners, but also as a technical set of variables and probabilities whose efficacy was to be studied, and whose practices could subsequently be managed and modified.

In Part II of the chapter I turn to the battlefields of Vietnam in order to continue this focus on Cold War practices of capture. After highlighting the convoluted and disorderly landscape of apprehension in which EPWs, political prisoners, and innocent civilians were captured and moved, I next emphasize the design and development of specific tools aimed at revealing the existence of an enemy. Here, I focus on the ways in which the helicopter altered not only the routes and trajectories of bodies from encounter to camp, but also exposed prisoners to new forms of violence. While the

helicopter led to increased speed and agility in the war in Vietnam, it also linked EPW operations with a much more complicated and distributed logistical system that often led to the errors in the evacuation process. Further, the helicopter also introduced in the spaces between capture and the camp an airborne private space in which captor and captive sat in prolonged proximity. It thus introduced a new type of space into the landscapes of war, and made its appearance in war crimes allegations and battlefield rumors not because of its oft-cited speed and firepower, but because of its airborne interior spaces.

Next, I detailed the use of the computer in the Phoenix counterinsurgency program. The advent of the computer as a real-time management tool in warfare and the increasing complexity of the battlefield put pressure on nearly all manifestations of detainee operations to embrace automation, speed, and the electronic distribution of information. While the camp had always been a vital source of battlefield information—information gleaned from prisoners would often generate the most timely battlefield intelligence—the inability to adequately administer these spaces within the increasingly complex space of war meant that tools like the computer would need to facilitate what Robert Komer called the rifle shot of precision war.

This push towards precision aimed to represent unimpeachable lethality with regards to America's enemies (who were clearly identifiable and spatially distinct from others), while the certitude of non-lethality was all but assured for civilians in the warzone.¹⁹⁰ On Westmoreland's battlefield of the future, practices of policing and

¹⁹⁰ Coker would much later call this the 're-enchantment of war,' "in whose optic precision weapons and surgical strikes successfully target combatants and minimize civilian casualties, death

capture would evaporate and ultimately recede into the language of 'kill probability' and the automated destruction of 'anything we can locate.' American weapons would kill only those they should; the rest of the population would be unaffected by military operations. Detainee capture would no longer occupy a place on this battlefield: why would one capture the enemy when strikes achieve such a level of precision and a near optimal kill percentage?

Totally precise precision war did not (and can not) happen, of course. Nor did the camp disappear, as Westmoreland implies. Apprehension, at least as it conventionally imagined, is not a long-range affair. It is at its base the performance of a lived, bodily encounter. Such facts did not stop energy being invested into, among other things, the increased importance of battlefield intelligence and data surveillance in detainee operations. The faith that technologically sophisticated forms of data capture would ultimately enable a more efficient and precise performance of bodily capture continued unabated after Vietnam.

The next chapter picks up where this one ends, at a time when enthusiasm for precision war is at a fever pitch and the practice of capture and the roles and practices of military detention are reframed once again. In the 80s and 90s, the disconnect between discourses of precision and the performance of these discourses on the battlefield is made visible in the spaces between capture and the camp. While popular discourse dubbed the Gulf War, for instance, a hyper-mediatised infowar, in truth, the interface between battlefield and camp remained an ad hoc and disorderly affair. The next

virtually disappears from the battle space, and the military prepares for its humanizing 'operations other than war.' Cited in: Gregory, "War and Peace," 164.

chapter thus explores how the late 20th-century evolution of the American military into an information-fed war machine has transformed not only the battlefield but also the utilization of detainment relative to the deployment of deadly violence.

**PRECISION WAR AND THE SHIFTING TERRAIN OF ENEMY APPREHENSION:
Mediating the Interface in the 1980s and 1990s**

This is the problem with anticipation.

—Jean Baudrillard,
The Iraq War did not Take Place



Figure 5.1: Two Screen Captures: CSPAN Broadcast, 27 February 1991

Introduction: Precision War and the Captured Body

On February 27, 1991, a reporter from *CSPAN* interviews US Captain Karl Stebbins about the nature of the ground war in Southern Iraq, more than 200 miles west of Kuwait. Stebbins is overseeing the firing of artillery rounds to support several light infantry divisions at the front, but something is slowing down the well-planned operation. The reporter asks him to describe what is happening:

“I’m not sure what targets we have out there. We aren’t being told what targets. We’ve shot a number of rounds as you know and have heard... In the next couple of hours we’ll know if we are moving forward or not. Right now there’s a number of POWs out front and they’ve sent another battalion up there to take care of some POWs.”

“What’s holding things up? Why are we stalled?” the reporter asks.

“POWs, they’re taking in some POWs”

“Quite a few?”

“That’s what I understand, yes.”¹

Although the ground invasion began just three days prior, it is already evident that this is a form of war whose geometries of power were so unequal that soldiers who don't know what they were firing at are nonetheless already forced to manage scores of surrendering bodies in volumes large enough to halt their planned offensive.²

CSPAN's cameras jump immediately from the stalled ground troops to columns of silent, dirty Iraqi soldiers being captured and processed by French soldiers [Figs 5.1, 5.2] in lines that stretch hundreds of feet long. Their clothes are torn, and in many

¹ “Capture of Iraqi POWs In Southern Iraq.”

² A note on terminology: For simplicity and clarity, I use the title ‘Persian Gulf War’ and the ‘Gulf War’ here to refer to the composite of US Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (August 1990-March 1991). Commentators have rightly noted that this is more accurately the Second Persian Gulf War, as the first was the Iran/Iraq War that lasted from 1980 to 1988.

cases their shoes are worn through, bare toes peaking out. All stand silently, with their hands on their heads, while they are searched and disarmed before being loaded onto waiting military trucks or buses. Coalition soldiers distribute water and food to the captives, who seem so exhausted that they are unable to raise their heads and hands to take the offering. The cameras cannot, as per the Geneva Conventions, show the prisoners' faces in a way that might lead to their individual identification; the viewer sees the captives, but is not allowed to *look* at them, to recognize the humanity they share.³ These are anonymous objects—as anonymous as their personal effects being hastily thrown into large cardboard boxes. US Army 1st Lieutenant Jeffrey Gaylord then calmly describes the general disarray of these new Iraqi captives:

“Overall, I’m very surprised right now. I thought they’d put up more of a fight, initially based on the overall intelligence and everything that we know about them. But things are going with better ease than I anticipated and I’m grateful for that. For our soldiers and for them. There’s a certain element of sympathy for them because they are so poorly equipped and the way...they’re human beings also and we are treating them as such taking as good’a care as we can of ‘em. ‘Cause we’re not here to destroy we’re just here to do a mission and take care of them at the same time. That’s one of the things that brings the human aspect back into our job, is taking care of people.”⁴

These surrendering troops are the only Iraqi bodies a global audience following the war will see. Their bodies stand as evidence of the power of both precision war and the coming revolution in military technical affairs. But somewhat paradoxically, these bodies point to issues that emerge from imagining an acorporeal war. Discourses of precision eliminate not only bodies, but also the space of encounter between friend and

³ Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*.

⁴ “Capture of Iraqi POWs In Southern Iraq.”

foe in the geography of war. They highlight the coming together of (a) mediated depictions of warfare as a televised enterprise, (b) narratives of precision violence, and (c) bodily encounter. The enemy in the Persian Gulf surprised Coalition troops. They had been expecting to face the resistance of one of the world's largest standing armies, battle-tested through years of conflict with Iran. What they faced instead were human enemies, so human that Coalition soldiers were reminded not of a ruthless enemy Other, but of humans that need to be cared for.

This short news clip highlights a number of key questions: what was the nature of the enemy that emerged in the twilight of the Cold War? How was such an enemy captured? How have ideas of precision and scientific violence worked to eliminate spaces of encounter from the mapping of late modern war's violence to such a degree that when enemy bodies appear, they are understood as unforeseen bodies? What role did the television play in structuring these performances? How did the nature of these encounters change once the enemy had been cut loose from their supposed bipolar foundations? I explore these questions below.

Part I of this chapter details the reorganization of the American military in light of both the failures in Southeast Asia and the American population's subsequent contraction of what became known as the 'Vietnam Syndrome', an oft-cited (but unproven) popular aversion to foreign military engagement. I juxtapose the resulting shift in discourse towards military precision and professionalism with two military engagements from the 1980s: Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and Operation Just Cause in Panama. Far from precision enterprises, in both cases prisoners were

apprehended in an ad hoc way that was anything but orderly. It was in Panama that the United States began to utilize its growing computer networks to tie the capture of war prisoners to the nascent global war on drugs. This shifted the political objective of detention, and offered a model for a coming US interventionist state that would utilize an expanding computerized security matrix to find and isolate deviant foreign bodies.

In Part II, I posit that technology in the Persian Gulf played a little-acknowledged yet key role in the transformation of the focus of EPW operations from sequestering the body to controlling that body's information. I note how the imbrication of discourses of precision war and the hyper-mediation of the theater of war through televised media shaped the landscape of apprehension in the Persian Gulf War. Many have commented on the erasure of the body from precision war, but the capture of bodies on the ground revealed that even in so-called bodiless war—where the lives and livelihoods of Iraqi civilians disappeared from calculations of wartime violence—there were still bodies that had to be managed.⁵ Nonetheless, the power of these precision discourses rendered the capture of prisoners of war an unforeseen logistical problem—an excess that slowed down the advancing violence of the Coalition ground war. I conclude the chapter by looking at the ways in which the logistical decisions in EPW operations in the Persian Gulf highlight how calls for precision warfare at a distance are also calls to develop exclusively lethal weapons, often leaving civilians and prisoners increasingly vulnerable to violence.

⁵ See, for instance: Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*; Hyndman, "Feminist Geopolitics Revisited"; Norris, "Military Censorship and the Body Count in the Persian Gulf War."

PART I:

Conjuring and Capturing Global Enemies

“Perhaps this is a new characteristic of virtuous warfare: that as states dematerialize and deconstruct, as national identities become more fluid, as simulations and scenarios reach for a credible threat, the public image of the foreign enemy is (only) reducible to a wanted poster. This is the conundrum of virtuous war: the more virtuous the intention, the more we must virtualize the enemy, until all that is left is the criminalized demon.”⁶

—James der Derian
Virtuous War

By the end of the Vietnam War, much of the American population had grown wary of overseas military action. The war’s outcome and ambiguous political aims, when weighed against its high cost in human lives and economic resources, had cast a long shadow over public consensus about the use of American power. Such uncertainties would shape foreign policy and military planning in the decades following the war. Americans were “confused and deeply divided on the goals to be pursued and the methods used” in Southeast Asia, and Washington subsequently viewed the population as being too risk averse and apprehensive about any and all distant military action—as having contracted what was dubbed the Vietnam Syndrome.⁷ While conservatives and the foreign policy establishment faulted the media for stoking anti-war sentiment and forcing “the military to fight with one hand tied behind its back,” there was nonetheless

⁶ Der Derian, *Virtuous War*, 101.

⁷ Citing conservative pundit Norman Podhoretz, who referred to the syndrome as “the sickly inhibitions against the use of military force,” Noam Chomsky points out the cynicism of a position that views people organizing and engaging in the political process as a malady that must be cured. Chomsky, “The Media and the War: What War?,” 33.

a real public exhaustion regarding war and a push to temper (but certainly not eliminate) US involvement in further pitched ideological battles.⁸ Presidents Reagan and Bush would continue to view these apprehensions about war as a hurdle in foreign policy and military planning into the 1990s.

The fact that there were military detainees in the ‘interventions’ known as Operations Urgent Fury and Just Cause is worth noting, especially since they occurred at the height of both war fatigue and a “crisis of credibility.”⁹ It is in these two brief ‘interventions’ that the discourse linking EPW capture with technologically sophisticated forms of data capture intensified in light of what would later become known as the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).¹⁰ It is also at this time that we see the rescaling of geopolitical discourse from a grand narrative focused on the American containment of ideological dominos to the global liberal targeting of rogue states and isolated despots. Just as these new enemies would require new targeting techniques that could locate and isolate the embodied threat, so these forms of targeting would come to modify how and if the enemy could be apprehended.

⁸ Herring, “America and Vietnam,” 104.

⁹ While one would be hard pressed to find a moment in the past thirty-five years when, despite the clarity of the above-described foreign policy narrative, the US was *not* involved in some form of military action that utilized confinement—Lebanon, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Iran—these ‘interventions’ and ‘operations other than war’ did not result in the systematic capture of prisoners, or in a way that required the establishment of military EPW channels.

¹⁰ Many have noted that by using the definitional standards of today’s RMA literature, there have been several revolutions in military affairs. See Gray, *Strategy for Chaos*. For simplicity, in this dissertation *the RMA* refers specifically to the recent transformations brought about by the incorporation of networked digital information technology, precision guided weapons, and ubiquitous surveillance into the design and development of military strategy.

Grenada:

Before Operation Urgent Fury began in Grenada in 1983, Pro-Marxist Maurice Bishop had seized power in a bloodless coup, sought out military and economic aid from Cuba and the Soviet Union, and begun constructing a military-grade runway along the coast. Tension intensified when a violent coup saw Bishop killed by a hardline faction of his own party. The resultant civil unrest pushed that political party to enforce curfews and establish a set of repressive martial laws.

While U.S. intervention on this tiny island was effectively framed in the grand Cold War narrative of communist expansion (as then-President Ronald Reagan said, it wasn't nutmeg that was at stake in the Caribbean, it was the United States' national security), it was also pitched to the war-weary public as a rescue operation involving 7,000 troops being sent to the island to evacuate 354 American medical students who had been studying there when Bishop seized power.¹¹ Positioned between a righting of dominos and a war for liberation—and in spite of numerous international objections—Operation Urgent Fury enjoyed broad domestic support.

Despite the mission's military success (hostilities were declared over in under two weeks), Urgent Fury was plagued by a number of issues that troubled military analysts. Chief among these were (a) the US reliance on outdated and inaccurate British maps of the island, (b) the inability of troops to locate the medical students, and (c) the lack of communication between the military's four branches (due to the simple fact that their radios operated on different frequencies). Additionally, despite the enforced US media

¹¹ Reagan, "Speech to the National Association of Manufacturers."

blackout, stories nonetheless emerged detailing numerous casualties of friendly fire and the loss of nine helicopters.¹²

The speed of the intervention and the short planning period meant that detainees were captured before a detention facility had been assembled; evacuation was ad hoc and there was no official place to evacuate *to*. As a result, the small Caribbean Peacekeeping Force (CPF) had to construct and oversee a provisional EPW enclosure. This site lacked access to sufficient supplies of food and clean drinking water, while both electricity and sanitary facilities were non-existent.¹³ Once captured, prisoners were neither processed nor segregated by rank—in fact, there was often no way for the capturing troops to discern rank at all. It comes as little surprise, then, that they rarely applied capture tags, often leaving large numbers of disorganized bodies at collection points. In Grenada, the ratio of detainees to MP guards became dangerously imbalanced, and reports from the field noted that the “potential for an extreme emergency was always just around the corner.”¹⁴ As it became clear that the local forces were not trained to handle detainees in accordance with the Geneva Conventions, an American infantry division quickly relieved them of their duties. MPs soon constructed a camp, and detainee operations continued without disruption until conflict ceased

¹² Gabriel, “Scenes from an Invasion: How the U.S. Military Stumbled to Victory in Grenada.”

¹³ Carvin, *Prisoners of America's Wars*, 119.

¹⁴ Hicks, “Operation ‘Urgent Fury’: Military Police (MP) in Grenada,” 5.

soon after.¹⁵ Grenada would turn out to be the last American unilateral invasion that aimed to stay the tide of communism.

The failures of the United States in Vietnam and the disorder of the mission in Grenada overlapped with a period in which the military was focusing on assessing its performance and rectifying its perceived shortcomings. Planners, still working under the looming shadow of Cold War geopolitics, focused on containment and non-nuclear military action. The military had moved from conscription to an all-volunteer force in 1973, in the hopes that it would increase military professionalism as well as inter-unit and inter-service cohesion. During the 70s and 80s, with the aim of expediting the achievement of these goals, there was also a substantial revision of a number of key field manuals and training regimes that culminated in the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986. Aimed at enabling a “more efficient use of defense resources” across the entire US military apparatus, the Act clarified the chain of command, strengthened the power of civilian decision-makers, and sought to circumvent inter-service conflict by focusing on joint commands, joint training, doctrine, and equipment interoperability.¹⁶ Secretary of Defense Les Aspin called it “[o]ne of the landmark laws of American history,” leading to “the greatest sea change in the history of the American military since the Continental Congress created the Continental Army in 1775.”¹⁷

¹⁵ During this time, three ‘high value’ detainees were “taken by truck and then helicopter to the brig on the USS Guam” effectively creating a mechanical prison island off the coast of an actual island. See Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*, 71.

¹⁶ Quote from *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, section U.S. Statutes at Large 100: 992. For an overview of the Act in light of more recent shifts in military focus, see Goodhart, “The Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 and American Counterinsurgency.”

¹⁷ Locher III, “Taking Stock of Goldwater Nichols,” 10.

Washington was seeking to develop the image of an efficient military corporation composed of professional soldiers who were uniquely organized to rationally distribute ever more precise lethal force. It was an image whose authenticity would soon be called into question.

Panama:

The transformation of the soldier from conscript to professional was accompanied by a parallel change in the concept and objectives of war. Operation Just Cause, the second major post-Vietnam EPW operation, was also the first test of this post-Cold War, post-Goldwater-Nichols Act military. EPW operations during the intervention are perhaps most notable for the transformations they foreshadowed regarding the framing of the enemy at the end of the Cold War and the rise of precision warfare and computer technology.

As the fall of the Berlin Wall had signaled the end of the Cold War just one month before, Operation Just Cause can be read as one of the West's increasingly frequent calls for global 'regime change'—In Panama, it was Manuel Noriega the US sought to remove from power. Noriega, a corrupt and brutal dictator who had for many years been a major US ally (and CIA asset) in the drug war and the Contra wars against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, was himself also deeply involved in arms smuggling, drug trafficking and money laundering.¹⁸ This had been tolerated, even facilitated by the United States until he and his Panamanian Defense Forces (PDF) became obstacles to

¹⁸ As Grandin notes, he was so important to the US that in 1979 the Carter Administration blocked a federal prosecutor from indicting him on drug charges. Grandin, *Empire's Workshop*, 191.

the renegotiation of the Torrijos–Carter Panama Canal access treaties.¹⁹ The combined geo-economic importance of powerful Asian countries coupled with the anticipated emergence of Latin American markets made the future of the strategic pinch-point of the Panama Canal extremely important to American economic interests, and the Americans wanted to secure what had long been a key site in Cold War geopolitical imaginaries.²⁰ Furthermore, since the US was due to hand over control of the canal to Panama in 2000, for the Bush Administration, stability was a central concern. Noriega needed to be removed, but canal access alone could not justify military intervention.

After an attempt to link the Panamanian intervention to an anti-communist narrative failed, the US found justification for invasion in Noriega's formal indictment on two money-laundering charges in Florida, his party's blatant electoral fraud, and their use of violence directed at four American servicemen.²¹ Arguing that the intervention was justified in terms of a global drug war, the defense of democratization and human rights, and the protection of American lives, at around midnight on 19 December 1989 roughly 26,000 US troops invaded Panama.

The three-day offensive aimed at twenty-seven military targets (many situated in densely populated civilian areas), was "praised as a stunning political and military

¹⁹ Trent, *The Panama Deception*.

²⁰ Dodds, "Screening Geopolitics."

²¹ The Marines were identified as being part of a group called the 'Hard Chargers' who were frustrated with Washington's unwillingness to respond to Noriega's provocations, and thus sought to instigate an international incident that would justify invasion. The Pentagon adamantly denies these claims. See Freed, "Some Blame Rogue Band of Marines for Picking Fight, Spurring Panama Invasion." While most American sources claimed these Marines were unarmed, local reports said that they were in fact armed and shot and wounded a member of the PDF. See Trent, *The Panama Deception*.

success, left thousands dead and wounded and cost millions of dollars.”²² The fact that the official objective of Noriega’s capture was regime change represented an anomaly in US military history; it remains the sole example of the targeting, capture, trial, and imprisonment of a foreign head of state for civil crimes tied to the US-led global war.²³ As the first post-WWII conflict not related to the bipolar Cold War, Operation Just Cause was an important shift from Reagan’s “containment militarism” to Bush’s “New World Order militarism.”²⁴ Setting the stage for the Persian Gulf War to come, Panama invoked a new model of post-Cold War military police action aimed at securing space for democratic nation building and human dignity: war in the name of life itself.

Operation Just Cause also represented the first implementation of recently revised military police (MP) and military intelligence (MI) field manuals. These doctrinal updates sought to account for the challenges revealed during detainee operations in Vietnam, ranging from the changing spatial organization of the battlefield in counterinsurgencies to difficulties encountered when handling and identifying an enemy hiding amongst the civilian population. The issue of identification, in particular, remained pertinent in Panama. It had been a minor concern in Grenada, where many of the 1,500 plus detainees had no clear military structure or hierarchy and were not tagged by the capturing troops, but in Panama, of nearly 2,400 detainees that were processed in the first four days, only 800 self-identified (or were determined by

²² Morales, “US Intervention and the New World Order,” 83.

²³ Axelrod, *America’s Wars*, 502. Cited in Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands*.

²⁴ Morales, “US Intervention and the New World Order,” 78.

‘probable cause’) as combatants.²⁵ Unlike in Grenada, advance planning and doctrinal revision meant that captured combatants were taken by truck or helicopter to a predetermined, well-resourced camp at the Empire Range training complex near Panama City. The camp, composed of Army tents and concertina wire, was located on an old rifle range on the US military reservation at Fort Clayton. This site provided easy road access from Panama City, had large open areas for helicopter landing zones, access to plumbing, and several administrative buildings.²⁶

The top-ranking military lawyer in the US Southern Command, Staff Judge Advocate John Wallace, had described the enemy in Panama simply as "people who we identified as belligerents," and noted that "when we took people into custody we cut a pretty wide swath."²⁷ Inevitably, then, organizing the EPW population and determining a justifiable reason for detainment took on added importance. Many Panamanians would later argue that the detained population consisted of such a ‘wide swath’ of the population because both the US military and the PDF had targeted civilian areas, killing many non-belligerents who had nothing to do with the conflict and sending others running for protection.²⁸ An estimated 30,000 displaced civilians were housed at a civilian camp at the U.S. Balboa High School. Many civilians also mistakenly ended up in the EPW compound at Fort Clayton.

²⁵ Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*, 73.

²⁶ Govern, "Sorting The Wolves From The Sheep: Enemy Prisoner Of War Operations During Operation Just Cause."

²⁷ Priest, "Captured Panamanians Pose Test of Changing Rules on POWs."

²⁸ Trent, *The Panama Deception*.

The sheer number of bodies captured during the US invasion meant that the Empire Range EPW camp could serve as a testing ground for the Prisoner of War Information System (PWIS I) linking camps to computer databases. This updated iteration of the administrative databases used in Vietnam allowed both the United States and the newly formed Public Security Forces to determine if the detainee had a criminal record (in either the US or Panama) that would require them to be further detained after hostilities had ceased. Detainee criminalization meant that a wartime detainee's status was no longer limited to belligerents protected by the Geneva Conventions or to political rivals who had violated the laws of the state. Now, the scale of activity that provided justification from detainment extended to include a global war on drugs. The scale of the conflict had shifted, and the use of international violence in the name of regional humanitarian interests was simultaneously a preemptive measure that, through a process of technological mediation in the PWIS, could also expose the existence of enemies in an undeclared global war. Detainment was here linked to a global sorting practice that had little to do with the nature of the violence occurring in Panama at all.

In Vietnam, the VCI had been criminalized for their means of fighting and their ideological belief systems; in Panama, however, military detention became a multipurpose tool that helped shape the production of a new liberal state. If, in Vietnam, interrogation and surveillance had produced a database that enabled the targeting and blacklisting of specific VCI (it distributed the names, histories, and political affiliations of the object to be captured), in Panama, the EPW database worked

to distinguish between simultaneous wartime environments—a war to oust Noriega and a global war on drugs—in order to reveal the imbrication of multiple scales of violence. The war effort to depose a dictator simultaneously served as a global policing operation allowing for the identification of all types of politically deviant bodies and their inclusion in the state’s detention apparatus. In Panama, wartime detention was not a spatially and temporally limited means to assure military victory, but to hasten the emergence of perpetual global security. The capturing of a ‘wide swath’ of bodies enabled the development of modes of information collection and organization that *induced* enemies to reveal themselves in ways that could subsequently be classified and organized, and those enemies apprehended.

The rhetorical overlap of the war on Noriega with the War on Drugs meant that the information embodied by the detainee had to be registered in and against the disciplinary fields of both: this was both an enemy prisoner of war and an international criminal enemy, and both US war and global policing. The battlefield on which an EPW was captured was no longer just local—the site of the war on Noriega—but also global, a site of the war on drugs. In this way, the capture of bodies in Panama served as a model for the US interventionist state: it utilized an expanding security matrix in order to find deviant foreign bodies and spatially isolate them. Detention, in Panama, was not simply indicative of a logic of attrition or territorial acquisition and control, but of a wider, more fluid landscape of global pacification, one that was “always already incorporated into the global system of war.”²⁹

²⁹ Neocleous, “A Brighter and Nicer New Life,” 202.

Whereas in Vietnam military commanders and the Judge Advocates General had been confounded by the sheer number of detainees, and found it difficult to classify or even organize the chaos, in Panama this diagram was turned on its head. Rather than struggling through the question of classification or organization, US forces utilized the space of violence to expose an EPW who potentially exceeded any single classification: a global criminal. Detainee operations in Panama pointed to a far broader spatial imaginary of the geography of war in which both the battlefield and sudden, exceptional violence could be utilized to make a global enemy emerge. In the next section I mark the ways in which such a discrepancy between the technologically precise and the generally violent produces real rifts in understandings of the space of war, and as such, further problematizes the role of detention.

The Technological Cure for Popular Pathologies

That modern state violence until the Cold War presented a clear friend/enemy distinction around which political life was organized is canonical in international relations and political philosophy. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, German jurist Carl Schmitt declared that the friend/enemy distinction was that to which all “political actions and motives can be reduced.”³⁰ While this clearly resonates with Cold War doctrine, many imagined that the elimination of the communist enemy would mark a new period with the United States as the sole arbiter of global security. Yet the late Cold War period that, for François Lyotard, ushered in the end of grand narratives

³⁰ Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, 26; 33.

would nonetheless give way to Francis Fukuyama's post-cold war 'end of history,' a period in which a global acceptance of Western liberal capitalism might wipe ideological conflict from all corners of the earth.³¹

But rather than producing post-ideological tranquility and global security, this collapse brought on a devastating onslaught of new, spatially distributed anxieties. The Cold War may have been underpinned by the twin fears of communist expansion and nuclear annihilation, but the enemy could be territorialized, located, and spatially fixed within the heavily monitored and regulated boundaries of internationally recognized states. The landscape of threat was molded into the oversimplified and reductive contours of International Relations' infamous territorial trap.³² In the words of the former director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), since the Cold War we have been faced "not with a peer competitor who is well known and well understood, but, instead, with adversaries whose location and capabilities are highly variable."³³

French philosopher Jacques Derrida notes that the Cold War had a spatial structure that, despite the prevailing cultural fears of mutual assured annihilation, channeled and limited fears in certain directions. For him, as for Schmitt, losing this enemy would be losing the structure of the political altogether:

"Where the principal enemy, the 'structuring' enemy, seems nowhere to be found, where it ceases to be identifiable and thus reliable - that is, where the same *phobia* projects a mobile multiplicity of potential, interchangeable,

³¹ Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*; Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*.

³² Agnew, "The Territorial Trap."

³³ Cited in Der Derian, *Virtuous War*, 102.

metonymic enemies, in secret alliance with one another: conjuration.”³⁴

Where there is no graspable enemy, one must be invented. In the depoliticized space that remains behind after the distinctions between *us* and *them* have evaporated, we are left with nothing but an inconsistent, disturbing, and spatially uncontrolled anxiety. Rather than the risky stability that emanates from a specific ideology grounded in a specific territory, whole places and populations are understood through the fleeting lens of “post-political biopolitics,” that form of contemporary politics in which the defense of life requires an enemy conjured and managed by a politics of fear.³⁵ Allen Feldman positions this unstable process as one that undercuts the very meaning of war itself:

“Derrida’s disappearing enemy evokes the theorem that the name of the name is not the name, and we are today embroiled in wars of naming and unnamings, including what can be named or not named as war and violence. The departure of a reliable enemy seriously threatens war as a system of political-discursive commensuration and capitalization that a calculable and prognosticated enemy secures and anchors. The loss of the reliable enemy is the unleashing of the incommensurable, of an alterity without measure or end and requiring an isomorphic means without end, a means that we have come to know as asymmetric warfare, as the unending war of global terror.”³⁶

Judging by the list of enemies that have developed following the Cold War, these cycles of de- and-re-politization are effectively limitless. In the US they take the form of the “internalization” of bipolarity “into a purely psychological state of manic highs of liberal interventionism and melancholic lows of neoisolationism.”³⁷ Targets emerge in a series of named crises whose primary consistency is that they mobilize discourses of war—the

³⁴ Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, 84.

³⁵ Žižek, *Violence*, 40.

³⁶ Feldman, “The Structuring Enemy and Archival War,” 1705.

³⁷ Der Derian, *Virtuous War*, 115.

war on drugs, war on poverty, war on obesity, war on terrorism, war on climate change, the war on corruption—such that war itself, its embodied politics, its violence, and its geographies, lose most vestiges of spatial and material clarity.³⁸

This crisis-naming process was clearly at work in the run-up to Operation Just Cause, where successive attempts to place Noriega into different enemy frameworks eventually yielded one to which the war-wary American population would not object. It would emerge again less than a year later in Iraq, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, an act that, as with Noriega before him, resulted in the repositioning of another former ally as a global threat. Even Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev called Iraq's invasion "an act of perfidy and a blatant violation of international law and the U.N. charter"³⁹— the Cold War, it seemed, had finally come to an end.

Positioned between large-scale industrial war, high-tech informational war, and the 'lawless' violence of the periphery, the Persian Gulf War became an early expression of the complexity of post-Cold War violence. Panama and Iraq, presaged as they were by guerrilla techniques in Vietnam, also foretold the emergence of the two faces of new war discourse: they "projected ahead to an era of future global lawlessness in the 'strategic slums' of the Third World, where the US faced the chronic danger of 'prolonged security operations.'"⁴⁰ At the same time, these conflicts ushered in the US turn towards the

³⁸ As der Derian notes, when this "order and predictability decline, leaders reach for the technological fix." *Ibid.*, xxx.

³⁹ Fuller, "Moscow and the Gulf War," 57.

⁴⁰ Morales, "US Intervention and the New World Order," 78. The degree to which these geopolitical framings of 'strategic slums' are distinguished from Kissinger's 'grey areas' is an open question. See: Kissinger, "Military Policy and Defense of the Grey Areas." On the differences and similarities between 'our' new wars and 'their' new wars, see Gregory, "War and Peace."

language of precision war that would come to typify the analyses of boosters of the revolution in military affairs (RMA).

To military strategists, American combat effectiveness in the Gulf War indicated that precision war could bring about victory without bloodshed. Many had believed that, based on its recent history in the ‘strategic slums’ of Korea, Vietnam, and Latin America, the US was underprepared and was going to take many battlefield losses. By the end of the Gulf War, however, the US was investing heavily in precision technologies.⁴¹ These information age technologies emerged as the clear victors in the RMA discourse, since they enabled a form of war that would be, theoretically, so efficient and precise that it would transpire “with little of warfare’s normal collateral destruction.”⁴²

The earliest writings on the RMA clearly distinguished between ‘our’ precision warfare and ‘their’ performance of war. RMA boosters claimed that “[t]raditional, *comfortable* ways of war,” those types of war practices by and between standing state militaries, “will give way to dramatic new forms of high-technology combat and to ever more sinister forms of irregular warfare.”⁴³ That warfare in any of its iterations could be framed as ‘comfortable’ is striking for a number of reasons, but most notably it reveals the sterile, myopic comprehension of violence that can only emerge at a remove, when the terrors of bodily violence are mediated by distance and technology. RMA discourse

⁴¹ Mahnken, *Technology and the American Way of War Since 1945*.

⁴² Metz and Kievit, *The Revolution in Military Affairs and Conflict Short of War*, 1.

⁴³ Mazarr, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: A Framework for Defense Planning*, 8. Italics mine. RMA literature clearly informed Mary Kaldor’s work on old and new wars that emerged a few years later. See: Kaldor, *New and Old Wars*.

is thus a place where “the language of Science is mobilized...to secure the legitimacy of the result: killing is made to appear objective and objectifying, executed in the service of Truth and Reason.”⁴⁴ At the same time, it suggests that those techniques of war that do not fit into this high-tech discourse are by default sinister and dubious. Indeed, much of the RMA literature that emerged during and after the Gulf War was underpinned by an ever-expanding security feedback loop oscillating between these two geopolitical visions: the incalculable insecurity exposed by the unruly periphery would require the rational, tech-savvy development of the new world order.

Of course, high-tech precision warfare inevitably led to increasingly sophisticated insurgent evasions, necessitating the development of more advanced surveillance and control technologies. From the 1980s, information technology played an increasingly large role as the army worked to create a military and domestic digital infrastructure. At the forefront of these technological developments were military contractors, who continued their explorations of lighter, more flexible weapons, sensing technologies and precision-guided munitions, with an aim to enabling the military to accurately deploy strategic lethal force without putting American troops in harm’s way. This was a form of violence that could function independently of the US population’s pathological aversions to war. The RMA emerged as the military’s technological answer to the “mobile multiplicity of potential, interchangeable, metonymic” enemies. In Iraq these innovations seemed to speak directly to the forms of violence that had flummoxed US forces in Vietnam: night vision technologies allowed troops to own the darkness that

⁴⁴ Gregory, “War and Peace,” 160.

had protected VC and endangered Americans; bunker busting munitions could penetrate the ground, taking out the insurgent's subterranean safe havens; precision weapons could target the enemy seeking shelter amongst the civilian population.⁴⁵

The Persian Gulf War was the last industrial war and the first information war.⁴⁶ Precision technology emerged as one of the war's leading heroes, and was the subject of much more strategic analysis than the performance of the American soldier. If troops were no longer noticed in the terrain of war, the bodies of the enemy were even less so, since a failure to recognize even American bodies on the battlefield meant a complete blindness when it came to any *other* forms of life. As the Iraq war drew to a close, strategists believed these new technologies to have been so effective at dismantling Iraq and forcing Saddam's retreat that President Bush was prompted to remark, "By God, we've kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all!"⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Herring, "America and Vietnam," 104.

⁴⁶ Virilio, *Desert Screen*; Alberts, *Defensive Information Warfare*.

⁴⁷ Herring, "America and Vietnam," 104.

PART II:

Mediated War, Bodiless War: Capturing Objects in the Persian Gulf

“The arresting power of optical technology to stabilize image flows, to freeze temporalities of urban and global circulation, is conjoined with legal and militarized powers of arrest and apprehension.”⁴⁸

—Allen Feldman
On the Actuarial Gaze

In this section I turn my attention to the ways that precision discourse shaped the imagining and apprehension of enemy bodies in the Persian Gulf War. As the largest military operation to occur after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War fit nicely into an American geopolitical imaginary in which it was the sole super power, dominating other states with a technologically advanced military deploying advanced, precision weapons that enabled surgical strikes. The space between capture and the camps would tell a slightly less orderly story. The omnipresent narrative of revolutionary precision discourse in Iraq, like that of bipolarity in the Cold War before it, concealed the emergence of a textured spatial narrative of logistical complications, messy encounters, and disavowed corporeality.

EPWs, and the disorderly ways in which their numbers were estimated, and the ways they were moved and processed, highlight the awkward place of capture in the spectrum of military operations. Keeping captives alive between capture and the camp—even in a war that came to symbolize the dramatic efficacy of laser-guided

⁴⁸ Feldman, “On The Actuarial Gaze: From 9/11 to Abu Ghraib,” 209.

weapons, long range bombing, and overhead surveillance—was not a precise endeavor. It was not well planned for, nor was it technologically sophisticated. If we now turn to the Persian Gulf War, we will see that as war discourse focused on the ever-more precise and technologically sophisticated distribution of violence, the spaces of encounter that were still part of that war became increasingly marginal—“screened off.” Feldman identifies this screening off as “the visual displacement of the complex social suffering and unreconciled history” that was “expressed, mobilized and created” by an attack; it was also, I would add, a move facilitated by the geographical imaginaries of both the RMA and the relatively new phenomenon of 24-hour televised war.⁴⁹ Yet, while for war planners the encounter was screened off, cast beyond the lenses of their battlefield logistical planning, as I argue below, in the televised war, the only Iraqi body that emerged *on* screen was that of the Iraqi surrenderer. These EPW bodies appeared in the media as evidence of the justness of the war: they could still speak, were unwilling to fight for their leader, and ached for liberation. In other words, the space between kill and capture became an important narrative tool for the affirmation of precision war’s humanitarian trajectories, while further enabling the screening-off of the civilian dead.

The military’s marginalization of the space of encounter had very real effects on how the enemy was imagined, managed, moved, and apprehended. These complications were evident even in a war in which, as an ICRC member stationed in Saudi Arabia noted, “[t]he treatment of Iraqi prisoners of war by US forces was the best compliance

⁴⁹ Ibid., 213.

with the Geneva Convention by any nation in any conflict in history.”⁵⁰ This may well have been true, but as I demonstrate below, its truth may have had more to do with the docile nature of the prisoners and the extremely short duration of the conflict than it had with EPW operations. That is to say, there are spaces of encounter in any war short of annihilation, and how these spaces are enacted serves as a reminder of the existence of bodies in the warzone even if discourses of precision seek to erase their presence from our imaginaries entirely.

‡ ‡ ‡

The discourse of the Revolution in Military Affairs is sutured together by themes of velocity, information dominance, simultaneity, and networks of precision. Controlling this fast-moving landscape becomes one of the primary objectives of military action, where “the power of pace is outstripping the value of place.”⁵¹ The rhetoric of future wars is argued in the lexicon of the global neoliberal information economy: ‘swarming,’ ‘hybridity,’ and a move to ‘just-in-time warfare’ comprised of small teams of digitally linked cyber-soldiers.⁵² In RMA discourse there is also a push for the automation of both killing and decision-making in an effort to increase the lived distance between soldiers and the targets of their violence while minimizing the number and duration of military encounters with an enemy population.

⁵⁰ United States. Dept. of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 577.

⁵¹ Luke and O’Tuathail, “Global Flowmations, Local Fundamentalisms, and Fast Geopolitics: ‘America’ in an Accelerating World Order.” Cited in Gregory, “Lines of Descent: From Bomber County to the Borderlands,” 842. In Virilio’s terms this would be a dromological chrono-politics. See: Virilio, *Speed and Politics*.

⁵² Among numerous examples see: Toffler and Toffler, *The Third Wave*; Krepinevich, “Cavalry to Computer: The Pattern of Military Revolutions”; Mazarr, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: A Framework for Defense Planning*; Arquilla and Ronfeldt, “Swarming and the Future of Conflict.”

Contact with the enemy is a perilous endeavor, and the idea of bodily contact zones where friend and enemy meet is rarely explored in RMA literature. Such encounters expose troops to obvious physical dangers, and as such are precarious and unstable; they cannot be managed with the efficacy and reproducibility now required by the military apparatus in wartime. RMA writings thus encourage the production of a favorable ‘frictional imbalance’, a disequilibrium that will result in the reduction of the cost and risk of war. These texts posit that war can and should be something that “the US ‘does’ to its enemies alone, rather than something that each does to the other.”⁵³ They seek to displace the human cost of war onto another population, one exposed to the technologically extended, rational, and precise technologies of war at a distance, but whose physical bodies American soldiers never have to encounter on the battlefield.

This corporeal erasure is most evident in the disappearance of the metric that polarized so many evaluations of the Vietnam War: the body count. While the destruction of the so-called ‘hard targets’ of the Gulf War—weapons caches, military installations, communications infrastructure—was extensively broadcast on cable news channels, the deaths of others were deliberately avoided or obfuscated. Instead, viewers at home watched what was effectively positioned as a bloodless war, or, in the words of General Colin Powell, “a clean win.”⁵⁴ The Pentagon worked hard to present a wartime analysis unencumbered by bodily damage and corporeal calculus: “I have absolutely no

⁵³ Stone, “Politics, Technology and the Revolution in Military Affairs,” 419.

⁵⁴ Yet, as Margot Norris notes, this imagined ‘clean war’ prevailed although “approximately double the number of Iraqis were killed in six weeks of combat as U.S. casualties produced by a decade of fighting in Vietnam.” See: Norris, “Military Censorship and the Body Count in the Persian Gulf War,” 224.

idea what the Iraqi casualties are," General H. Norman Schwarzkopf was quoted to have said, "and I tell you, if I have anything to say about it, we're never going to get into the body-count business."⁵⁵ Such censorship and sequestration of data regarding the human cost of precision violence rendered the lives and deaths of Iraqis part of a "disauthorized discourse drowned out by a 'loud,' legitimated, visually dominating, technological narrative."⁵⁶

Technology in the Gulf War thus facilitated what Elaine Scarry called the torturer's "dream of an absolute, one-directional capacity to injure those outside one's territorial boundaries" that "may begin to approach...absolute nonreciprocity, the dream that one will be oneself exempt from the condition of being embodied while one's opponent will be kept in a state of radical embodiment by its awareness that it is at any moment deeply woundable."⁵⁷ This disequilibrium is fundamental to the technologized vision of the RMA, in which the strategy is to harm from a distance and offer the enemy no way to fight back, thus forcing them to negotiate from a position utterly devoid of leverage. It also places lethal force squarely in the instrumental realm, imagining a one-sided form of violence (largely delivered by aerial assault) that can function to bring about

⁵⁵ *The New York Times* 3 February 1991 cited in *Ibid.* See also Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*.

⁵⁶ Norris, "Military Censorship and the Body Count in the Persian Gulf War," 226. This 'military censorship' is part and parcel of detainee operations, which have, since at least the Vietnam War, been sites whose appearance in the media has been strictly monitored and regulated. Consider, for instance, a Force Order from the Commanding General of the III Marine Amphibious Force of MACV, which notes that interrogation in the presence of newsmen, interviews with detainees by newsmen, and still or motion pictures of detainees or detention facilities for other than official purposes, and that all detainee collection facilities shall be posted with signs prohibiting picture taking. "Force Order 3461.2B," 16 August 1968, Box 33, RG 389. POW/Civilian Internee Information Center; Unclassified Records, 1969-1975; National Archives at College Park, MD (NACP). RG 389 / 290 / 76 / 6 / Shelf 3

⁵⁷ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 80.

specific political ends. That is, an affirmation of Foucault's famous inversion of Clausewitz: the use of war to bring about the reproduction of a desired political disequilibrium—politics as the continuation of war by other means.⁵⁸

This frictional imbalance was imbricated with media representations of the war—images from the battlefield piped onto television screens across the globe. Television had played a minor role in informing Americans about the Korean War; as for Vietnam, it has often been called the first televised war, the first whose violence was broadcast into living rooms far from the frontlines. Here, however, I prefer to follow Tom Engelhardt, who counters that Vietnam was, in fact, the last non-televised war. Unlike the Gulf War, whose temporality seemed designed for the news cycle, Vietnam, with its “inability either to adhere to precise scheduling or achieve closure” never met the demands of war as “total television.”⁵⁹ On the contrary, late night raids on Baghdad—brief, explosive, and technologically sophisticated—gave Americans at home an image of a war that they had not seen from Southeast Asia: a form of war underpinned by few American casualties and the clean, surgical strikes of disembodied technologies on enemy *objects* (not people). In watching this objectified landscape unfold, global spectators were given the divine properties of “ubiquity (to be all present together at the same time), instantaneity, immediacy, omnivoyance, omnipresence... at once here

⁵⁸ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, 15,16.

⁵⁹ Engelhardt, “The Gulf War as Total Television,” 630. Or, as Gerard Ó’Tuathail notes: “The war began in prime-time (7:00 EST) and was brought to the world by US reporters (CNN supplies its news feed to 103 countries) who represented the US-led attack by drawing upon exclusively American experiences (“sky lit up like the Fourth of July”). See Ó’Tuathail, “The Effacement of Place? US Foreign Policy and the Spatiality of the Gulf Crisis,” 22,23.

and there at the same time.”⁶⁰ The televisual war presented viewers with a carefully crafted narrative built on the premise that what they were watching was “not just a miracle of military prowess but a miracle of mercy, wherein surgical strikes would take out the enemy while sparing civilians”⁶¹

So technologically lopsided and mediated by imagery was the Gulf War that commentators from Noam Chomsky to Jean Baudrillard would argue that a ‘war’ did not even take place.⁶² One side, wrote Baudrillard, “lost in its virtual war won in advance,” while “the other was buried in its traditional war lost in advance. They never saw each other: when the Americans finally appeared behind their curtain of bombs the Iraqis had already disappeared behind their curtain of smoke...”⁶³ Susan Sontag, for her part, notes that images, as interfaces between the observer and the wartime body, “have been reproached for being a way of watching suffering at a distance, as if there were some other way of watching.”⁶⁴ She then complicates this by arguing that to “speak of reality becoming a spectacle is a breathtaking provincialism” that:

“assumes everyone is a spectator. It suggests that there is no real suffering in the world. But it is absurd to identify the world with those zones in the well-off countries where people have the dubious privilege of becoming spectators, or of declining to be spectators, of other people’s pain.”⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Virilio, *Desert Screen*, 42.

⁶¹ Nixon, “Of Land Mines and Cluster Bombs,” 162.

⁶² “Since this war was won in advance, we will never know what it would have been like had it existed.” See: Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*. Noam Chomsky echoes this sentiment: “As I understand the concept ‘war’, it involves two sides in combat, say, shooting at each other. That did not happen in the Gulf.” See Chomsky, “The Media and the War: What War?,” 61.

⁶³ Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, 62.

⁶⁴ Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others*, 117.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 110,111.

Of course the Gulf War did not only take place on a television screen. Lives were lost. Materiel and matter were exhausted. But bodies at war—as grievable forms of lived life—were extracted from their corporeal and discursive presence on the battlefield and placed into the register of “dramatically real yet comfortably televisual” information.⁶⁶ Without the “recognition of the other,” that comes from the relational practices of a shared visuality—from the possibility of mutual *looking*—we have no “place from which to claim rights and determine what is right.”⁶⁷ Without this mutual exchange, grievance becomes impossible, for one cannot grieve the loss of information. As Butler notes, “[w]ithout grievability, there is no life, or, rather, there is something living that is other than life.”⁶⁸ That something would be the precision-guided weapon.

It was glorified precision-guided weapons, not humans, who were the heroes of the RMA. While weapons were anthropomorphized, the landscape of war was not only depicted as a field of dehumanized objects—military targets—but also as being remarkably free of recognizable human life. The ‘eyes’ of weapon-mounted cameras provided a steady stream of images of the targets as they delivered their ‘just packages.’⁶⁹ What the spectator watched was the “death of a vehicle, not of its driver,” a fantasy that “betray[ed] nothing so explicit about the fate of the occupants or whom they might have been.” Through the eyes of its new heroes, war was “sanitized and

⁶⁶ Ó’Tuathail, “The Effacement of Place? US Foreign Policy and the Spatiality of the Gulf Crisis,” 23. Cited in Gregory, *The Colonial Present*, 163.

⁶⁷ Mirzoeff, *The Right to Look*, 1.

⁶⁸ Butler, *Frames of War*, 15.

⁶⁹ Beier, “Outsmarting Technologies,” 268.

profoundly depoliticized.”⁷⁰ Witnessing war now meant watching it unfold on the television screen; it was a “surgical war...a matter of war-processing in which the enemy only appears as a computerized target...Everything in *trompe l’oeil!*”⁷¹

The discourse of the ‘surgical’ strike is a significant component of the mediation of precision warfare. The healthy body is not killed, but rather disabled while the malignant element is removed. The discursive wizardry of surgical discourse implies that the body politic is redeemable, that each cut of the scalpel is necessary for continued life, for a better quality of life, and that the technophilic fantasy of a clean war has been realized. Reporters were swayed by its rhetorical power: they gave accounts, for instance, of cruise missiles navigating the contours of Baghdad on their way to “*take out* the Security Ministry building while leaving the houses on either side of it undamaged.”⁷² It was no longer that Westerners with pathologically anti-war — now the language of sickness had been outsourced, and it was the Iraqi city, rather than the American people, that needed medical help. “Baghdad seemed to me to be suffering from arteriosclerosis,” wrote war reporter John Simpson, “it appeared unchanged, and yet its vital functions were atrophying with each new air raid. It was without water, power, and communication.”⁷³

Medical surgery relies on a suite of environmental controls, specific preparations, and a particular sequence of events. It requires an approach that abstracts and

⁷⁰ Ibid., 268,269.

⁷¹ Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, 62.

⁷² Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of True War Stories*, 284. Simpson himself is intentionally highlighting both the military ‘take out’ and the surgical one.

⁷³ Ibid.

compartmentalizes the human body into a cluster of technical and bio-technical processes. Both the process and the thing processed are depoliticized objects acted upon by the surgeon. Metaphorical surgery also depoliticizes and objectifies. Furthermore, the war-as-surgery metaphor reifies the distance created by television. It transposes the geography of the city into the infirmed body, while the actual human bodies in that city become a strange composite of fleshy substance and corporeal movement understood by military planners as information, as field, as object on a par with others in the city's landscape: as a *target*.⁷⁴

The Gulf War enacted a double erasure: the technologies that facilitate war from a distance shielded soldiers from the bodies they killed, while also shielding television viewers from the abject spectacle of human death. The enemy body was erased from the televised landscape and, through the metaphorical framing of war's violence, emptied of all politics.

Seeing "is always a question of the power to see—and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices," such that "an optics is a politics of position."⁷⁵ The Iraqi civilian body that had disappeared from the viewfinder of military planners also disappeared from televisual sight.⁷⁶ Rather my intention is to draw attention to the fact

⁷⁴ The surgical metaphor also belies the imprecision of much of the Gulf War, like the "slow violence" of the 24 million cluster bombs that were dropped on Iraq—many of which failed to explode—that led to the haphazard wastage of the "war after war." See: Nixon, "Of Land Mines and Cluster Bombs," 170; Blackmore, *War X*, 164.

⁷⁵ Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, 191,192. Cited in Hyndman, "Feminist Geopolitics Revisited," 38.

⁷⁶ I bring this up not to express any kind of parity between the deaths erased from the historical writing of the Gulf War and the bodies of the EPW. Indeed, no historical study of the EPW in the Gulf War should fail to mention that a member of the ICRC who was stationed in Saudi Arabia said

that the ways the body of the ‘other’ did appear in mediated representations was indicative of a particular form of power. If we consider the seeming lack of detainees in the Gulf War in this light, it seems almost natural; *of course* the geographic imaginary produced by precision war contained no prisoners; it often lacked any bodies at all.

However, while the army’s deployment of precision technologies (and the media’s obsession with them) may have disturbingly managed to erase the civilian population from the design and performance of warfare, they did not and could not erase the actual bodies. When people have been imagined out of the landscape of war, then encountering, handling, and managing those disappeared bodies becomes an unforeseen challenge. Standing in stark juxtaposition to the discourses of surgical precision were the bodies in the Gulf War whose presence belied the distance and cleanliness of the war’s most prominent military spatial framing. These bodies were the captive population, and their existence problematized narratives of order, precision, and bodily invisibility. In the next section, I analyze the performance produced by the surrender and capturing of such unforeseen bodies.

Qualifying Surrender: Capturing Unforeseen Bodies

On Jan. 18, 1991 — in the early hours of the air assault on Iraq — an operation involving the USS *Nicholas*, a guided missile frigate, was taking place in the northern Persian Gulf. The mission was to neutralize nine offshore oil platforms manned by Iraqi soldiers armed with missiles and anti-aircraft guns. Several hours before the planned

that the “treatment of Iraqi prisoners of war by US forces was the best compliance with the Geneva Convention by any nation in any conflict in history.”⁷⁶

operation was to begin, US airmen reported seeing at least two Iraqis on different platforms waving what looked like white flags to signify surrender. When Commander Dennis G. Morral was informed, he ordered his subordinates not to report the surrender flags to higher echelons. Just a few hours later, while the *Nicholas* fired at the platforms with 76-millimeter and 40-millimeter guns, he ordered a helicopter strike with missiles and rockets. The three-hour raid killed five, wounded three, and resulted in the capture of 23 Iraqis.⁷⁷

The decision to kill or to capture is often underpinned by cultural assumptions and rumor. The enemy faced by Commander Morral had emerged through discourses relying heavily on “calculated constructions of images of the dictator and his minions” that “summoned up centuries-old orientalist notions of Arab men as devious, cowardly, prone to irrational violence, vengeful, and repressive of women.”⁷⁸ The vision of the enemy was juxtaposed with one labeling Iraqis as an incompetent, cowardly, and servile enemy who could not fight at all.⁷⁹ Neither discourse overshadowed the other; both were equally and often simultaneously believed.

This meant that when Iraqi soldiers began surrendering at unmanageable rates in the ground war, commanders still warned that these were not Saddam Hussein’s elite Republican Guard, but mere draftees who were not expected to put up a fight. The real enemy, the ruthless one who willingly broke with the laws of war, was yet to emerge. The tropes that form the backbone of ‘traditional’ inter-state military conflict made it

⁷⁷ Schmitt, “Navy Finds Fault in Gulf War Raid”; Healy, “U.S. Copters Told to Fire on Iraqis Who Appeared to Surrender.”

⁷⁸ Adas, *Dominance by Design*, 345.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 369.

clear: Iraq had the fourth largest army in the world, armored vehicles, group cohesion and loyalty to Saddam Hussein, and its ground troops had significant experience garnered in eight years of war with Iran.⁸⁰ For this reason, troops were to approach the white flag with skepticism, to see surrender as a questionable practice that had to be authenticated through proof. And here, ironically, the range and accuracy of American weapons was such that American *soldiers* never had the chance to hear an Iraqi's case.

The initial reports of the *USS Nicholas* attack presented it as one of the most successful raids of the short war. However, after an anonymous letter from a crewmember reported the incident, the Navy opened a formal investigation, over the course of which military lawyers gleaned that Morral had distrusted the waving of the surrender flags. According to his logic, Iraqis had made “perfidious use of white flags in the Iran-Iraq war” and this was enough to disqualify, or at least render suspect, any Iraqi surrender henceforth.⁸¹ Months later, the Navy ruled that the Commander receive mild censure for demonstrating “extremely poor judgment” — they did not want to send “the wrong kind of message to people in the field,” one that could make them second-guess their use of force.⁸² One of the few critical media reports of the decision noted that in reading hostile intent where there might have been none, the Navy seemed to be instigating a new rule for high-tech war: “when in doubt, shoot it out.”⁸³

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 355.

⁸¹ Palmer-Fernández, “White Flags on the Road to Basra,” 145.

⁸² Healy, “U.S. Helicopters Told to Fire on Iraqis Who Appeared to Surrender.”

⁸³ Kreisher, “Navy Rule: When in Doubt, Shoot It Out - Even in Peacetime.” The opinion piece notes that the Navy had only four years previously issued general courts martial to a Navy Captain and Lieutenant for failing to defend their ship when an Iraqi plane had been spotted and deemed ‘friendly’ by the Air Force. The message from the Navy, according to Kreisher, was that in questionable situations, even in peacetime, shoot.

Those not killed, however, were captured. Once the captives had been brought on board the *Nicholas*, some members of the crew realized that they were facing not a pernicious enemy, but scared humans. "I had an image of fierce, ruthless fighters, but, really, these men weren't different from you or me," said a member of the Coast Guard. "When I started working with the first prisoner, I saw the fear in his eyes and saw him shaking. I think I would have had the same fear if I was in his situation."⁸⁴ According to Judith Butler, this "epistemological capacity to apprehend a life is partially dependent on that life being produced according to norms that qualify it as a life or, indeed, part of life."⁸⁵ The captives on the *Nicholas* were being doubly apprehended—detained by the Navy and understood as recognizable human *life*. One sailor remarked:

"It wasn't what I expected. I expected to see soldiers who had been defeated, drawn and gaunt looks on their faces. I did not see that. I did not see a defeated enemy—I saw a group of people who did not want to be soldiers. I saw people who wanted to be doing something else with their lives."⁸⁶

In the course of this interaction, the Iraqi prisoners were politically redefined, an enemy humanized. These captured soldiers resonated with the liberal narrative of a war for the sake of peace—they were a collective, largely anonymous population whose status was temporary (for the war's duration), and conditional (an outcome of their situation within the Iraqi military hierarchy and their weaponized position on the rigs). Theirs was not a particular form of subject identity; they were not like the ideologically perverse Communist prisoners of the Cold War, nor were they simply a mass of bodies

⁸⁴ "Captor of Iraqi POWs: 'These Men Weren't Different'."

⁸⁵ Butler, *Frames of War*, 3.

⁸⁶ Balzar, "Surrendering Iraqis Are 'Glad to Be Out of Iraq' : Prisoners: Instead of a Worn, Depressed Enemy, Allied Forces Are Finding Smiling Men with No Fight Left in Them."

drawn from a wide swath of unrecognizable Panamanians. The enemy on board the *Nicholas* was no 'different from you or me,' and the nefarious soldier who sought to deceive Americans was nowhere to be found. The humanizing effects of the encounter recast the political life of the EPW, and the discursive construction of 'enemy' was edited out of the shot, leaving only images of men who wanted nothing to do with the war.

During the Persian Gulf War, the bodies of surrendering soldiers like those captured by the *Nicholas* were the only Iraqi bodies to appear in Western newspapers and on television screens. If the operators of advance surveillance units insisted that the surrendering enemy was not to be trusted, but rather was subject to a military gaze determined to view them as duplicitous, the images of the surrenderers broadcast to viewers in the United States told a story of defenseless, frightened men. Contrary to the discourse of precision warfare, these were not objects, not targets, but bodies that needed to be fed, sheltered, and treated humanely. "They are not exhibits in a zoo," American soldiers explained. "Thumbscrews and racks are a thing of the past...you get a better response if you treat them humanely. We learned that in Vietnam."⁸⁷

To viewers watching the war from their homes, the prisoners' bodies stood as evidence of the overwhelming combat effectiveness of American precision war, validating the narrative of a just war targeting a global villain completely disconnected from the will of his people. The EPWs offered a human face to precision war that had hitherto relied mainly on dehumanized images of SCUD and PATRIOT Missiles over

⁸⁷ Platiau, "Behind Wire: U.S. Troops Said to Be Treating Enemy POWs Humanely." Italics mine.

Baghdad's night sky.

Paradoxically, however, the presence of these EPW bodies performed a kind of de facto censorship. They diverted attention from the material realities and broken bodies at the center of war's ontologies by highlighting the presence of other bodies that were being, by most accounts, well treated. Just as the sidelining of the body count had deflected public focus away from death, the narrative of the EPWs distracted attention from the violence at play in the cities of Iraq. In fact, it even offered a perverse justification for it: "This enemy wants nothing to do with Saddam Hussein or his Republican Guard. Our violence is *for them*." The portrayal of the Iraqi EPW in Iraq demonstrated how precision warfare could disguise "its own massive destructiveness, cruelty, and apathy toward the Iraqi dead as a victory of Western Enlightenment progress over the barbarism, archaism, medievalism, of a morally primitive culture."⁸⁸ The body of the surrenderer drew attention to a very particular subset of the Iraqi population, one far removed from the urban civilians whose bridges had been destroyed, power had been cut off, and water supply had been destroyed. Far removed from the civilian dead, these EPW bodies were pieces of a war imaginary in which targets could still speak, were unwilling to fight for their leader, and ached for liberation. In short, they were good liberal subjects.

The space of capture and evacuation here offers an entry-point into the feedback loop of violence associated with precision security power. Violence deployed from a great distance objectifies the entire landscape of war, abstracting human life into

⁸⁸ Norris, "Military Censorship and the Body Count in the Persian Gulf War," 240.

targets and data points. This objectification “increases the social capacity to inflict pain upon the Other,” and renders his or her pain “inadmissible to public discourse.”⁸⁹ When (and *if*) these objects emerge as recognizable forms of life, their very status as living beings is used to justify the further use of violence.

The mediatization of EPWs during the Persian Gulf War itself—the fact that they were on television at all—however, was more the result of logistical problems than any one narrative seeking to justify the use of violence. In the next section I turn attention to those particular systems, and explore what their failures reveal about the nature of the space between capture and the camp.

The Logistics of the Encounter in a War Without Bodies

The contours of EPW operations are crafted during a war’s planning stages, and rely heavily on logistical expectations and imagined resource distribution structures.⁹⁰ Military logistics are part of what have been called the ‘sinews of war,’ the “practical art of moving armies and keeping them supplied.”⁹¹ The ways that the military uses resources, transportation systems, and waste streams is intimately interwoven with strategic efficacy. Logistics are framed both by how the military understands its own capacities and resources, and how they anticipate and imagine the shape of the war to come. In war, variations that can occur in either or both of these networks—the quantity and spatial distribution of existing resources and the space and time of their

⁸⁹ Feldman, “On Cultural Anesthesia: From Desert Storm to Rodney King,” 406.

⁹⁰ As geographer Deb Cowen notes, logistics is “a ‘science’ of the efficient organization of movement within spatial systems that entails the design and management of supply chains.” See: Cowen, “A Geography of Logistics,” 2.

⁹¹ Huston, *The Sinews of War*. Quote taken from Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, 1.

expected use—can mean the difference between a well fed and well supplied military and a hungry, vulnerable, unarmed force.⁹² Importantly, logistical decisions craft the geographical outlines of the wartime detainment apparatus, altering the shape of the thresholds between outside and in and defining the populations who can and do cross them.

Logistics, too, were seen to transform with the RMA.⁹³ One of the central characteristics of the RMA is that information takes on an elevated position in combat, replacing (or at least minimizing) the decisive role of men and materiel in battle.⁹⁴ RMA boosters have gone as far as to speculate that traditional logistics would disappear as information became the medium of warfare and cyberspace emerges as “the decisive battlefield.” Flattening the Earth like many prominent champions of globalization in the 90s and early 2000s, they imagined war in which “all things move at the speed of light, geography has no meaning, and there are no forces to require supplies.”⁹⁵ This is indicative of the myopic thinking of the RMA: surgical war between disembodied technologies is possible, and a minimized or disappearing military footprint is its inevitable result. A central component of RMA logistics, then, came at the expense of imagining the existence of and planning for the management of other bodies on a

⁹² For instance, sophisticated supply routes kept the North Vietnamese, who were distributed in small groups across the countryside, relatively well supplied. American knowledge of these logistical channels, it should be noted, began in the war prisons, with the 1965 RAND Studies with prisoners in Vietnam. For an overview of the entire project, see Davison, *A Users Guide to the RAND Interviews in Vietnam*.

⁹³ Kane, *Military Logistics and Strategic Performance*.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 152. Kane goes on to critique this notion, noting that warfare must take *place* in the material world and that logistics cannot disappear.

physical battlefield. In the Gulf War, planning decisions reflected this general ambivalence about managing and handling the civilian population that would be effected by the violence.

Narratives during the war's planning stages attempted to make explicit the case that the war was not against the people of Iraq, but their fanatical leader who had recklessly invaded Kuwait, shunned international law, and placed his entire population in harm's way. This was a war for global peace—its targets would be limited to the military infrastructure. As Stephen Graham notes, however, the way the Persian Gulf War actually unfolded saw the US-led Coalition target Iraq's military infrastructure, ignoring the fact that most of that infrastructure was fundamental to the lives of the country's civilians. Infrastructure, he argues, is almost never simply military or civilian. It is dual use. Coalition forces, for instance, flew more than 200 sorties against electrical plants, leaving the country with just 4% of its pre-war power supply levels.

The far-reaching effects of these decisions cannot be overstated. They ultimately destabilized water and sewage systems and left the country with conditions favorable for the outbreak of communicable disease. Repair of these systems had been rendered virtually impossible because pre-war UN sanctions meant that replacement parts were not available or expertise was in short supply. Regardless of these technical means, the UN prohibited Iraqis from repairing the infrastructure because it was seen as facilitating military development.⁹⁶ Accounting for the final death toll (to the degree that one can be determined) in this war for life yields widely varying results. Estimates

⁹⁶ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 280,281.

of military combat deaths hover around 56,000, with 3,500 civilians being caught up in the war's deadly violence. But the indirect effects of the developmental crisis that began during the war and remained long after the 1991 invasion are pinned by Oxford Research Group at 205,500 civilians.⁹⁷

Despite their claimed humanitarian focus, little planning was done for the potential volume of civilians that would likely flee the violence. The assumption at the highest levels of military and civilian decision-making was that the Iraqi population would simply reject Saddam Hussein and attempt to overthrow him themselves. This rather remarkable assumption that Iraqis would see the destruction raining down on their cities as an *opportunity* to build anew in situ, without concern for their own bodily wellbeing, would be repeated a decade later, as another US-led Coalition was bearing down on the country. In neither war did populations benignly greet Americans "as liberators."⁹⁸

Turning a blind eye to the effects of military destruction, and contrary to established prisoner doctrine, then, military planners simply sidestepped the potential issue of civilian displacement by integrating the Displaced Civilian (DC) mission in Iraq with EPW operations. In doing so they ignored what one military historian called "a time bomb that was sitting right in front of their faces waiting to explode."⁹⁹ The general disembodiment of warfare and logistical planning had real effects, and it

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Dick Cheney, who was involved in the planning of both of these invasions, famously declared to Tim Russert in 2003 that "things have gotten so bad inside Iraq, from the standpoint of the Iraqi people, my belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators." See: *Meet the Press*. 16 March 2003.

⁹⁹ Bilbo, "Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm," 62.

appeared as though “planners across the board, at every headquarters echelon from division to theater, either intentionally or unintentionally, failed to take into consideration the effects the air and ground campaigns would have on the citizens of Iraq.”¹⁰⁰

Indeed, in the days leading up to the airwar, there was staunch resistance to the idea of setting up DC camp infrastructure at all. While recognizing that the Coalition had certain obligations under international law—specifically the Fourth Geneva Convention—guidance given to field directors was to avoid creating camps for three primary reasons: 1) Operating camps was “resource intensive and a drain on US logistical capabilities”; 2) Camps for displaced civilians “serve as magnets, and draw people who are only marginally in need, thus exacerbating the logistical problems”; and 3) Camps, because of the material resources required and the precarity of the displaced population, “tend to become permanent installations, and we intended only a very temporary occupation.”¹⁰¹ Thus the question of caring for the population—the population whose protection was one of the primary reasons for the war—was seen as too costly and logistically cumbersome. Rather than address the question of whether or not military action would lead to civilian displacement, the issue was largely ignored or deferred: cast off from the logistical lens of the war which, “rooted in cost–benefit and systems analysis,” saw the rationality of the market trumping the ostensible humanitarian objectives of Persian Gulf violence.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 61–62.

¹⁰² Cowen, “A Geography of Logistics,” 3.

The result of this particular overlapping of EPW camps with civilian installations effectively erased them as safe places for the population to seek refuge for fear that they might become targets of retribution by soldiers or ethnic rivals. While the Coalition did handle a number of DCs, there was nowhere near the administrative capacity or secure space to handle the volume of civilians who attempted to flee the violence deployed by both sides: displaced civilians were outsourced. Thus, the more than 100,000 Kurds and Shi'a who "fled cities where the conflicts were particularly fierce" were forced to seek refuge in rebel camps, while more than 70,000 civilians would become refugees in camps in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran.¹⁰³ All told an estimated 3 million Iraqis fled violence—an exodus that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees would call the highest in history. Many would remain displaced long after the war had ended. Thousands of Shi'a, for instance, remained in areas that lacked adequate food, hygiene, and medical care and found themselves at risk of reprisal violence by the Iraqi military.¹⁰⁴ These were the lives that were 'marginally in need' and thus at odds with the logistics of a temporary intervention.

Rather than establish a civilian camp infrastructure, this particular logistical calculus exposed the civilians of Iraq to violence and prolonged insecurity. That a historian could imagine this particular time bomb remaining unexploded offers a view of the general callousness of the American approach to the civilian population of Iraq, both during and long after the bombs stopped falling.

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¹⁰³ Goldstein, *Endless Torment*, vii.

¹⁰⁴ Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 204.

Calls for warfare at a distance are thus also calls to make specific types of logistical decisions—to spend money and resources developing lethal tools that directly affect the strategic goals, rather than allocate valuable human and economic resources away from the primary military objective. Understanding of the speed and scale of EPW operations in the Gulf War offers a window into the types of economic and material resources that would be eliminated if the sanitized imaginary of warfare at a distance were to be actualized, if the technophilic dream of precision war were to leave the ground altogether. It is not difficult to imagine how investments in detention camps to feed and house enemy populations might not be seen as ideal expenditures within the landscape of enmity that underscores war. Logistical cost benefit analyses are inseparable from the discursive framing of war, which in the Persian Gulf relied on a yawning gap between the imaginary immateriality of precision and the unavoidable bodily materiality and physical proximity of capturing bodies in wartime.

In EPW operations logistics covers issues from choosing sites for camps and establishing the resource chains for their construction, staffing, and continued operation. In the Gulf War, this meant considering things as varied as water and laundry services to supplying gas masks for EPWs in the event that Saddam Hussein decided to use chemical weapons. Much of this relies on predictions, or estimations, about how a particular military strategy will be utilized and its results in terms of numbers of bodies, their overall health, and their cultural practices. From the ad hoc construction and relocation of camps in Korea to the complete lack of an EPW

infrastructure in Grenada, many of the deprivations of prisoner camps have been a result of early logistical miscalculations.

In Iraq, initial planning estimated that over the course of the first six months of military operations approximately 4,000 detainees would be captured. By the time military operations began, this initial estimate had been radically altered, with predictions revised to project that 100,000 might arrive in the first week alone.¹⁰⁵ Had this initial estimate been used, the narratives about EPW in the Gulf would likely be quite different, as ultimately there were nearly 70,000 captured in less than three months.

Camp construction began on 17 January 1991 in Saudi Arabia, and three days later the first enclosure was completed. The first detainees arrived one hour after the completion of this enclosure; however, most camps were not completed by this time.¹⁰⁶ Military construction details were able to install approximately one mile of concertina, eight guard towers, and two guard shacks per day in the lead up to the invasion. Each camp was approximately four square kilometers, ultimately requiring 450 miles of chain link fencing; 35,000 rolls of concertina wire; 10,000 tents; 296 guard towers; 5,000 wash basins; 1,500 latrines; eight 210-kw generators; eight 50,000-gallon and 35 3,000-gallon water bladders; two tactical water distribution systems; 200,000 sets of clothing and bedding; 100,000 towels; footwear, and nuclear, biological and chemical protective masks; 140,000 sundry packs, 300,000 meals a day and 1.5 million gallons of water a

¹⁰⁵ United States. Dept. of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 580.

¹⁰⁶ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 21.

day; and, five tons of lindane powder for delousing operations.¹⁰⁷ This enormous undertaking remains largely invisible in histories of the Persian Gulf War.

After revising initial estimates the United States had anticipated the capture of a large number of detainees, establishing four camps in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province that were each designed to hold 12,000 prisoners. These camps could be easily expanded to house 24,000 with no additional support should the need arise. Two of the camps in the east were housed in a larger base cluster near the Persian Gulf known by troops as the Bronx area, and two more were at a compound located inland to the west, known as the Brooklyn area. Brooklyn would be used to house Marine Corps and allied



Figure 5.2: EPW Facilities in Iraq, 1991
(Solid Squares: Coalition Facilities; Square Outlines: KSA Facilities)

¹⁰⁷ United States. Dept. of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 581,582.

captures, while the Bronx area was established for all other Coalition captures.

Additionally, a number of temporary theater internment facilities were staged closer to the fighting front [Fig. 5.2].¹⁰⁸

As was the case in Vietnam, captured prisoners would be processed and initially detained by American forces and then sent on to detention by a third party, in this case the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). They were held by the US for a maximum of 30 days, after which they would either be moved to one of four KSA camps or the entirety of the US “camp-in-being” would be handed over to the KSA. Unlike in Vietnam, where the US invested heavily in virtually every aspect of both the national prison apparatus and the military detainment archipelago, Saudi Arabia paid for more than 80% of the costs for evacuating prisoners taken by the US and its Coalition partners.¹⁰⁹ The decision to send detainees on to the KSA was made by the governments of the US, the UK, and the French in order to assure consistent treatment. All parties assumed that these transfers in detainee control would be more efficient, requiring fewer interpreters and leading to treatment more in line with the prisoners’ own cultural practices. In agreeing to transfer detainees to the Saudis, the US was required by the GPW to assure that they were treated in accordance with international law.¹¹⁰ There were a number of

¹⁰⁸ Doyle, *The Enemy in Our Hands*, 298. See also Bilbo, “Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm.”

¹⁰⁹ Bilbo, “Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm,” 110. After noting a number of the ways in which the Saudis made EPW Operations in Iraq function smoothly, Bilbo noted that “We cannot afford to plan on this same type of support in the future.”

¹¹⁰ Obtaining interpreters in the camps was initially a problem, and Kuwaiti military volunteers needed to be hired. They were slowly phased out by the KSA.

liaison teams organized to maintain accountability, and provide assistance with administrative, logistical, and managerial concerns.¹¹¹

There were nearly 70,000 prisoners of war in the Persian Gulf. Of these the vast majority were captured by American troops, though British and French forces accounted for around 6,000.¹¹² While more than a 1,000 were captured and processed during the 38-day 'defensive' air war, 22,560 were captured and processed in the four day ground war. While this clearly identifies that more prisoners are taken in ground war operations, what is surprising is the number of prisoners that surfaced after the war was 'over'. In the two months that followed the February cease-fire, 46,181 additional EPWs were processed into US enclosures.¹¹³ These were the bodies that were either slowly making their way through the evacuation channels or were waiting to be successfully entered into US administrative systems.¹¹⁴ By the time all EPW had been processed into the camps, most Coalition POWs had been repatriated for nearly two months. The last prisoner in U.S. custody was transferred to the KSA on 2 May 1991. Precision war is fast, sudden, and overwhelming. This was not precision war.

The most problematic aspect of EPW operations, and perhaps in the general war effort, was not the management of the camp populations or their interrogations, but

¹¹¹ United States. Dept. of Defense, *Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 579.

¹¹² Additionally, Saudi Arabia captured, processed, and interned 16,921 Iraqis.

¹¹³ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 22. All Coalition POWs were repatriated by March 5, well before the majority of EPW had been successfully processed into the Coalition camps. See Springer, *America's Captives*, 194.

¹¹⁴ Army lawyers have subsequently noted that if the US still relied on these 'manual methods', it "would have taken months to process and report the capture of Iraqi prisoners of war." See: Ary, "Accounting for Prisoners of War," 25.

managing the space between the encounter and the camp. These problems began immediately in the space of encounter. Capturing troops, in the first hours of the conflict, made it a point to issue capture cards and tag the detainees as per doctrinal expectations. However, when the rate of capture increased, Coalition forces attention to the administrative requirements of detention flagged. As the war progressed, this lack of attention began to effect camp administration and information distribution. As many as 80% of the EPWs would end up arriving at the camps without these initial documents, and as a result, they could not be immediately manifested into rosters. As the volume of bodies increased, capturing troops who typically make a note of all of a detainees belongings and issue a receipt for them to claim it upon release, instead confiscated everything and threw it in garbage bags that were sent to the EPW camps in utter disarray. Perhaps more troubling for the Coalition, Military Intelligence was losing access to items of key intelligence value like pocket litter and documents.¹¹⁵

The disorder continued at various stages in the evacuation of prisoners from the places where they surrendered. As had been the case since Vietnam, prisoners would be taken from the battlefield in Chinook helicopters if they were available and the ground had been secured.¹¹⁶ The desert did not provide the same degree of cover as did the jungle terrain of Vietnam, so evacuating helicopters were continuously exposed to targeting from the ground. In response, evacuation in the ground war was largely intended to utilize the 'back haul' capacity of 'organic transportation assets': trucks that

¹¹⁵ Bilbo, "Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm," 77.

¹¹⁶ Lane and Clifford, "Prisoners Pose Logistical Problem." Kennedy, "U.S. Copters Lead Attack on Iraqis; 500 Prisoners Taken."

were delivering logistical support to the front lines. Once the trucks had been emptied of food, ammunition, or troops, captured bodies would simply be driven back across the border to the KSA. However, the war progressed with such speed and at such a scale that there was little back haul capability for evacuation.¹¹⁷ Many of the trucks sent forward to the fronts with ammunition never needed to be unloaded—the ground war was so rapid—and thus there was no room for returning prisoners. Groups of prisoners were sent to the rear on their own, as in Korea they were disarmed and searched and then simply pointed in the correct direction.¹¹⁸ This lack of backhaul capability continued even after the ground war had ended.¹¹⁹

A backup plan was implemented that would see the MPs in charge of EPW operations acquire around 200 trucks and buses from locals in the area. After training 200 MPs to drive these vehicles, they were then used to move prisoners from holding areas to the American camps and between the US facilities and the KSA camps.¹²⁰ Other MPs required training as mechanics, as the heavy driving load and desert conditions meant the buses frequently broke down. Some argued that the buses would be too vulnerable to attack and that the prisoners would need to be marched to the rear under armed guard, but this threat never materialized.¹²¹

By the second day of the ground war, the numbers of EPW began to overwhelm even the secondary system, with prisoners being evacuated in convoys as large as 2,000,

¹¹⁷ McGrath, Krause, and Command, *Theater Logistics and the Gulf War*, 87.

¹¹⁸ Bilbo, "Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm," 77.

¹¹⁹ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 52.

¹²⁰ Langenus, "Moving An Army, Movement Control for Desert Storm," 44.

¹²¹ Lane and Clifford, "Prisoners Pose Logistical Problem."

with as many as 8,000 EPWs assembled in one location. "I think we were overwhelmed," said one US officer, who went on to note that troops were too focused on "operational accomplishment" to focus on moving the captives to safety.¹²² This oversight countered the intents of the GPW, which specifically call for the rapid evacuation of EPWs to safety. Here, as was the case of the DC camps noted above, the fact that no war crimes were committed is likely due to the short duration of the war, rather than its proper, precise management.

Many of the rapidly arriving detainees "were dehydrated, in need of food and shelter, and threatened to breach the compound wire."¹²³ This rupturing of the camp walls could only be the case if the detainees actually made it to the camps at all. In that period the evacuation channels were so overcrowded with EPWs, many too weak to walk long distances, and the shortage of buses left them stranded.¹²⁴ One battalion operations officer, echoing the often heard claims that the war was so asymmetrical that the bases were more dangerous than the battlefield, said the "biggest hazard now is being trampled by EPWs."¹²⁵ Populations were increasing rapidly and supplies were in such high demand that supply trucks would drive right into the camps, where prisoners would unload and store the newly arriving provisions. Analysts would later characterize the scene as one "of mass confusion and purposeful activity that would not have been

¹²² Coll, "30,000 POWs Pose Logistical Problem," A31.

¹²³ Bilbo, "Enemy Prisoners of War (EPW) Operations During Operation Desert Storm," 87.

¹²⁴ Coll, "30,000 POWs Pose Logistical Problem."

¹²⁵ Schmitt, "P.O.W.'s; General's 'Wild Guess': 50,000 Prisoners, So Far."

possible if the prisoners had not been so cooperative.”¹²⁶

The chaos also disrupted the EPW accountability mission, once again leading to a lack of accurate information concerning the numbers and locations of prisoners en route to the camps. This occurred despite the utilization of an updated version of the Prisoner of War Information System (PWIS II), which dramatically increased the speed of identity processing from around 190 prisoners per day to over 1,500.¹²⁷ As in both Korea and Vietnam, US soldiers found transliterating and transcribing to be a fundamental challenge—even with the assistance of Kuwaiti and Saudi translators.

Further, the stability that was meant to come from the synchronization of records with fingerprint data in Vietnam was, almost twenty years later, still a troubling problem. EPWs were prone to give false names and switch their identification bands, and this made managing their movement between camps and accounting for their whereabouts difficult.¹²⁸ This posed additional problems when members of the 800th MP brigade were attempting to locate over 500 prisoners accused of war crimes. After abandoning the use of the computer database, a manual screening of prisoners finally located only 30 of these suspects.¹²⁹

The situation behind the frontlines in the Gulf War told a story not of precision guided missiles and revolutionary military technical affairs, but of a spatial and administrative confusion that actually had an adverse effect on the carrying out of

¹²⁶ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 52.

¹²⁷ Ary, “Accounting for Prisoners of War,” 23.

¹²⁸ Gebhardt, *The Road to Abu Ghraib: US Army Detainee Doctrine and Experience*, 89.

¹²⁹ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 57.

precision at the front. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney sought to calm any public concerns about the problem of “dealing with all the prisoners.” He said that the numbers of prisoners “can slow us up, but we’ve made preparations for that kind of eventuality. It shouldn’t be something we can’t handle.”¹³⁰ Field commanders were less confident than Cheney, repeatedly appealing to their superiors for assistance in handling and moving the enemy body.¹³¹ “We all need a lot of help with these POWs,” one commander said, “I have a couple thousand. We can’t take care of them.”¹³²

During the four-day ground war and the chaotic period that followed, “[l]ogistical support for the camps was improvised.” As early as the second day of the ground war, the build-up of detainees on the various supply routes that connected the front to the rear actually slowed the Coalition’s rate of advance.¹³³ Commentators would observe that “it appeared to some at the front that the Iraqis were accomplishing in surrender what they could not do in battle: stopping the fast drive at the heart of the allied strategy.”¹³⁴ The logistics of capturing were not enabling the logistics of killing. Indeed the supply routes were so clogged with surrendering Iraqis that the speed of the military operations had to be slowed. Here, contra the dromological geographic imaginary that “the power of pace is outstripping the value of place,” in the evacuation channels, it

¹³⁰ Lane and Clifford, “Prisoners Pose Logistical Problem.”

¹³¹ It is perhaps because of this episode (and Dick Cheney’s role in it) that the second Bush Administration was so quick to assume that US troops would be treated as liberators in 2003, as if the volume of surrendering troops in one war might determine the allegiances and steadfastness of populations a decade later.

¹³² Gosselin and Neuffer, “Surrenders: Thousands of Prisoners Tax Coalition.”

¹³³ Brinkerhoff, Silva, and Seitz, *United States Army Reserve in Operation Desert Storm: Enemy Prisoner of War Operations: The 800th Military Police Brigade*, 50.

¹³⁴ Gosselin and Neuffer, “Surrenders: Thousands of Prisoners Tax Coalition.”

would seem, the power of place was capable of outpacing the value of pace.¹³⁵

Conclusion:

“...it produces reality effects for a world in flux through a one-sided gaze...that aspires not only to oversee but to *foresee* all threats, rooting out potential as well as real dangers with an anticipatory, normalizing panoptic.”¹³⁶

—James der Derian
Virtuous War

In this chapter, I have traced the emergence of a post-Cold War enemy and the distinct textures that apprehension and evacuation took in light of his emergence. The twilight of the Cold War saw a dramatic reorganization of the US military and a transformation of the idea of the enemy and the enemy threat. In particular, I demonstrated that discourses of precision and warfare performed at a distance that began to emerge at the end of the Vietnam War had a significant effect on the performance and imagination of the space between capture and the camp.

The resulting shift in discourse towards military precision and professionalism are juxtaposed with a description of EPW operations in two military actions from the 1980s: Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada and Operation Just Cause in Panama. Far from a precision enterprise, in both cases, the apprehension of prisoners took shape in an ad hoc way that was quite distant from the ordered discourses of a newly

¹³⁵ Luke and O’Tuathail, “Global Flowmations, Local Fundamentalisms, and Fast Geopolitics: ‘America’ in an Accelerating World Order.” Cited in Gregory, “Lines of Descent: From Bomber County to the Borderlands,” 842.

¹³⁶ Der Derian, *Virtuous War*, 115.

restructured and professionalized military apparatus. Further, in Panama the United States began to utilize its growing computer networks to tie the capture of war prisoners to its undeclared global war on drugs. These detainees rescaled the terrain of the conflict—by drawing detainees into a host of different military enclosures, the US effort in Panama simultaneously performed a violent extraterritorial policing effort under the sign of a war against a global criminal. This shifted the political objectives of detaining bodies and offered a model for the US interventionist state that utilized an expanding computerized security matrix in order to find deviant or criminal foreign bodies and spatially isolate them.

In the second section of the chapter, I showed how the imbrication of discourses of precision war and the hyper-mediation of the war theater through televised media shaped the landscape of apprehension in the Persian Gulf War. As part of this theater, the surrendering EPW became actors whose presence in the media offered a justification for the ‘precision’ violence of Operation Desert Storm. The need to spatially manage human life in the warzone was not erased by these changes, but rather, it was simply displaced beyond the margins of the media’s gaze. The power of precision discourses rendered the capture of prisoners of war as an unforeseen logistical problem—an excess that ultimately worked to slow down the advancing violence of the Coalition ground war. As Margot Norris writes, the Persian Gulf War, with its “deliberate aim of transforming the real-making sign of warfare—namely the injured and dead body—into an unreality, unknowability, and undecipherability,” had the capacity to

“derealize modern warfare in ways that will make it permanently acceptable.”¹³⁷ This derealization process becomes a focal point in the transformation of the space between capture and the camp that unfolds across Iraq and Afghanistan after 11 September 2001.

In the next chapter I explore the space between capture and the camp as it has unfolded over the past 12 years. The shape of the battlefield and the nature of the enemy shifted dramatically following the Gulf War and the declared successes of the RMA. One of the key effects of the Gulf War on future EPW operations was that information itself became seen as a key medium by and through which enemy populations and narratives of control could be managed. In the wake of such shifts, information dominance was seen as a necessity if the United States was to be capable of winning wars against an unstructured and emergent enemy. As a result, the ways in which the military sought to apprehend security threats has also taken on new objectives. The first section of the next chapter thus explores extraordinary rendition, a process that is, at its root, a very specific arrangement of the evacuation infrastructure. Rendition deals explicitly with the enemy body as a material thing, as an object whose body must be mined and manipulated in order to extract information—the key resource in the global war. By extending the blank spaces generated by the helicopter in Vietnam, rendition uses networks of global circulation to enact a distinct form of capture. The next section also explores the relationship between the capture of this material body and the capture of data by looking at the use of digital biometrics in Iraq and

¹³⁷ Norris, “Military Censorship and the Body Count in the Persian Gulf War,” 224.

Afghanistan. In utilizing these technologies, the interface between inside and outside is now iteratively created through mobile technological interfaces. Biometrics automates the encounter between the body and the occupying power. I pair these two dramatically different forms of apprehension together in order to argue that the interface between capture and the camp is being reimagined as spatially, architecturally, and technologically indistinguishable from the spaces of circulation that define logistical societies.

**RENDERING WARTIME INFORMATION:
Between Bodily Capture and Data Capture in Contemporary War**

The toughest part of my journey was finding the enemy.

—James der Derian

Virtual War

Protecting our nation's security - our people, our territory and our way of life - is my Administration's foremost mission and constitutional duty. The end of the Cold War fundamentally changed America's security imperatives. The central security challenge of the past half century—the threat of communist expansion - is gone. The dangers we face today are more diverse. Ethnic conflict is spreading and rogue states pose a serious danger to regional stability in many corners of the globe. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction represents a major challenge to our security. Large scale environmental degradation, exacerbated by rapid population growth, threatens to undermine political stability in many countries and regions.

—President Bill Clinton,
National Security Strategy 1994

So begins President Clinton's preface to his first National Security Strategy in 1994.¹ The Gulf War had ended and the new landscape of threat that faced the Administration was spatially diffuse and politically varied. While Saddam Hussein fit the mold of a maniacal rogue state leader—a global villain—the period that followed the Gulf War was notable for an increased focus within international relations and security studies on the new nature of the enemy: fluid, networked, mobile, and barely visible. Drawn into the fold of American security concerns were such spatially expansive and geographically distributed threats as climate change, small-scale conflicts that crossed national boundaries, rapid population growth, and terrorism. These targets were difficult to locate because they were embedded in the systems and flows of

¹ According to Snider, this strategy paper was delayed for 18 months and went through as many as 21 revisions. This was a reflection of the Administration's focus on domestic issues, but it also reflected "the lack of consensus initially found within the administration, and the difficulty that caused in formulating a new grand strategy" in light of a landscape of threat that could not be pinned down in states. Snider, "The national security strategy: documenting strategic vision," 10.

contemporary western everyday life, from capitalist consumption to global finance to tourism and air travel. Julian Reid calls the social spaces in which threat emerges from within the systems that sustain everyday life 'logistical societies'.² In logistical societies the lives of (certain) populations become, in their very performances, the space of war while simultaneously being the very thing that must be preserved, managed, and optimized. This makes late modern war an explicitly biopolitical endeavor, a form of conflict that takes as its target the administration of the lives of populations.³ One cannot defend against the intrusion of these enemies across any territorial border because they utilize or are located within the systems that make logistical society function in the first place.

The global villain of the 80s and 90s was pinned to space by international relations' territorial trappings: linking geopolitics to a bounded and bordered area whose decisions and directions were articulated by a coherent state. With the end of Cold War, the "increased velocity and volatility of the world economy" and "the emergence of political movements outside the framework of territorial states" would call this spatial framing into question.⁴ New enemies like 'global terror networks' emerged in the 1990s and 2000s that were ostensibly delinked from this landscape of threat, and international relations became concerned more with identifying, defining,

² Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror*, 17–39.

³ See, for instance: Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*; Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*; Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror*; Dillon and Reid, *The Liberal Way of War*.

⁴ Agnew, "The Territorial Trap," 55. On the nature of territory, see Elden, "Thinking Territory Historically"; Elden, "Thinking Territory Politically." On the recalcitrant trappings of the national state scale in contemporary International Relations, in light of so-called 'deterritorializing' factors, see Shah, "The Territorial Trap of the Territorial Trap"; Agnew, "Still Trapped in Territory?"

and governing a networked, fluid, emergent threat: a global counterinsurgency.

The enemy body in this war amongst the global population is rarely a blank canvas that emerges through pitched battles at the frontlines. It is increasingly a highly mediated and distributed effect of a suite of techniques aimed at utilizing the camouflage provided by systems of circulation: the enemy is information, data, and the potential violence of an unlimited number of volatile black boxes. Countering this enemy ostensibly requires the “ratcheting up of techniques of tracking, surveillance and targeting centred on both the architectures of circulation and mobility — infrastructures — and the spaces of everyday urban life.”⁵

Accordingly, wartime tactics no longer focus solely on the territorial landscapes of war, but increasingly target the relational and infrastructural connections that enable the production of insecurity well beyond any territorially configured state space or delimited battlefield. As these new forms of apprehension are called upon, they also considerably shift the dynamics of inside and outside that underpin wartime detention. Drawing a line, for instance, between the extraordinary rendition of a ‘terror suspect’ from the airport in New York and the capture of a member of the Taliban in Afghanistan is no longer simply a question of distinguishing civilian political arrest from military detainment. Rather, the two are extremely different practices bound up with and inseparable from one another. What has this done to the interface between capture and the camp?

‡ ‡ ‡

⁵ Graham, “When Life Itself Is War,” 138.

In this chapter, then, I am primarily concerned with tracing the expansive spatial contours of this threshold itself. How, and where, are the limits of military detainment expressed in logistical societies? Who are the agents tasked with apprehension? Where are they located? As noted above, the location and disposition of the insecure landscape has shifted dramatically in the past decade and a half. This variable locus of insecurity altered the practice of capture and significantly changed the spatiality of detainment: how often it was called upon, how and when persons were detained, and who they were. Building on my findings detailed in the previous chapter, below I explore the shifting geographical distribution and technological manifestations of this interface in America's most recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. I highlight two distinct but interrelated apprehension techniques: extraordinary rendition and digital biometric enrollment.

In the first part of this chapter, I map out how the spatial practices of capture and evacuation have changed in light of this shifting geography. First, I highlight the emergence and later reliance upon a network of global rendition flights and temporary detention facilities—black sites—all over the world. In describing the geography of extraordinary rendition, what becomes clear is that it is now impossible to imagine contemporary military detainment *without* secret sites, without temporary holding facilities that are 'hidden in plain sight'. Extraordinary rendition, while ostensibly unlawful (again) since 2009, has since that time been given space within a legislative ambiguity that leaves room for 'temporary' detainment aimed specifically at gathering information and intelligence. In mobilizing this particular loophole, the Obama

Administration has changed the understanding of just what the uses of capture are; how capture can be justified at all; and what spaces of military detention, in fact, are.

Next, I outline the nature of the rapidly expanding use of digital biometric scanners that dynamically produce large databases and information archives of occupied populations. Through biometric enrollment, the site of security encounter is increasingly understood as a site of technological mediation. By turning my attention to the performance of capture, as it has come to encompass data capture on par with bodily capture, the distance between the decision to detain and the decision to kill is extended and digitized. In other words, this process of reducing bodies to numbers requires a site, it must take place, and there must be an “apparatus that performs the evaluation, a hinge between the world of things and a world of numbers.”⁶ These performances are the focus of this section.

I put these two dramatically different forms of apprehension—rendition and biometrics—together to draw particular attention to the ways in which spaces of detention are being designed to emerge like the new global enemy; utilizing the masking capabilities and spatial expansiveness of logistical societies. I argue here that both practices fundamentally change the geographic distributions, contact points, and architectural manifestations of this threshold.

Extraordinary rendition relies on an architecture of detainment that focuses not solely on enclosure, but on spatial and locational indistinguishability. Rendition, which makes its appearance as a global, mobile threshold between capture and the camp, is the

⁶ Harwood, *The Interface*, 9.

performance of a thick interface, an international space that prolongs and extends the space between kill and capture. This limit cannot be isolated from the spaces of global circulation and exchange. Digital biometrics, too, generate a vision of the border between inside and outside that is distributed widely across space and populations. Both of these practices—extraordinary rendition and biometric enrollment—are underpinned by the idea of precision war, the idea of military omniscience, and the idea that tools exist to parse friend from foe, and to deploy lethal—yet specific—violence. Yet both also identify the fact that this precision relies in many ways on a broadening of control, on a loosening of categorical fixities, and on expanding the net of police power.

*PART I:**Rendition: A New Art Form*

One of the most notable and notorious effects that this new security outlook generated in military detention was the beginning of a reliance on (not simply the selective use of) extraordinary rendition. Though often argued to be an extra-legal practice initiated by an American sovereign who had lost his ethical compass in the wake of a catastrophic attack, the practice of rendition had in truth emerged more than a decade before George W. Bush took office. For this reason it is important to begin the discussion of extraordinary rendition in the context of the RMA and the pre-9/11 security landscape, the period that to George Friedman, head of the private intelligence analysis firm *Stratfor*, was typified by “planning for everything except what happened.”⁷

In this section, I look to describe the ways in which rendition has changed the space of the interface between capture and the camp in global war. With extraordinary rendition, the scale of detainee evacuation is global, mobile, and made up of a series of spatially indistinct locations. In its approach to the geographies of law, to global flows, and to military doctrine, this is quite different from earlier manifestations of prisoner capture and evacuation that were, indeed, global [Fig 6.1]. For instance, the use of steam ships in the Second World War to bring EPWs to the US took advantage of the global supply chain feeding industrial war. During that war, there were approximately 125 EPW camps spread fairly evenly across the contiguous U.S. (only

⁷ Friedman, *America's Secret War*, 79.



Figure 6.1: EPW camps across the United States in 1945

nine states lacked prisons).⁸ The scale of detainment was dramatically different from that of contemporary war: 425,036 EPWs were held domestically, or about the size of the urban center of contemporary Atlanta, Georgia.⁹ But in WWII, this international movement of prisoners was done to remove them from the battlefield in order to be in accordance with early international law and strategic objectives. With rendition, international prisoner movement is aimed at skirting these limitations, bending the margins of the battlefield and the law as much as possible without breaching or breaking them.¹⁰

‡ ‡ ‡

First used in the late 1980s, rendition traditionally involved sending a detainee from the place they were captured to the US or their home country in order to facilitate a speedy interrogation and fair trial—specifically in situations where strong extradition laws between states were not in place. The policy was initially controversial, as it allowed for the extraterritorial arrest of fugitives who had outstanding warrants in the US, placing American domestic law over that of other states. For this reason, each apprehension required presidential approval, though it did not require the FBI or

⁸ A recent publication by the RAND Corporation lists the number of camps at more than 500, with facilities in all but three states, though provides no citation. See: Benard et al., *The Battle Behind the Wire*, 6.

⁹ U.S. Army Service Forces, *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1945*. This document breaks down the EPW populations as follows: Germans: 378,156; Italians: 41,456; Japanese: 5,424. These detainees were also put to work in various domestic industries, including approximately 85,000 in agriculture, 25,000 in forestry, and 25,000 in food production. See: Patterson, *Annual Report of Under Secretary of War for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1945*, 9. The above-mentioned RAND study notes that the locations of these camps adhered to local labor needs. Employers paid the government for the work, and this helped to defray the cost of operating the camps. Benard et al., *The Battle Behind the Wire*, 7. In comparing the geographic distribution of detainees in these two wars, the reality that in 1944 there were more than half as many *prisons* as there are Guantánamo *prisoners* now makes the contemporary political theater surrounding the enemy combatant seem absurd.

¹⁰ Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils*, Location 1660.

arresting agency to get the approval of the foreign country.¹¹ Though initially intended to facilitate the judicial process, during the Clinton Administration, and in the face of an emerging global terrorist threat, rendition would be used to deliberately bypass legal processes, and to facilitate intelligence gathering about future threats through increasingly brutal interrogations.¹² Rendition became a hallmark of international terrorist policing. The National Security Strategy of 1996 would approvingly note:

“...the last three years, more terrorists have been arrested and extradited to the United States than during the totality of the previous three Administrations. We are still determined to apprehend many others, including the suspected perpetrators of the Pan Am 103 bombing who are being sheltered in Libya, and those involved in the deadly attack on U.S. Government employees at CIA Headquarters in 1994.”¹³

While the US had considered terrorism a crime and used legal avenues to prosecute perpetrators, the Clinton White House was increasingly shifting its attention to extra-territorial extra-legal posturing and preemptive action.¹⁴ Though not initially intended to gather intelligence, soon the process was intimately linked with interrogation and information extraction. In 1995, Talaat Fouad Qassem, a spokesman for an armed Egyptian Islamist group, was picked up in Croatia, questioned by Americans aboard a ship in the Adriatic Sea, and sent on to Egypt where, having already been sentenced to death in absentia, he was killed. J.D. Boys identifies this as perhaps the first time that

¹¹ Downing, “The Domestic and International Legal Implications of the Abduction of Criminals from Foreign Soil,” 573. The policy was initiated under the Carter Administration, though at the time it required foreign governmental approval. However, Congress passed a number of legislative changes in the 80s that expanded the FBI’s authority to detain independent of foreign sovereign approval. Yet another iteration of an American ‘unitary executive’ who privately and personally decides on matters of life and death; freedom and captivity.

¹² Boys, “What’s so Extraordinary About Rendition?,” 591.

¹³ The White House, “A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement.”

¹⁴ Raimo, “Winning at the Expense of Law.”

rendition was used in a way that utilized an exceptional legal space to kill a suspect.¹⁵ A mobile, furtive landscape of apprehension was taking shape.

What Clinton's national security advisor Sandy Berger would call 'a new art form' would soon become known as extraordinary rendition.¹⁶ This is notably distinct from traditional rendition for the ways that it targets members of terrorist organizations or their affiliates, circumvents the legal process, and uses covert operations and third-party detention facilities in places where prisoners may be tortured. The CIA, the FBI, or foreign agents operating at their behest often apprehend these targeted individuals based on secret intelligence and dubiously legally undercover actions.¹⁷ Rendition's use expanded significantly on 17 September 2001, when President George W. Bush signed into effect a 'finding' authorizing CIA to perform extensive foreign covert action. While still subject to US law and Justice Department review, this finding gave the CIA "broad authorization to disrupt terrorist activity, including permission to kill, capture and detain members of al Qaeda *anywhere in the world*."¹⁸ The CIA had long conducted international intelligence gathering missions—with or without the approval of other sovereign governments. This finding, however, gave the agency the authority to establish detention facilities—'islands' for interrogation or punishment—globally and

¹⁵ Boys, "What's so Extraordinary About Rendition?"

¹⁶ George, "Airline 'Carrying CIA Guns to Unita."

¹⁷ As the practice was shifting during the 90s from one of apprehension for legal hearing to apprehension for intelligence gathering, Vice President Gore would famously say: "Of course it's a violation of international law, that's why it's a covert action. The guy was a terrorist. Go grab his ass." Clarke, *Against All Enemies*, 144. Cited in Boys, "What's so Extraordinary About Rendition?," 592.

¹⁸ Priest, "CIA Holds Terror Suspects in Secret Prisons." Italics Mine

without the need for the President to approve each one. As Paglen and Thompson write of the finding:

“Age-old complaints about covert actions getting ‘lawyered’ to death would be gone. New, secret wars would begin across the world. Old ones would expand. Strict rules about congressional and executive oversight of covert operations would be a thing of the past. The agency would no longer have to get individual covert actions approved by the President. The CIA would have tremendous new powers and tremendous autonomy.”¹⁹

By establishing this authority to act independently in other states, the finding places a primacy on US safety, security, and sovereignty while usurping the territorial and legal dominion of others, including its allies in the War on Terror.

Reflecting the shift in focus of detainee operations from a reactive space of battlefield management to a preemptive site of intelligence gathering, extraordinary rendition was framed by the Administration as a boon for improving the potential for gathering information. In order to make this transnational shipping of prisoners legally plausible, they applied a very particular reading of Article 3 of the United Nations Convention Against Torture, arguing that if they were generally sure that the detainee would not be abused or tortured they could render them abroad.²⁰ US law (relevant for the movement of persons from the United States abroad) was in this case less restrictive, only stipulating that torture must be understood as a matter of policy in the targeted state to prohibit rendition.²¹

¹⁹ Paglen and Thompson, *Torture Taxi*, 22.

²⁰ Mayer, *The Dark Side*.

²¹ US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in a case involving a deportation to Haiti, *Auguste v. Ridge*, 395 F.3d 123 (3d Cir. 2005), and the decision of the Bureau of Immigration Appeals in *In re J--E--*, 23 I&N Dec. 291. See Lederman, “Rendition to Torture.”

Here the approach to security practice in the war on terror reveals a mode of operating *through* the law (rather than against or in spite of it). Law here is imagined as an unpredictable practice governed not by reproducibility or ethics, but guided by the whims of various administrators and managers, what Judith Butler calls ‘petty sovereigns’.²² Thinking about extraordinary rendition not as a lawless practice by a renegade sovereign but as an excess of law-like (and as Derek Gregory calls them, legal-lethal spaces of exception) procedures encourages a further mapping of the numerous actors and systems that are required to enact it in the first place: legal experts; systems of rules and codes; flight control analysts; military hierarchies and special operations forces; intelligence bureaucrats; private airlines; runway and road maintenance crews; and regional police networks.²³ These various functions and managerial practices highlight the myriad points of connection between the infrastructures of circulation and the architectures of enclosure.

When the media began reporting about black sites and ghost flights it once again became evident that—as in Korea and Vietnam—there were multiple simultaneous yet quite different infrastructures of military detainment at work in the War on Terror. Rather than solely utilizing an American-funded host-nation national police infrastructure as a form of spatial management in ‘internal’ war, this alternative system was a clandestine international space of circulation—logistical detainment for a logistical society. The US consistently relied on these channels to deal with a particular form of political foe that resonated with the anxieties generated by an unstructured

²² Butler, *Precarious Life*.

²³ Gregory, “War and Peace.”

enemy: be it the future rendered uncertain by international terrorism or the imagined catastrophe of an Iraq with weapons of mass destruction. The existence of these parallel carceral networks is important, as each facilitates a differentiated treatment for prisoners based upon where and how they were apprehended and, as discussed below in Part II, what their presumed 'risk profile' may be.

The United States has long utilized third party proxies in its wartime detainment for a number of reasons from cutting costs to keeping more soldiers at the fighting front. Third parties are especially useful when they facilitate practices that would stain the ethical narrative of American war were they to be done by US Forces. Whereas the Korean and Vietnamese national prison infrastructures developed with US aid and training, they were at root part of a national prison system, however tenuous or marginal those systems were before occupation. The US utilized such proxy detention spaces again in Afghanistan, where CIA-funded and constructed prison facilities like the Salt Pit prison, where disappeared prisoners from across the global battlespace were housed away from the prying eyes of the ICRC. These proxy sites, as they had in Korea and Vietnam, were often sites of extreme brutality witnessed by US officials, who could later claim that 'we' had no legal authority to intervene in the mistreatment of prisoners, like leaving a man to freeze to death and then ordering that he be buried in an unmarked grave.²⁴

Unlike these 'host-nation' detention apparatuses, extraordinary rendition is the introduction of a newly imagined circulation system that in its performance reimagines

²⁴ Priest, "CIA Avoids Scrutiny of Detainee Treatment."

and reterritorializes the space of war as wholly indistinct from the spaces of contemporary global capitalism. No longer reliant simply on the host nation, rendition utilizes the global scale in the construction of its proxies. Perpetual everywhere war is marked by flexible, temporary detainment practices. Importantly, the rendition infrastructure is always already in place—it does not require the establishment of camps and compounds, of logistical supply for long term detention, or accountability requirements and Red Cross visits. It requires movement, fear, and spatial anonymity.

However, the more ‘traditional’ channels still existed. This military detainment network that was constructed in Iraq and Afghanistan consisted of spaces like collection points, detainee holding areas (DHA), theater internment facilities (TIF), along with the rather anomalous strategic internment facility [SIF] at Guantánamo Bay where, in theory, those having strategic or exceptional intelligence value were sent for interrogation.²⁵ The territorial location of these detention facilities is blurry. There were, across two territorial theaters in Iraq and Afghanistan only three TIFs. But, in Iraq and Afghanistan, traditional military detainment was also part of a suite of functions that were performed at some Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) located across the countryside. Additionally, in Afghanistan there is evidence of nine so-called Field Detention Sites at which Afghan and American agents abused certain detainees as they

²⁵ Innumerable journalistic reports and scholarly analyses have challenged the veracity of this theory. The primacy of intelligence and information in the War on Terror means that interrogation plays a central, if not foundational role in detainee operations such that the quest for what Karen Greenberg calls a ‘least worst place’ that would enable ‘enhanced interrogation’ was one that involved much political and legal geographical exploration at the highest levels of the DoD. See: Greenberg, *The Least Worst Place*.

made their way to Bagram Prison—often referred to as ‘Obama’s Guantánamo’.²⁶ These tended to be short term holding areas for interrogation before the detainee was moved to the TIF or onto the SIF at Guantánamo, but occasionally, as in Abu Ghraib, they were longer-term detainment spaces.²⁷ Those captured and evacuated to these sites were brought to self-contained camps that were linked into wider military logistical channels. MPs staffed the compounds, guarded, and escorted the prisoners while military intelligence personnel performed interrogations, with civilian agents from the CIA and FBI available to interrogate special cases.

As had been the case in Vietnam, where the different treatment of different types of prisoners was stark and politically contentious, the Bush Administration had famously determined that al-Qaeda and Taliban detainees would not classify as EPW but as ‘enemy combatants’. In the earliest days of the Iraq War, those captured were given EPW status because most of them were clearly affiliated with the Iraqi Army. When the US and coalition forces captured Baghdad, for instance, they took 80,000 prisoners.²⁸ But this political clarity and volume did not last. Soon the prisoners that filled military detainment facilities in both Afghanistan and Iraq were largely made up of local populations who objected to the American occupation, and who in both countries came to be known simply as a single category of actor—insurgent—regardless of their political motivations or regional contexts. Insurgents were imagined and

²⁶ Gopal, “Obama’s Secret Prisons.”

²⁷ Article 22 of the GPW specifically states that “Except in particular cases which are justified by the interest of the prisoners themselves, they shall not be interned in penitentiaries.” This clearly placed the Abu Ghraib facility outside of international law even before the abused took place there.

²⁸ Springer, *America’s Captives*, 197.

handled differently than EPW, even if US protocol called for all of them to be treated in accordance with the GPW.

In Iraq, this meant that the population that just over a decade before had been described by a befuddled US soldier as “like Americans, more or less, only Iraqis” was transformed into an insidious and dubious other that required a rescaling of military operations and the use of distinct and violent apprehension techniques that were aimed not at soldiers, but entire populations.²⁹

In 2004 a confidential Red Cross report was leaked containing a scathing review of these apprehension practices in the first eight months of war in Iraq. The report’s findings tell the story of war that takes place in the space of the home, in pockets of violence that resemble nothing more than arbitrary and excessively violent police raids:

“Arrests as described in these allegations tended to follow a pattern. Arresting authorities entered houses usually after dark, breaking down doors, waking up residents roughly, yelling orders, forcing family members into one room under military guard while searching the rest of the house and further breaking doors, cabinets and other property. They arrested suspects, tying their hands in the back with flexi-cuffs, hooding them, and taking them away. Sometimes they arrested all adult males present in a house, including elderly, handicapped and sick people. Treatment often included pushing people around, insulting, taking aim with rifles, punching and kicking and striking with rifles. Individuals were often led away in whatever they happened to be wearing at the time of arrest -- sometimes in pyjamas or underwear -- and were denied the opportunity to gather a few essential belongings, such as clothing, hygiene items, medicine or eyeglasses. Those who surrendered with a suitcase often had their belongings confiscated. In many cases personal belongings were seized during the arrest, with no receipt being issued.”³⁰

²⁹ Balzar, “Surrendering Iraqis Are ‘Glad to Be Out of Iraq’ : Prisoners: Instead of a Worn, Depressed Enemy, Allied Forces Are Finding Smiling Men with No Fight Left in Them.”

³⁰ ICRC, *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the Treatment by the Coalition Forces of Prisoners of War and Other Protected Persons by the Geneva Conventions in Iraq During Arrest, Internment and Interrogation*, 7.

Military capture and arrest here are largely indistinguishable, barring the excessive force that is used against the captives. The captors rarely identified themselves, nor did they tell the detainee where they were being taken. Further, the report claims that the families of prisoners were not informed of what happened to the prisoners, resulting in a “de facto disappearance.”³¹ A far cry from RMA narratives of precision war at a distance, descriptions of the spaces of capture and evacuation in the report are harrowing narratives of violent spaces of encounter:

“The ICRC examined another person deprived of his liberty in the “High Value Detainees” section in October 2003 who had been subjected to a similar treatment. He had been hooded, handcuffed in the back, and made to lie face down, on a hot surface during transportation. This had caused severe skin burns that required three months hospitalization. At the time of the interview he had been recently discharged from hospital. He had to undergo several skin grafts, the amputation of his right index finger, and suffered permanent loss of the use of his left fifth finger secondary to burn-induced skin retraction. He also suffered extensive burns over the abdomen, anterior aspects of lower extremities, the palm of his right hand and the sole of his left foot.”³²

One case described led to death not at the point of capture but in the space between capture and camp:

“One allegation collected by the ICRC concerned the arrest of nine men by the CF [*coalition forces*] in a hotel in Basrah on 13 September 2003. Following their arrest, the nine men were made to kneel, face and hands against the ground, as if in a prayer position. The soldiers stamped on the back of the neck of those raising their head. They confiscated their money without issuing a receipt. The suspects were taken to Al-Hakimiya, a former office previously used by the *mukhabarat* in Basrah and then beaten severely by CF personnel. One of the arrestees died following the ill-treatment [*Name redacted*], aged 28, married,

³¹ Ibid., 8.

³² Ibid., 10.

father of two children). Prior to his death, his co-arrestees heard him screaming and asking for assistance.”³³

These violent practices, however, were not extremely successful in actually apprehending the enemy. In fact, they led to a remarkable number of detainees in both Iraq and Afghanistan who were not belligerents at all but civilians who had been captured by mistake, as revenge, or for a cash payout.³⁴ Despite this degree of force and the latitude taken in terms of detainee treatment in the performance of capture and evacuation, US officials still saw it as necessary to pursue the clandestine operations of extraordinary rendition in order to counter the global landscape of imagined threat. Thus a more spatially expansive and temporally fluid infrastructure was overlaid on top of and imbricated with this system of ‘official’ military camps and practices. These two systems, though performed by different sets of actors, were not wholly distinct.

The detention facility at Guantánamo Bay, which had a classified CIA-maintained facility—alternatively called ‘Secret Squirrel’, Camp 7, or Camp Platinum—within the ‘traditional’ camp walls, becomes one such hinge that connects this more traditional EPW apparatus with the furtive networks of rendition.³⁵ Part of the complexity of these networks emerges through a ghostly discourse that maps a detention assemblage whose spatial and material limits are in constant, furtive flux. Unlike the presumably fixed

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Among the numerous expositions of this fact in both the Iraq and Afghanistan theaters, see: Porter, “Ninety Percent of Petraeus’s Captured ‘Taliban’ Were Civilians”; Mayer, *The Dark Side*; Denbeaux, Denbeaux, and Gregorek, *Report on Guantánamo Detainees*; Danner, *Torture and Truth*; ICRC, *Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on the Treatment by the Coalition Forces of Prisoners of War and Other Protected Persons by the Geneva Conventions in Iraq During Arrest, Internment and Interrogation*. According to Danner, between 70 and 90 percent of those that wound up in Abu Ghraib, for instance, were ‘mistakenly’ apprehended.

³⁵ Cucullu, *Inside Gitmo*, 145; Walsh, “DoD News Briefing With Adm. Walsh From The Pentagon.”

location, construction, occupation, and eventual disassembly of war camps, rendition draws attention to mobility, to traces, to trajectories. In fact, this network of clandestine detention facilities first became visible by way of planewatchers, people who, as a hobby, keep track of incoming and outgoing flights at various airports.³⁶ Subsequently these traces become the prime representational technique in the mapping the aeromobility of rendition, and makes explicit that the movement and connection of the space between capture and the camp is as vital to the production of spaces of detainment as are the stopping points. It was not the spaces themselves that gave the network away but the connections between them. The CIA early on had determined that for reasons of legal liability it wanted to minimize its direct involvement in the rendition system, and attempted to position its role in the network as functioning like a travel agency.³⁷ It seems to have succeeded in this attempt, as maps of the rendition network mirror maps of commercial airline flight paths [Figure 6.2].

Rather than movement by military escort, Private Military Contractors and third party nationals facilitated movement in extraordinary rendition channels. The language of this infrastructure is underpinned not by a military spatial taxonomy—there are no TIFs or DHAs—but by a set of temporal and performative locations in a network:

³⁶ Paglen and Thompson, *Torture Taxi*.

³⁷ Grey, *Ghost Plane*, 219.

stopover points, transfer points, staging points [Table 6.1]. The spaces in the rendition infrastructure materialize through spatial “points of condensation” that are defined by what is done to the body of the prisoner administratively.³⁸ Whereas ‘traditional’ military detainment produces and manages its own localized infrastructure through a combination of internal logistical supply chains and the use of existing roadways and airspace, extraordinary rendition dispenses with these tasks almost entirely. A far cry from the linear evacuation routes described in early EPW doctrine, this is networked war that relies on a host of performances that are not connected to the military process of supplying war, but to the logistics of global neoliberal capitalism. Rendition is a spatial trace of global war.

Indeed there could be no extraordinary rendition without the systems of connectivity and information exchange enabled by the networked society. Stephen Graham has noted the increased targeting of urban infrastructures by advanced western militaries; a targeting that exploits the ‘dual use’ of systems like electricity and water supply that are required for both civilian life and insurgent/military life.³⁹ In the spaces of rendition, globalized networks are activated as dual use space—enabling flows of capital and flows of carceral spaces. This requires that these transportation and communication infrastructures remain functional, that they facilitate the connections between any one site and its carceral other.

³⁸ I take the phrase from O’Neill, “Of Camps, Gulags and Extraordinary Renditions.”

³⁹ Graham, *Cities Under Siege*.

Name	Description	Cities
Stopover points	Points at which aircraft land to refuel, mostly on the way home	Prestwick Shannon Roma Ciampino Athens Santa Maria (Azores) Bangor Prague
Staging points	Points from which operations are often launched - planes and crews prepare there, or meet in clusters	Washington Frankfurt Adana-Incirlık (Turkey) Ramstein Larnaca Palma de Mallorca Baku (Azerbaijan)
One-off pick-up points	Points from which, according to our research, one detainee or one group of detainees was picked up for rendition or unlawful transfer, but not as part of a systematic occurrence	Stockholm-Bromma Banjul Skopje Aviano Tuzla
Detainee transfer / Drop-off points	Places visited often, where flights tend to stop for just short periods, mostly far off the obvious route – either their location is close to a site of a known detention facility or a <i>prima facie</i> case can be made to indicate a detention facility in their vicinity	Cairo Amman Islamabad Rabat Kabul Guantánamo Bay Timisoara / Bucharest (Romania) Tashkent Algiers Baghdad Szymany (Poland)

Table 6.1: Aircraft Landing Locations involving Council of Europe member states⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Marty, *Alleged Secret Detentions and Unlawful Inter-state Transfers Involving Council of Europe Member States*.

Kyle Foggo's Reveal: Black Sites and CIA Junkspace

A vast archipelago of temporary detention spaces that span the globe in both space and time emerges out of this networked practice. The system of facilities outlined in Figure 6.2 extends the spatiality of detention from isolated super-max islands like Guantánamo and Bagram to spaces like schoolhouses, warehouses, and airport hangers in places like Syria, Egypt, Poland, and Romania. These temporary international CIA detention facilities do not convey a consistent set of architectural or infrastructural elements. They don't need to. Ultimately, these black sites are spaces that are made into prisons through their occupation, by the coming together of certain bodies working in the grey areas of international and national law. They cease to function as spaces of detention as soon as the prisoner and their overseer depart—often by way of corporate *Gulfstream* jetliners operated by private contractors.⁴¹ Matthew Sparke has pointed out the spatial paradoxes of these dual use detainment spaces, noting what he calls the carceral cosmopolitanism of rendition that saw “American guards from the ‘Special Removal Unit’ watch[ing] movies on the corporate AV system” while prisoners sit “chained to the jet’s luxury leather seats...Videos and leather seats for the elite,” he writes, “chains and beatings for the subaltern.” The gap between the spaces is “at once

⁴¹ Most scholars of the industry place the rise in use of PMCs back to military budget cuts following the Cold War. See Singer, *Corporate Warriors*. As the reduced threat from that war’s enemies was coupled with new high-tech weapons, the need for a massive standing army decreased. Through the 1990s, many ex-military personnel were left without work. Out of this pool of specialized labor developed the early landscape of the modern day PMC. See Spearin C., “The Emperors Leased Clothes.”

incredibly narrowed and unimaginably vast.”⁴²

The characteristics of flight, fear, and isolation that exposed the prisoner body to new types of violence during helicopter evacuations in Vietnam, are here replicated as the defining characteristics of the process itself. Rendition is somehow as much about flying—about occupying a mobile, globalized aerial territoriality—as it is about detaining, torturing, or kidnapping. But it is also about civilian infrastructures that connect places: roads, hotels, private homes, highways, flight control towers, and local police and security officials in various cities in a way that EPW operations to that point had not. In its reliance on these everyday systems, the space of rendition is “not so much an innocuous background” O’Neill writes, “but rather complicit in the violence” enacted upon the detained body.⁴³ In other words, the landscape that is outside of the camp, indeed outside of the space of war, is the central component of extraordinary rendition—fusing the outside and the inside in a tenuous spatial performance at an interface of control.

The dark underside of dual use detainment also presents the researcher with a difficult spatial ‘thing’ to study. If any space can be used, what are the spatial characteristics of wartime detainment? What type of materials and logistics are required to maintain these networks? What is the prison wall and what are its

⁴² Sparke, “A Neoliberal Nexus: Economy, Security and the Biopolitics of Citizenship on the Border,” 173,174. Sparke cites a New York Times article detailing the case of Majer Arar, who was discussed in chapter three. In that article, readers get Arar’s view of his global ‘hopscotch’ from his chair as well: “Mr. Arar says, he followed the plane’s movements on a map displayed on a video screen, watching as it traveled to Dulles Airport, outside Washington, to a Maine airport he believed was in Portland, to Rome, and finally to Amman, Jordan, where he was blindfolded and driven to Syria.” See Shane, Fessenden, and Grey, “Detainee’s Suit Gains Support From Jet’s Log.”

⁴³ O’Neill, “Of Camps, Gulags and Extraordinary Renditions,” 2.

typological (and topological) qualities? The impulse may therefore be to assign these spaces the role of semiotic stand-ins: referring to black sites allows one to insert an entire furtive spatial imaginary into a conversation with little regard to their performance. And yet, a certain design logic has begun, if only in fits and starts, to trickle out of the secret world and into the light. This fleeting network of things has effects: the ghost site leaves evidence in its wake.

Much of the literature on both the guerrilla and the insurgent places an emphasis on their use of spaces and populations as open fields into which their bodies disappear. As scholars like Stephen Graham and Eyal Weizman have explored, one of the ways that state militaries have attempted to counter this erasure has been to emulate it.⁴⁴ Or rather, to invert it—turning all space outside of the insurgent’s tactical terrain into a seamless topology of control. One example of this design logic was revealed in interviews related to the guilty plea (for contracting fraud) of former U.S. intelligence officer Kyle ‘Dusty’ Foggo. The interviews revealed that Foggo oversaw the construction of three secret detention centers that were each to house about a half-dozen detainees. The design objective was for the prisons themselves to disappear (as the insurgent does) into the landscape. Obviously these facilities could not be stand-alone camps with well-guarded exterior walls in the model of Camp Delta at Guantánamo. Instead, the three facilities were essentially adaptive reuse projects that occupied urban spaces left vacant by the vagaries of neoliberal capitalism. These spaces included a renovated building in

⁴⁴ In other words, if the guerrilla must “swim amongst the people as the fish swims in the sea,” security practices must be just as effervescent. For example, Weizman has explored the use of ‘micro-tactical’ actions by Israeli Defense Forces wherein the troops literally drill ‘overground tunnels’ through the dense urban fabric in order to furtively disrupt the street dominance of Palestinian guerrillas. See Graham, *Cities Under Siege*; Weizman, “The Art of War.”

Bucharest, Romania, a steel-beam structure in Morocco and another remodeling project in a former Eastern bloc city.⁴⁵

But it wasn't just the siting or the repurposing of innocuous urban space that served to spatially erase these facilities as nodes in a network of iterative capture and evacuation. According to the *Times*, the spaces were also "designed to appear identical, so prisoners would be disoriented and not know where they were if they were shuttled back and forth."⁴⁶ Here, concertina wasn't employed to mark a fixed prison limit. Rather, Foggo's designers employed a system of radical architectural disorientation produced by international movement and the blurring of the distinctions between spaces. This is the territorial mirroring of the rendition flight, as if the sites on the ground might also be in ever-changing motion, lifted from the confines of architectural materiality. The space-time of capture and evacuation is extended from air-to-land and back again, a geographic diagram of the everywhere war.⁴⁷

This fused the prisons with their surroundings and served to insinuate the omnipresence of Western imperial power. Borrowing from architect Rem Koolhaas, the detainee was thrust into a kind of CIA *Junkspace*.⁴⁸ Describing the smooth spatial condition that connects the spaces of global consumerism—malls, airports, hotels—Koolhaas notes that, far from architectural distinction, *Junkspace* is a spatial situation

⁴⁵ Johnston and Mazzetti, "A Window Into C.I.A.'s Embrace of Secret Jails."

⁴⁶ Ibid. This spatial blurring also serves to amplify the efficacy of interrogation techniques, specifically "False Flag" in which the interrogator implies that they are an agent of an unfriendly regime (and one in which physical abuse would be tolerated) and that the prison space itself is located in an area that would be particularly dangerous should the detainee escape.

⁴⁷ Gregory, "The Everywhere War."

⁴⁸ Koolhaas, "Junkspace."

in which “continuity is the essence,” producing a consumer reality that “is always interior,” yet “so extensive that you rarely perceive the limits.” Junkspace, he notes, “promotes disorientation by any means.”⁴⁹ These spaces are fleeting and unstable. Just as the design logic of the global war prison and consumer culture melt into each other, so too do spaces of evacuation and spaces of detainment.

Because of its continual emergence and disappearance, extraordinary rendition is tied to and propped up by the somewhat supernatural assemblages of language and power. Indeed, the forces that make their appearance in the war have generated a haunted discourse—from ghost detainees to the disappeared to black sites—rhetoric used to describe people who are not there and places that we cannot see. In this way, the language of extraordinary rendition demonstrates the affective challenges of ‘talking terror’: circulating in a horrific register similar to that of ‘the disappeared’ or other state-led kidnappings.⁵⁰ This particular aesthetics of disappearance is distinct from the landscape of capture practiced in earlier conflicts.⁵¹ Whereas Phoenix operations in Vietnam toed the line between military capture and furtive, lawless kidnapping, with extraordinary rendition there is no doubt. As in Vietnam, the utilization of proxy detention sites offered a financial, logistical, and ethical shield from direct claims of malfeasance or abuse and torture: a selective utilization of the Other in accomplishing the tasks we want but don’t want to be seen as doing.

This practice also reinforces the idea that the ways that ‘they’ do things is

⁴⁹ Ibid., 175.

⁵⁰ Taussig, *The Nervous System*.

⁵¹ Virilio and Degener, *Negative Horizon*.

backwards and abhorrent, even if ‘we’ directly enabled and funded it. For instance, despite its illegality in international law, the US knowingly sent one of its detainees, Abu Omar, to Egypt when according to a State Department report, Egypt's security services at the time utilized “stripping and blindfolding prisoners; dousing them with cold water; beatings with fists, whips, metal rods, and other objects; administering electric shocks; suspending prisoners by their arms; and sexual assault and threats of rape.”⁵²

Extraordinary rendition rescales the violence of war, treating “the world as one giant battlefield for [the American-led] ‘war on terror’, kidnapping, arresting, arbitrarily detaining, torturing and transferring suspects from one secret prison to another across the world with impunity.”⁵³ Detainees in rendition’s emergent encampments were more likely to have been apprehended *off* the battlefield, in their homes at night, like Moazzam Begg who was in Islamabad when unknown men came to steal him away.⁵⁴ Or perhaps they were picked up at a security checkpoint in an international airport territorially but not legally inside the United States, like Majer Arar.⁵⁵ Put into the framework of military detainment, extraordinary rendition is the apotheosis of a globalized space of capture and evacuation. It substantially differs in space and time

⁵² Bergen, “The Body Snatchers.”

⁵³ Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2007: Politics of Fear Creating a Dangerously Divided World*. The quoted statement is by Irene Khan, the Secretary General of Amnesty International when announcing the publication of the report.

⁵⁴ Begg and Brittain, *Enemy Combatant*.

⁵⁵ Lobel, “Extraordinary Rendition and the Constitution”; Shephard and MacCharles, “Arar Report Prompts New Torture Inquiry; Former Supreme Court Justice to Probe Cases of Three Others Detained in Syria.” See also: Nisa, “Demons, Phantoms, Monsters: Law, Bodies, and Detention in the War on Terror.”

from practices in previous wars. Lines begin to erode between battlefield capture and kidnapping, between removing the body from the global war and reducing the body to its raw biological life, using whatever means necessary to extract 'intelligence'. The gaps between the image of liberal, lawful war and the deployment of illiberal and exceptional violence in practice are drawn out in the space between capture and the camp.

Rendition Under Obama and the Truth Effects of an Event that Never Happens

The use of extraordinary rendition expanded dramatically during the eight years of the George W. Bush Administration. As the fifth anniversary of the 11 September attacks approached, President Bush defended the use of renditions and what Jane Mayer calls the outsourcing of torture:⁵⁶

“This program has been and remains one of the most vital tools in our war against the terrorists. It is invaluable to America and to our allies...Were it not for this program, our intelligence community believes that al Qaeda and its allies would have succeeded in launching another attack against the American homeland. By giving us information about terrorist plans we could not get anywhere else, this program has saved innocent lives.”⁵⁷

That is to say that for the government, the success of rendition can only be understood based on the evidence provided by events that *do not happen*. Preemptive and anticipatory detainment produce the security that they themselves name, a form of political activity that somehow rationalizes its own operations in the name of catastrophic events that have not, and subsequently do not, occur. There is no way to prove the veracity of these claims, and indeed, one might speculate that the production of actionable intelligence is not necessarily connected to the production of truth, but to

⁵⁶ Mayer, *The Dark Side*.

⁵⁷ “President Bush’s Speech on Terrorism.”

the production of a militarized theater of security.

When President Obama took office in 2009 he sought to make good on his campaign promise to close the detention facility at Guantánamo and eliminate the use of CIA black sites and enhanced interrogation. While the use of these CIA-run secret prisons is now unlawful, as per Executive Order 13491 of 2009, Guantánamo remains open and rendition, which Obama never intended to eliminate, is still used. The Administration has argued that it will roll back rendition to the pre-Bush-era practice that would not see suspects kidnapped, sent abroad and tortured. Rather, as Defense Secretary Leon Panetta noted, “the renditions, where we return an individual to the jurisdiction of another country and then they exercise, you know, their right to try that individual and to prosecute him under their laws” would remain “an appropriate use of rendition.”⁵⁸

But it is difficult to imagine how one can continue to perform *any* rendition while eliminating the temporary spaces that become prison cells through its performance. Indeed, this paradox has recently come to light as part of an investigative report detailing the Obama Administration’s weekly review of the so-called ‘kill lists’ naming targets in the sprawling borderlands of drone warfare. John A. Rizzo, the CIA’s top

⁵⁸ Panetta had been questioned if the government had sent prisoners abroad to be tortured, to which he answered: “I have not been officially briefed on any of the extraordinary renditions as to what actually took place. My understanding is that there were black sites; my understanding is that we used those during that time. Some of these were permanent facilities. What took place with those individuals, I don’t have any direct evidence of, but obviously, there were indications that those countries did not meet the kind of human values that we would extend to prisoners. So it’s for those reasons that the President acted to prevent extraordinary renditions.” To which Committee Vice Chairman Kit Bond probed (no doubt in an attempt to implicate the Democrat) Clinton Administration in the narrative of violent renditions): “Now, since you don’t know about those, I would assume that would apply to the renditions in the 1990s, when detainees were transferred to a third country where they were executed. Does that qualify as torture?” *Nomination of Leon Panetta to Be Director, Central Intelligence Agency*, section 14.

lawyer at the time, protested that the proposed Executive Order to close black sites stepped on other aspects of the US secret detention apparatus. “The way this is written,” he argued, “you are going to take us out of the rendition business.” The White House responded by redefining what the government’s understanding of a detention facility was. The new understanding of detention would now exclude the places where people were held “on a short-term, transitory basis.”⁵⁹ Therefore, while black sites may have been closed, this does not obviate the clandestine use of temporary globalized secret detainment: black sites close in name only.

The public is apparently meant to take it on good faith that these facilities do not employ torture and that when prisoners are secretly taken at night to another country, it is to bring them before a judicial hearing. There is no way of knowing whether or not Obama’s rendition is as extraordinary as his predecessor’s, despite the claims of increased oversight.⁶⁰ Indeed, just a few weeks prior to the announcement of Osama bin Laden’s death, a report of secret detentions again emerged as part of the U.S. war effort. But officials did not describe them as prisons or utilize the established detainee operations doctrine. Rather, these new sites were understood as “temporary holding pens whose primary purpose [was] to gather intelligence.”⁶¹ And this intelligence forms

⁵⁹ Becker and Shane, “Secret ‘Kill List’ Tests Obama’s Principles.”

⁶⁰ Johnston, “U.S. Says Rendition to Continue, but With More Oversight.” As the recent revelation of Obama’s ‘kill list’ makes clear, there is a wide political and ethical gulf between public oversight (or even classified oversight within the legislative branch) and the oversight defined by top-secret Presidential deliberations. Whether the public should feel better or worse knowing that the President gave ‘careful consideration’ to the outsourcing of violence and torture is an open question. Regarding the emerging epistemological apparatus known dubiously as the ‘disposition matrix’ which guides the President’s consideration of new targets, see: Miller, “Plan for Hunting Terrorists Signals U.S. Intends to Keep Adding Names to Kill Lists.”

⁶¹ Dozier, “Afghanistan Secret Prisons Confirmed By U.S.,” NP.

the most vital ingredient in managing the battlespace of a global counterinsurgency, for drone strikes and targeting lists would not be possible without the acquisition of human intelligence (HUMINT) through connections on the ground. Spaces of detention—through any definitional framework—become key sites in the identification of those connections.

As demonstrated in previous chapters, this redrafting of the spatial typology of confinement in order to open a quasi-legal space is certainly not unique to the narrative of rendition. But it is significant here for what it portends about the spatiality of military detainment enclosures. Over the past sixty years, the US military, the CIA, and their assorted proxy agents have succeeded in transforming what was once a temporary ‘situational’ status with temporary sites of physical enclosure based on the ‘reality’ of war—the EPW and the war prison—and rendered both permanent (yet discontinuous) through the use of such temporally precarious designations as the ‘indefinite detention’ of ‘unlawful combatants.’ Subsequently, in what was pitched as an attempt to move beyond these dubious practices, they redefined detainment itself, introducing a new spatial typology that was simply defined as a temporary site for intelligence gathering.

The process here is quite striking: First, the EPW was initially codified in IHL as a temporary status. However, by next authoring a perpetual war and then introducing indefinite detainment, the very meaning of wartime detainment changed. Next, a temporary form of detainment was *re*-introduced, one that was no longer part of IHL, and no longer clearly framed by detainee doctrine. These spaces offered a view of the EPW camp through a very distorted mirror. The Obama Administration appears to have

created a new category of spaces and spatial practices that simultaneously is and is not 'detention.'

A flurry of open questions immediately follows. What rules govern these holding pens? What status do their inhabitants have? Where are they captured *from*? Where are they rendered *to*? These questions remain unanswerable for now, but what is clear is that rendition and black sites have not necessarily disappeared. Rather, this spatially and temporally expansive potentially violent liminal space between capture and the camp has simply been given a new name and a new architecture.

‡ ‡ ‡

Perhaps the most dramatic changes to occur in the landscape of apprehension over the sixty years of this study occurred in the last five years. The coming together of a shifting battlespace imaginary that sees the entire globe as a space of war with a rapidly accelerating digitally networked culture that compresses space and time has generated a new geography in and through which military detainment takes shape. Further, as information becomes both the primary driver of and medium through which war is performed, the maintenance of global security increasingly relies on the production of data by force in one region and by privilege in another: an uneven geography of digital power.

In the next section, I outline the ways in which the emergence of handheld digital biometrics within the space of war dramatically reshapes the landscape of detainment and the geography of capture. The power of digital biometrics emerges in two distinct ways: first, the transformation of the performance of sites of encounter (with new

bodily practices requiring a specific grammar of action) and second, the increased fusion and connectivity between distributed spaces in a network of control that is capable of managing populations from a great distance. If extraordinary rendition is about the furtive networking of prison spaces in order to facilitate specific ends with regards to the body (torture and interrogation), the use of digital biometrics sees the networking of the body itself as a key to facilitating certain ends with regards to the objectives of prison space (generating spatial control and governing mobilities). Below I argue that through the use of digital biometrics, the individual body emerges as an extension of the data, rather than the data being an extension of the individual body. I highlight the power of biometrics to shift the nature of the detention assemblage from one focused primarily on the spatial removal of threatening bodies to one that relies on a mobile distribution of critical interfaces that automate the distinctions between friend and enemy.

PART II:

Data Capture: Apprehending Global Security

I cannot move without it. I cannot leave it there where it is, so that I, myself, may go elsewhere. I can go to the other end of the world; I can hide in the morning under the covers, make myself as small as possible. I can even let myself melt under the sun at the beach – it will always be there. Where I am. It is here, irreparably; it is never elsewhere. My body...

—Michel Foucault,
The Utopian Body (1966 Radio lecture)

As the 1990s gave way to the new Millennium, security had a new focus: the emergent biopolitical threats thriving in the spaces of circulation. These had to be located and delimited, their disorder rechanneled into something productive for the state. Security objectives were therefore targeting insurgencies that now functioned “across social, technical, political, cultural and financial networks, straddling transnational scales.”⁶² One of the traditional methods used to counter such insurgencies had been to separate enemy combatants from innocent civilians in the general population, but traditional disciplinary spatial tactics such as containment and isolation were ill suited to these new, mobile threats, since the enemy body was effectively indistinguishable from those of other human actors.⁶³ Military objectives now became focused on “securitizing and targeting” everyday spaces of circulation and exchange.⁶⁴ Securing space meant that vital infrastructure, from water distribution and

⁶² Graham, “When Life Itself Is War,” 138.

⁶³ This is effectively true of all non-territorially defined conflicts, be they counterinsurgency or, given the recent failures of COIN, counterterror operations.

⁶⁴ Graham, “When Life Itself Is War,” 138.

power grids to financial transactions and email inboxes, became targets for both opportunity and destruction: the double bind of security in logistical societies.

In a logistical society, crises are not and cannot be totally avoided, and threats cannot be totally eliminated; they must be managed. Establishing optimum conditions for security entails finding and articulating patterns of bodily affiliation: who has spent money in abnormal ways, who has moved from region to region at suspicious times, how many men of military age have purchased one-way flights from a particular region. These are practices that articulate “differential risks, zones of higher risk and zones of lesser or lower risk.”⁶⁵ Individual tracking and surveillance—disciplinary practices built around a mode of visual control that is “permanent in its effects even if it is discontinuous in action”—are thus joined by mediated practices such as data-mining, simulation, and electronic identification that target the population as a circulating mass.⁶⁶

The spatiality of these security practices is not concrete; these do not concern a physical battlefield, but rather a landscape of uncertainty and possibility. And while the sovereign has the power to kill within his realm, and disciplinary institutions have their own hierarchical order within theirs, security practice is neither spatially fixed nor territorially enclosed. Rather, as Foucault notes, to secure is to “plan a milieu in terms of events or series of events or possible elements, of series that will have to be regulated

⁶⁵ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 61.

⁶⁶ Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 201. It is important to note that Foucault and his interlocutors maintain that disciplinary power does not disappear in situations where security power is evident, but rather that the security framework is positioned relative to a different set of problems, “occluding those of disciplinary governing at specific moments, in particular places.” Amoores, “Data Derivatives,” 36. See also: Burchell, Gordon, and Miller, *The Foucault Effect*; Dean, *Governmentality*; Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*.

within a multivalent and transformable framework.” The space of security, then, deals with the flexible management of “a series of possible events; it refers to the temporal and the uncertain,” and as such is deeply rooted in establishing and monitoring probabilities.⁶⁷ Through constant references to riskiness of the possible, the probable, and the speculative, techniques of security use the capacities of the population rather than the individual and take the future as their temporal frame. Targeting a future event requires the mobilization of a logic of preemption that can encompass “risks that are thought to be at once uncertain or unknowable *and* catastrophic to the extent that they require immediate action”: dangers like sudden terrorist or insurgent violence.⁶⁸ One of the key spatial performances that emerges from this landscape of anticipatory control is a distinct set of militarized detention practices, including new techniques of apprehension that do much to concretize the securitized geographies of the global war on terror. Detainment has long been associated with disciplinary power, but these new practices create a form of control that is not bound to institutional enclosure; instead, it is geographically expansive and technologically varied. The apprehension of wartime combatants, for example, had long been associated with logics of prevention, with keeping a body that has attacked (or that could attack or attack again) from populating the environment you wished to control. The space (battlefield) and method (military violence) of attack were, by and large, understood. In the environment of the

⁶⁷ Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 35. He continues by articulating the role that statistical vision plays in articulating the population’s security: “I think the management of these series that, because they are open series can only be controlled by an estimate of probabilities, is pretty much the essential characteristic of the mechanism of security.”

⁶⁸ De Goede, *Speculative Security*, xxviii; Aradau and van Munster, “Taming the Future: The Dispositif of Risk in the War on Terror”; Aradau and van Munster, “Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions,(un) Knowing the Future.”

unstructured enemy, however, apprehension is structured by a logic of both prevention and preemption. This logic creates a narrative of risk, envisaging the future shape, time, location, method, and actors of violence so that action can be taken in the now.

Preemptive security seeks to turn incalculable and indeterminate future threats into objects of governance in the present.⁶⁹ “Perpetual vigilance” is required “for signs of danger on the assumption that everyone is guilty of criminal intent.”⁷⁰ Not only is this vigilance required with reference to everyone all the time, it is required everywhere.

In light of this incalculable insecurity, vigilant security practitioners direct their attentions toward the “collective life of the nation,” and the regulation of maladies in terms of their frequencies and statistical manifestations, rather than the deviance of individual actors.⁷¹ Thus with some contemporary security performances, the aim is “not simply to punish what was done,” as is ostensibly the case with rendition, but also “to prevent what may yet occur” by linking the physical body to a host of statistically driven, speculative relationships.⁷²

This is one of the central tasks of digital biometrics—biological markers such as fingerprints, iris detail, hand geometry, and facial structure that are unique to each body.⁷³ Using a variety of different enrollment devices, digital biometrics take

⁶⁹ “Prevention and pre-emption” as Bethany Evans writes, “are therefore driven by different spatiotemporal conceptions of the future and subsequently adopt different methodologies to capture and act on future space-times.” Evans, “Anticipating Fatness,” 26.

⁷⁰ Ericson, “The State of Preemption: Managing Terrorism Risk Through Counter-law,” 57.

⁷¹ Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic*, 31. Cited in Shapiro, “The New Violent Cartography,” 301.

⁷² Margulies, “Deviance, Risk, and Law,” 746.

⁷³ In addition to these physiological characteristics, the suite of available techniques in advanced digital biometrics has recently expanded to include behavioral characteristics such as gait and voice recognition, heart rate detection, eye movement analyses, and even brain activity monitoring, all of

information from the body and transform it into circulating digital information stored in (and easily retrieved from) searchable databases. These new digital technologies are not only crucial to the identification, management, and control of potential enemies, of potentially disruptive bodies, but they can also connect detainee operations to a broad array of other tasks. Myra Gray, the former head of the Biometric Identity Management Agency⁷⁴ (BIMA), the Defense Department organization devoted to Identification Management (IdM), notes as much, pointing out that emergent biometric technologies have played a substantial role in both military and non-military endeavors such as “high-value target tracking, Maritime Interception Operations, personnel recovery, facility and logical access control, disaster relief, humanitarian assistance, security operations, in-theater interagency operations, access to services for non-U.S. persons, and U.S. border protection.”⁷⁵ Digital biometrics enable security practices to move from the level of the specific individual to that of general information about an entire population in order to uncover statistical anomalies. This works to transform the wartime encounter, turning it into something governed by the “bloodless sciences of risk management and actuarial assessment” built around “predictions of group behavior” like pattern of life analyses and predictive analytics: semi-automated data harvesting technologies that seek to anticipate and map emerging global threats.⁷⁶

which can identify deviant or abnormal bodies in large crowds from a considerable distance. They seek to predict a person’s intentions and preempt their behavior by profiling them on the basis of the predetermined ‘risky’ characteristics of their unique biological presence. However, since the military has not utilized these in theater, they remain outside of the scope of this study.

⁷⁴ Until 2010, BIMA was known as the Biometric Task Force (BTF).

⁷⁵ *Biometrics Task Force Annual Report: Fiscal Year 2009*. p.38

⁷⁶ Margulies, “Deviance, Risk, and Law,” 746.

Unlike disciplinary power, this iteration of control is neither particularly visual nor fixed in institutional space; it is “inescapable and exhaustive...hidden or backgrounded” in codes and algorithms, and to such a degree that its subjects “might not be aware of how the software is working to reshape their activity.”⁷⁷ In targeting “the statistical dimension” of the population, apprehension here “entails the production of knowledges no longer intended to...clarify what can be known, but rather to ‘clarify’ what cannot be known.”⁷⁸ Biometrics generate an interface, one that aids in the process of making legible the potential for disorder that remain hidden within a populations’ ‘black boxes’.

Apprehending this thing that cannot be known involves tying together the speculative and the material. In this complex landscape, the enemy must be induced to appear by way of his relationships to other things: distant spaces, remnants of IEDs, contacts with other suspicious individuals and monies, all of which are located beyond the spatial limits of any individual encounter. The enemy body is not necessarily visible as an object, but as composite of relationships between a body and other things: the enemy is relational. Unlike the intimate and disordered practices of battlefield apprehensions past, battlefield capture is here reimagined as a relatively banal organizational process, the technological sorting of certain actors from the fluid field of the population through ‘enrollment’.

This is done in the space of the encounter by connecting a very real bodily location to its “textually mediated physicality” in the form of paper, data trails, and the latent fingerprints and bodily traces taken from items found in the field: exploded IED

⁷⁷ Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*, 87.

⁷⁸ Bottomley and Moore, “From Walls to Membranes,” 181.

fragments, books, computers, etc.⁷⁹ Bodies have an “enlarged silhouette” that, when examined through digital biometrical lenses, reveals affiliations that link the black box of their physicality with their “financial, communicational, and informational prostheses.”⁸⁰ These prostheses—data shadows—are invisible. If the extended body of the relational enemy is to be targeted and apprehended, specific technologies are required to render that body legible.

In this landscape of unstructured threat, the objective is no longer to capture and evacuate enemy bodies from the frontlines of the battlefield, but increasingly to conjure enemies within fields of data, thereby enabling certain “ways of acting upon indeterminate threats in the present.”⁸¹ New technologies of rule target not only the hearts and minds of the population, perform not only the task of distinguishing ‘friends’ from ‘enemies’, but seek to extract the enemy’s very existence from an incredibly complex relational landscape. This is not to say that the enemy does not exist, but rather that it is necessary that he, a target whose affiliations are not evident through a consistent, organized and overt bodily violence, manifest himself via a field of information in order to be understood. “The hard part in a counterinsurgency campaign, in a counterterrorism campaign,” John Nagl says of this distance between the *acts* of war and the actual spaces of apprehension, “isn't killing your enemy; it's finding your enemy.”⁸² Such a challenge not only reconfigures the spatiality of a site of encounter and evacuation, it alters the requirements that need to be met in order for

⁷⁹ Shapiro, “The New Violent Cartography,” 301.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Simon, “Suspicious Encounters,” 160.

⁸² Nagl, “Frontline: Obama’s War.”

such a site to exist.

Finding and apprehending the wartime prisoner becomes a problem of communications, data-gathering, and information (not just for troops, but for an expanding population of administrators and databases as well) before it becomes a problem of sequestration, housing, or feeding. Analysts sift through aggregated and coded information, data that has been subjected to sorting algorithms, in an attempt to capture bodies that will lead to both the sequestration of an enemy and the production and storage of yet more information. Wartime detention has become an increasingly central part of the global data landscape, and this global data landscape, in return, is equally constitutive of the war prison. Whereas one used to capture bodies to gain control of the battlefield and garner timely tactical information, one now generates copious amounts of information via distributed technologies to approximate that control of the battlefield and, in certain instances, to capture bodies, or to kill..

Biometrics: Multimodal Bodies of Knowledge

“The bodily trace remains”
—Francis Galton, *Fingerprints* 1892

“Data don’t die.”
—Thomas Y. Levin, 2010

In the past decade, a new form of capture premised on the acquisition and distribution of digital biometric information has begun to redefine military detention. As biometric enrollment has become more common on the battleground and the

information it procures wirelessly distributed to civilian and military databases, identity is increasingly linked to a series of relational effects—group affiliations, family histories, travel itineraries, banking records—of which the physical body is just one manifestation. Such advanced (and rapidly advancing) digital biometrics regimes allow military forces to *look into* the population instead of *looking at* them, and enable the military to “assess measurable physiological and behavioral characteristics that establish an individual’s identity with certainty.”⁸³ Flitting between data capture and bodily capture at the speed of bandwidth, this kind of apprehension remaps the topologies of wartime insecurity. It plots them into an anticipatory framework that circumvents the problematic of “friend or foe” by submitting entire populations to a networked field of circulating, calculable, and relational data.

‘Analog’ biometrics have long been used in state identification practices—most commonly through the fingerprinting of criminals, suspected criminals, and disciplinary subjects. What is particularly interesting for the present study, however, is the fact that they have also long been associated with detainment. One of the first consistent uses of biometrics was in British Bengal, where fingerprinting (or handprinting) was integrated into early colonial contracts.⁸⁴ It soon became a primary form of identification in Indian jails, thereby anchoring the practice of biometric identification in the history of colonial

⁸³ The Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Military Police and Counterinsurgency Operations Operation Iraqi Freedom Initial Impressions Report (IIR)*, 107.

⁸⁴ Colonial magistrate William Herschel used a full handprint of Rajyadar Konai, a pensioner, as a signature on a contract. For Paul Rabinow, this was a distinctly modern use of biometrics, in that it was “analytic, systematic, and utilitarian.” Rabinow, “Galton’s Regret and DNA Typing,” 59

detainment.⁸⁵

The colonial ‘boomerang effect’ identified by Stephen Graham meant that fingerprinting soon made its way to the West, where its primary function was to identify and apprehend criminals.⁸⁶ After being successfully used in a murder case in 1892, the practice spread quickly: the New York State prison system has used this form of biometrics since 1903, and the National Bureau of Criminal Identification, an entity built on biometrics, was established in 1905. In fact, it wasn’t until the U.S. Department of Justice enabled a more widespread collection of citizen fingerprints in 1924 that the practice was formalized outside the criminal justice system. During the Second World War, Roosevelt signed the Alien Registration Act, which called for the fingerprinting of all aliens over the age of fourteen; biometrics were formally integrated into social space, then, as a reaction to crime, internal war, and forms of colonial visibility and paranoia. This legacy can be traced forward to the present day, where the association of fingerprinting with incarceration and a surrender of privacy is frequently—at least domestically—the foundation for political resistance by privacy groups and civil libertarians.

Modern day digital biometrics are not only reactive, but preemptive as well. Like analog fingerprinting and ID cards, they differentiate between persons by reducing them to discrete, manageable bits of data. Yet they also have a significantly greater use

⁸⁵ Sengoopta importantly shows that routine identification of civilians, as opposed to criminals, would have been unthinkable at the time in the British metropole, but that “[t]he body of the colonial subject, however, was another matter altogether.” Sengoopta, *Imprint of the Raj*, 203.

⁸⁶ Graham, writing after Foucault, argues that boomerang effects are evident in the myriad forms of control that were initially used in colonial spaces to control occupied populations and then enter the domestic landscape. Graham, *Cities Under Siege*.

value than the older classificatory regimes, since they can connect users to networked information infrastructures. This ‘multimodal identification’ is searchable and interchangeable across multiple identification databases.⁸⁷ As Ansorge notes, each discrete (yet interfaced) digital database, when compiled and ‘viewed’ in conjunction with others, enables security agencies “to profile and encode people according to degrees of riskiness.”⁸⁸ ‘Risk scores’ are created, by mining information following a set of basic, repeatable steps:

- Assemble a large amount of differently sourced properties of individuals or groups;
- Quantify these properties by turning them into calculable values;
- Aggregate these values into a score, be it a risk, support, credit, or merit score;
- Categorize the initial individuals or groups, on the basis of that score, into new groups;
- Act and differentiate your strategies on the basis of the newly created groups.⁸⁹

Digital biometrics are thus aimed at enabling an automatic and automated interpretation of the relationship between bodies and a fluid field of information (that body’s past activities, and increasingly, what it has bought and where it has been) in order to facilitate a specific decision. To validate or invalidate movement; to establish the parameters for detainment; to allow safe passage; or to assure that an encounter ends with release —such decisions are now made using diverse and frequently mobile interfaces of control that are intricately interwoven with the machinations of everyday

⁸⁷ Mordini and Massari, “Body, Biometrics and Identity.”

⁸⁸ Ansorge, “Digital Power in World Politics,” 70.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

life in contemporary capitalism.⁹⁰

Biological markers must be digitized in order to be used; in modern war, they are subjected to the algorithmic interface of the biometric scanner.⁹¹ When a person is biometrically enrolled on the battlefield, their data is encoded and run through ‘on board’ databases for matches, including hits on biometrically enabled watch-lists. As of April of this year, the main watch-list in Afghanistan contained the names and bodily information on over 33,000 Afghans.⁹² The data is also wirelessly sent to BIMA’s headquarters in Clarksville, West Virginia where it is processed, analyzed, and stored. In Clarksville, data flows through another series of algorithms to determine if the captured information resonates with existing records or latent prints pulled from objects in the field [Fig. 6.3]. Through these processes of enrollment and data acquisition, the bodies of potential ‘friend’ and potential ‘enemy’ alike are entered into a database that is indifferent to their status as either. If the ‘Enemy’ changes, however, a modification of

⁹⁰ So central are these new identification technologies to the spatiality of neoliberalism that states in the developing world are now organizing into blocks that will utilize biometric passports that will enable them to “implement the principle of free movement of persons.” “SecurLinx: Biometrics Part of Plan for Central African Development.”

⁹¹ Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*; Mackenzie, “The Performativity of Code.”

⁹² Government Accountability Office, *Defense Biometrics*, 8. These onboard watch-lists are subsets of much larger lists maintained by BIMA in West Virginia and the National Ground Intelligence Center in Virginia.

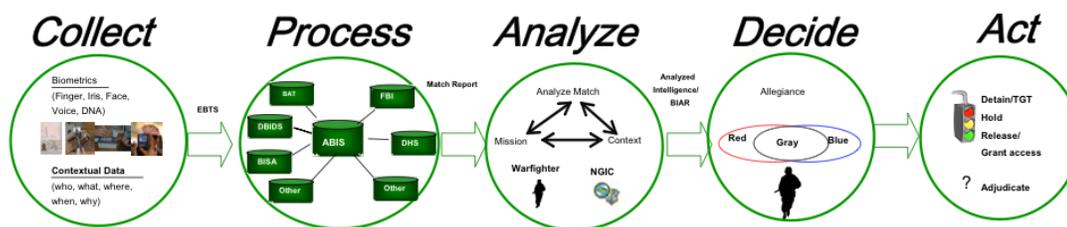


Figure 6.3: Biometrics Sequence ‘Support Requirements’

From: Dee, “Department of Defense Biometrics: NDIA Disruptive Technologies.”

the search algorithms can reveal a new enemy population lurking in the fields of data.

In West Virginia, Certified Latent Print Examiners (CLPE) compare a growing archive of digitized latent fingerprints gleaned from surfaces in Iraq and Afghanistan—many of them from the fragments of IED events.⁹³ These distant examiner-agents exist as a sort of bureaucratic mirror to the drone pilot’s distant violence, an extension and geographic distribution of the soldier’s body. But rather than deploying lethal force from an Air Force Base in Nevada, as a drone pilot does, the latent print examiners calculate a risk score, which is then returned to the field; it is this score that articulates the captor’s proper course of action. These analysts see themselves as a direct part of the extensive battlespace: “Our examiners are protecting the warfighter,” said one CLPE, “and I think that is one of the most exciting things about what we do.”

They are an integral part of this digitized iteration of late modern war. Derek Gregory has outlined the many ways in which the drone assemblage works to shorten the ‘kill-chain’ of aerial bombardment, reducing the amount of time between locating a

⁹³ Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Identify/Enable/Protect: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2011*.

target and destroying it.⁹⁴ In a rather strange inversion of this space-time compression, the encounter's dependence on distant spaces of decision-making lengthens, mediates, and distributes the geographic footprint of the 'capture chain'. Historically, the decision to capture was made on-the-spot and on the battlefield by soldiers who often flouted both official regulation and the GPW. When digital biometrics were first deployed in theater, this same decision took anywhere from 22 minutes to fifteen days, and was enabled by an analyst in the heart of the American coal country.⁹⁵

Here, the space between capture and the camp is charted by groups of geographically distributed people operating on multiple technological interfaces: warfighters and agents with enrollment devices in the field; analysts, algorithms, and computer processors in West Virginia. The acts of classification and transduction performed at and through these interfaces "turn the individual body into a witness against" itself—establishing connections between their particular identity, reducible to their physical body, and their expanded relational data shadow.⁹⁶ In fact, just as the database does not distinguish between enemy and friend, the biometric scanner does not differentiate between life and death. Usable data can still be harvested up to six hours after a body is pronounced dead; it outlives its source.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Gregory, "From a View to a Kill Drones and Late Modern War."

⁹⁵ Multiple factors contribute to the time it takes to transmit biometrics data from the warfighter to the DoD databases and back. These factors include: Biometrics architecture itself, connectivity challenges caused by geographic location, heavy demand for data on infrastructure, and modifications in mission requirements.

⁹⁶ Van der Ploeg, "The Illegal Body," 301. Cited in Ceyhan, "Technologization of Security: Management of Uncertainty and Risk in the Age of Biometrics," 118.

⁹⁷ "Biometrics in Afghanistan."

Wartime security has become a question of revealing traces and connections across global space, of pinning down the un-localizable threat of the unstructured enemy. At the biometric interface, war is now primarily forensic: it is chiefly concerned with uncovering evidence about current enemy actors and establishing an infrastructure to sort future ones.⁹⁸ This is evident in the promotional literature for BIMA's biometrics regimes:

“An unknown enemy launches dozens of IED attacks across Afghanistan. Can his identity be found out of the ashes? A Navy boarding team intercepts a suspicious freighter off the coast of Somalia. Are they friends or foes? A driver approaches the gate of a US military post. Is she an employee or an intruder? There is a technology that can verify access; a technology that can distinguish friend from foe; a technology that can stop terrorists before they strike again... biometrics.”⁹⁹

However, the translation that occurs in these interfaces is cause for concern. Once life has been mediated by technical devices, once “[s]ound and image, voice and text are reduced to surface effects” inside the database, then “everything becomes a number: quantity without image, sound, or voice.”¹⁰⁰ And once life itself has been successfully transduced and rendered into a standardized, replicable string of code, this data becomes incredibly mobile and pliable. A searchable database can flatten the distinctions between corporeal matter, financial transactions, geographic locations and social relations. Just what is lost in these transductions of life into data, however, remains impossible to determine, lost in the “untranslatable affective gaps” of

⁹⁸ Along with other systems such as the Automated Identity Management System (AMIS), the Joint Expeditionary Forensic Facility (JEFF), the Combined Explosives Exploitation Cell (CEXC) and older ‘reach-back’ capabilities, Biometrics Enabled Intelligence is listed as a key part of the analytical and expeditionary forensics labs in theater. In 2012, there were 7 forensics labs in Iraq and 8 in Afghanistan. See: Tom Dee (Director, Defense Biometrics), “The State of DoD Biometrics.”

⁹⁹ Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Biometrics 2012*.

¹⁰⁰ Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 1.

bioinformatic legibility.¹⁰¹ “With numbers,” as media theorist Friedrich Kittler writes, “everything goes.”¹⁰²

Security advocates applaud the technological drive towards ‘identity dominance,’ but for its critics, it has been the harbinger of biometric surveillance into the spaces of circulation of contemporary capitalism. Both do, however, agree that the expansive transactional space of the database facilitates data about just about anything going anywhere.¹⁰³

Author Naomi Wolf, for instance, warns in a recent opinion piece that “if you think that 24/7 tracking of citizens by biometric recognition systems is paranoid fantasy, just read the industry newsletters.”¹⁰⁴ Interestingly enough, her analysis turns to detention, arrest, and the temporality of preemption and prevention as she writes:

“What is very obvious is that this technology will not be applied merely to people under arrest, or to people under surveillance in accordance with the fourth amendment (suspects in possible terrorist plots or other potential crimes, *after* law enforcement agents have already obtained a warrant from a magistrate). No, the “targets” here are me and you: everyone, all of the time. In the name of “national security”, the capacity is being built to identify, track and document any citizen constantly and continuously.”¹⁰⁵

Yet even these necessary critiques of power do a significant amount of work to erase the uneven geographies that are actually at work in the production of the databases in the first place. Biometric technologies have a broadened scope and landscape of

¹⁰¹ Apter, *The Translation Zone*, 64.

¹⁰² Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 1.

¹⁰³ This ‘footloose’ digital information is also troubling because its acquisition and distribution is not simply within the purview of the state, but increasingly “companies and private actors can also have it.” See Anson, “Digital Power in World Politics,” 74.

¹⁰⁴ Wolf, “The New Totalitarianism of Surveillance Technology.”

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

applicability, where “all individuals are subject to technological identification and surveillance.”¹⁰⁶ We are all targets, but some are targeted more often than others, and in more invasive ways. While “[i]nformation and data fluidity” between and among different agencies operating at different scales makes it “difficult to determine where information came from originally,” this does not mean that the location of information acquisition and encounter is indistinguishable or unimportant.¹⁰⁷

One of the dangers of focusing on the power of databases and code is that such emphasis transforms the battlefield into information. We find ourselves analyzing war without blood, without bodies—as we did in the Persian Gulf. While the database itself may manage environments indifferently, then, it is nevertheless important to remember that the practices of lethal force on the battlefield remain, and that different bodies are differently exposed to the precarity of life in the warzone. The risk is that we assume that because the modes of control have infiltrated and enable the transactional spaces of the West to such a degree that they are no longer visible in control societies, they then must be indifferent to the information that constitutes and is constituted by them.

In his analysis of digital power, Anson concludes that “sovereignty is a sorting practice and that the central feature of modernity is to be ranked and sorted by a sovereign with a *technically neutral tool and methodology*.”¹⁰⁸ Yet an inspection of how these digital databases are produced challenges the presumed neutrality not just of the

¹⁰⁶ Ceyhan, “Technologization of Security: Management of Uncertainty and Risk in the Age of Biometrics,” 103.

¹⁰⁷ Lynch, *From Fingerprints to DNA*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Anson, “Digital Power in World Politics,” 67. Italics mine.

code underpinning the database, but of the sites of encounter where such information is generated. Any analysis of the power of data should include a caveat stating that while these new technologies are indifferent to the question of “whether its ‘targets’ are located in Manhattan or Baghdad, London or Fallujah,” the site of data production itself is both of vital and varying importance.¹⁰⁹

The disequilibrium between data gathered on the battlefield, say, versus data captured in a shopping mall is often overlooked, especially by Western security scholars in the thrall of the Orwellian implications of the “global informatics archive to which we are constantly tethered.”¹¹⁰ The archive, however, is a process of *archiving*, and the sites and practices of encounter that produce the information to be archived are not neutral, but geographically, ideologically, and politically discrete. While this has been underlined in recent studies of the act of border-making, the textures and technologies that go into the production of legibility in American war have remained largely peripheral.¹¹¹

While these transgressions into the domestic sphere and the rampant militarization of everyday life in the US are certainly troubling, the US has moved forward with at least a modicum of restraint when directing new digital biometrics programs at its domestic populations.¹¹² When it comes to describing and documenting

¹⁰⁹ Graham, “When Life Itself Is War,” 142,143.

¹¹⁰ Lockwood and Coley, *Cloud Time*, 1.

¹¹¹ For instance, see: Martin, “Bombs, Bodies, and Biopolitics: Securitizing the Subject at the Airport Security Checkpoint”; Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*; Simon, “Suspicious Encounters”; Martin, “Catch and Remove”; Amoore, “Data Derivatives”; Epstein, “Embodying Risk: Using Biometrics to Protect the Border”; Amoore and Hall, “Taking People Apart”; de Goede, *Speculative Security*.

¹¹² See, for instance, the NYPD’s recent discussion of digital biometric recordkeeping and prison populations. The NYPD states that it destroys the data once the prisoner’s court case is decided, limiting the uproar from privacy activists. Rivera and Baker, “N.Y. Police Take Photos of Suspects’

populations that represent external threat and disorder, however, the government is in the constant pursuit of new techniques. Such debates do not occur in the contexts of occupied Afghanistan or Iraq, where military occupations lasting over a decade do the work of deciding the limits of privacy and security. Highlighting the militarization of the 'center' can divert attention from the difference between the many iterations biometric encounters can take, and the many geographies through which they occur.

It is equally important to acknowledge that the use of digital biometrics in itself is not exclusively a function of a repressive power. Alan Sekula explores the complications that emerge at the intersection between the body and the landscape of apprehension in his writing about the photographic construction of the bodily archive. He discusses the relationship between the criminal portrait and the ceremonial portrait, arguing that the photographic object itself emerges as "a double system: a system of representation capable of functioning both *honorifically* and *repressively*."¹¹³ This double system is thus capable of simultaneously facilitating "the arrest of [its] referent," while working, in another spatial and historical context, to provide "for the ceremonial presentation of the bourgeois *self*."¹¹⁴ The result of this simultaneity is a "covert Hobbesian logic" that "links the terrain of the 'National Gallery' with that of the 'Police Act.'"¹¹⁵ Photography, like biometrics, functions to provide or restrict access to space.

Irises." Even in the regulation and governance of migrants in the US, the scale of enrollment pales in comparison to the generalized practice aimed at the entire population of Afghanistan.

¹¹³ Sekula, "The Body and the Archive," 6.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 7. Are these italics his or yours?

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Biometrics also enable certain bodies to pass through thresholds of their choosing while obviating the possibility for others. But the biometric body is not understood as being distinct from the material body, as a photograph can move independently of its subject. Unlike the portrait, the biometrical eschews the coherency of the 2D photograph in favor of a composite multimodal image that contains both visual and computational information. This image, however, is not usually an image at all, but a mathematical representation drawn from the transductions into a template. The initial image—the ‘picture’—can either be stored in the database or discarded.¹¹⁶

Such multimodal biometrics bring together multiple forms of evidence compiled by multiple sources of information into one file. This data is central to what the military calls ‘identity dominance’, which allows American forces to:

- Tie individuals to a claimed identity – for life
- Associate individuals to locations, events, and times
- Facilitate interdiction of insurgents hiding among a civilian populace
- To find, fix, track, target, and interdict/influence individuals vice groups
- Make military operations more precise, people and operations more secure
- Manage detainees and identifying recidivists
- Perform background screening of employees
- Screen those persons accessing bases/installations
- Improve security on combat security patrols, Maritime operations, and Forensic Investigations¹¹⁷

Biometric enrollment, then, subjects bodies to a particular form of state visibility. But just as the multimodal image is not really an image, this visibility is not really a question of seeing. Rather, it is the instance, the algorithmic trace, the particular formulae that

¹¹⁶ Lynch, *From Fingerprints to DNA*, 5.

¹¹⁷ Troy E. Techau (US Army Directorate of Intelligence, US Central Command), “Identity Dominance: Enhancing Military Operations Using Biometrics Technologies.”

the State uses to parse out important information from the noise.¹¹⁸ Nobody, as Mario Carpo notes:

“would try to judge the creditworthiness of a credit card by looking at it, in the way one would peruse a banknote or inspect its watermark. Visual identification is now out of the game. In this instance, exactly transmissible but invisible algorithms have already replaced all visual and physical traces of authenticity.”¹¹⁹

The same holds true for the objectified bodies in counterinsurgency; the way a body looks reveals nothing about its relationships to other bodies or to enemy practices. But visualizing data, and the induction of truths from that data, has allowed American forces to overcome their decades-long struggle to see another person in the space of the encounter.

Biometrics are used not just to log detainee identity, but also to create what has been called a biometric or ubiquitous border—a mobile threshold, a spatial interface through which one can only pass if cleared by both the deciphering algorithms and the agents who read the device’s screen.¹²⁰ In the biometric database, the physical body is both referent object and its representation. ‘Donated’ information rests adjacent to information that was acquired at the barrel of a gun. “The importance of biometrics,” says BIMA’s Col. Douglas Flour, “is the ability to identify friend from foe at the tip of

¹¹⁸ Or, as Anson asks, “What is seeing like a state when the state sees through databases?” Anson, “Digital Power in World Politics,” 73.

¹¹⁹ Carpo, *The Alphabet and the Algorithm*, 3,4. He continues “Indeed, for online transactions the physical existence of the card is neither required nor verifiable. The first way to confirm the validity of a credit card is to run a check on the sixteen-digit sequence of its number using a simple algorithm, known as Luhn's formula, which in most cases (statistically, nine times out of ten) is enough to detect irregularities.”

¹²⁰ Amore, “Biometric Borders.”; Graham, *Cities Under Siege*, 132.

the spear.”¹²¹ People forced to inhabit landscapes of war plotted by imperial expansion and military force encounter the relational body not through the innocuous thresholds of honorific mobilities, but through the application (or the threat of application) of force. The interface is literally thrust upon them.

HIIDE and SEEK: Biometrics Collection in Theater

“Knowledge may be power. But for the U.S. military, it’s also a weapon system.”
—*BIMA Annual Report 2011*

The military is incredibly optimistic about the deployment of electronic personal data as an extension of the detention assemblage. As one journalist recently noted, the enrollment of data is itself seen as a vital tool for implementing one of the key principles of counterinsurgency theory: “that the population needs to be separated from insurgents.”¹²² Interviews with soldiers have demonstrated that they know that “leveraging the power of biometrics can be the difference between detaining, retaining, or releasing an insurgent and preventing an incident or picking up the pieces.”¹²³ On the forensic battlefield, then, the digital biometrics regime has led to the apprehension of over 3,000 enemy combatants in Afghanistan and almost 900 “high value individuals worldwide.”¹²⁴

¹²¹ Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Identify/Enable/Protect: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2011*, 19.

¹²² Boone, “US Army Amasses Biometric Data in Afghanistan.”

¹²³ The Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Military Police and Counterinsurgency Operations Operation Iraqi Freedom Initial Impressions Report (IIR)*, 108.

¹²⁴ Government Accountability Office, *Defense Biometrics*, 16.; Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Biometrics 2012*.

Source	Description	Biometric
Biometrics Automated Toolset (BAT)	Enemy combatants, detainees, locally employed personnel (LEP), misc. fingerprinted by the U.S. military; used for intel functions, LEP processing, detention management	Various Flat or Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris
Biometric Identification System for Access (BISA)	Base Access System where biometrics are collected from persons requiring access to U.S. installations in Iraq; issues biometrically-enabled badge as credential	Ten Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris
Multi-Purpose Access Card (MPAC)	Iraqi applying for a position of trust or privilege with Iraqi Gov't; some stations are being use for criminal processing	Ten Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, Iris, & Voice
Expanded Maritime Interception Operation (eMIO)	Deployed on Navy patrols performing interception and boarding operations on the high seas	Ten Flat or Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris
Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Jump Kits	Deployed with SOF troops on tactical missions.	Various Flat or Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris
Detainee Reporting Systems (DRS)	Detainee Management, collecting biometrics from all detainees held for more than 14 days and assigned an ISN number; Red Cross-compliant	Ten Rolled Fingerprint & Photo
Defense Biometric Identification System (DBIDS)	Base access system; collects biometrics from all personnel accessing US bases, including soldiers, government employees, civilians, contractors, day workers, etc.	Ten Rolled Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris
Hand-held Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDE)	Tactical operations by OGA in Iraq, 10th Mtn Div in Afghanistan; also used in detention facilities	Flat Fingerprint, Photo, & Iris

Table 6.2: Biometrically Enabled Systems in Theater¹²⁵

Digital biometrics are so central to the manifestation of the interface between inside and outside—to making the detainee—that no fewer than six of the eight biometric systems in use in Iraq and Afghanistan are directly involved in detainee capture or administration [Table 6.2].¹²⁶ In just two cases, where the function of

¹²⁵ Tom Dee (Director, Defense Biometrics), “Department of Defense Biometrics: NDIA Disruptive Technologies.”

¹²⁶ The SOCOM jump kit is vital to enrolling HVT in the field, and the eMIO can be used to enroll persons apprehended while at sea, because, as LCDR Ken Wasson of the Navy notes, “With two-thirds of the world covered by water, there’s a good chance targets will try and go somewhere by boat.” Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Identify/Enable/Protect: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2011*, 34.

biometric enrollment is to secure access to vulnerable or high-security areas, does a biometrically enabled ID badge serve an honorific function—to *enable* movement. Further, detainee populations themselves are being enrolled as a matter of course.¹²⁷ Thus the enrollment process brings the information body ‘inside’ the purview of the detention assemblage, while maintaining the biological body ‘outside’. In a recent review of counterinsurgency operations in Iraq, Army analysts noted as much, stating that one of the key successes of biometrics has been their proficiency at seaming together data across this threshold, synchronizing “collected biometrics on detainees to biometrics being collected on the outside during current operations.”¹²⁸

This synchronization of data across spatial thresholds dramatically accelerated in 2004, when a wave of insurgent violence in the cities of Mosul and Fallujah in Iraq led the Department of Defense to intensify its identification programs there. In order to facilitate this, Fallujah was garrisoned and all persons moving in and out of security zones had to be documented and enrolled in the upstart biometric database.¹²⁹ These initial attempts to deploy digital biometric technologies in theater were limited to fixed geographic locations like checkpoints and access points to government compounds: enclosing the city behind physical and digital walls. While the enclosure of Fallujah had transformed security within the city, its efficacy was limited by the fact that the majority of soldiers in the field—those who encountered the population on a regular basis—were using different enrollment systems that did not interface with one

¹²⁷ Ackerman, “U.S. Scans Afghan Inmates for Biometric Database.”

¹²⁸ The Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Military Police and Counterinsurgency Operations Operation Iraqi Freedom Initial Impressions Report (IIR)*, 108.

¹²⁹ At this time, the DoD was also beginning to enroll all detainees into the databases.

another. Another complication was that their physical location often meant they could not establish successful connections to the military internet. Updates to the system were therefore slow, sometimes taking up to a week for new enrollees to be added to the main databases. Thus the soldiers in the field, those who would find current information most useful, had limited access to either biometric databases or intelligence reports.

In 2007, upon taking over the command of US operations in Iraq, General David Petraeus—co-author of the newly revised *Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24*—ordered an increase in biometric scans to keep pace with the military’s troop surge he was charged with implementing.¹³⁰ Subsequently, massive amounts of biometric and geo-locational information (including biographical reports and interrogation reports from within the detention apparatus) gathered from across a broad array of spaces were entered into the Defense Department’s Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS) database. Data housed in the ABIS database, which is built by Lockheed-Martin and located with BIMA at the Defense Department’s forensic data center in West Virginia, acts as a catalogue of occupied populations and links the bodies of those scanned to an increasingly mobile infrastructure of detainment.

Between 2006 and 2007, then, the U.S. military’s digital enrollment of biometric information hit full stride in Iraq and Afghanistan. It was so effective that many, like Col. Natalie Jacaruso, a military deputy for BIMA, viewed the expansion of biometrics in

¹³⁰ Shanker, “To Track Militants, U.S. Has System That Never Forgets a Face.”

Afghanistan as a “game changer” and a fully “operational weapons system” by 2011.¹³¹

To turn the bodies that make up a population into a weapons system (that is directed back at them) relies on establishing an array of interfaces for enrollment.

In addition to the above-mentioned spatially-fixed checkpoints, the practice of using recently developed handheld devices—like the Biometric Automated Toolsets (BAT), Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment (HIIDE), and the Secure Electronic Enrollment Kit (SEEK) technologies—has emerged in encounters across the two theaters. These three technologies each function slightly differently. BATs, for instance, consist of a suite of peripheral devices connected to a laptop computer. While they require the establishment of a fixed workstation or checkpoint, in Afghanistan they also interface with approximately 150 computer servers across the country allowing Army and Marine units to enroll persons of interest, track them, and integrate documents like interrogation reports into their files. Both HIIDE and SEEK are self-contained handheld devices that are used by Army and Marine Corps (HIIDE) and Special Operations (SEEK) in a diverse array of spaces and interpersonal encounters. While the information architecture differs between military branches and the specific biometric tools they use, each produces a multimodal subject portfolio composed of iris, fingerprint, and facial images that are stored in and checked off of the ‘on-board’ “watch-list” database and also wirelessly sent to ABIS in West Virginia or other external databases. In a nod to the geographically fluid nature of the battlespace, these devices also have the capacity to produce multiple mission-specific watch-lists that account for

¹³¹ Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Biometrics 2012*.



Figure 6.4: HIIDE Enrollment Device



Figure 6.5: SEEK Enrollment Device

“rules of engagement, status of forces agreements and the laws of armed conflict that vary by country and mission.”¹³²

While each device meets these baseline criteria, their capabilities are constantly expanding. The SEEK II, for instance, widely rumored to be the unit that the Navy SEALs used to verify the corpse of bin Laden, combines the multimodal enrollment capability with an e-passport and magnetic ID card reader. These additions extend the depth of the subject’s data portfolio and enable a credentials-matching device for people needing to be identified in the field.¹³³ The most recent devices—like those piloted in the Army’s Last Tactical Mile program—aim to move biometric capacities beyond static operations and out into the kinetic landscape of tactical operations, which ultimately requires reducing the amount of time necessary between enrollment and generating an

¹³² Biometrics Identity Management Agency, *Identify/Enable/Protect: Annual Report, Fiscal Year 2011*, 13. The biometrics market is projected to reach \$10.02 billion by 2014. See: “Press Release: Global Biometrics Market Forecast and Opportunities, 2017.”

¹³³ *Cross Match at the 2011 Biometric Consortium Conference.*

accurate match in the database [Fig 6.6]. After expanding the ‘capture chain’ to up to 15 days, then, the Army is doing its best to reduce the time-to-match to below 2 minutes.

HIIDE and SEEK devices have required a transformation in the actions of soldiers as well.¹³⁴ If a database query yields a ‘hit’, the device alerts its user to the enrollee’s risk score. These risk profiles turn all banal encounters between civilians and the military (and its state security proxies) into potential sites of bodily apprehension. The risk score presents the warfighter in the field with a clear series of potential decisions, and underwrites them with the authority of the database and its code. Presented with a series of possible actions, the combatant is faced not with a fleeting choice between kill or capture, but with an automated set of risky tiers which run a gamut from detention to mere job disqualification [Table 6.3]. The decision is greatly effected by the design of the technical parameters of the devices themselves. Thus the decision to detain is not brought on by situational awareness or by an understanding of immediate threat or danger, but an algorithmic interpretation of potential future riskiness as presented to the captor by a technical device.

While the device itself presents the user with a set of automated risk variables, we cannot remain naïve to the fact that by abrogating agency to the automated processes of the machine itself, we simply replace the soldier’s version of truth with the machine’s. The veracity of the information that leads to the decision is here buttressed by an underlying faith that, because actions are automated, the machine’s conclusions are likely true. But the decision trees of biometric systems can and do frequently

¹³⁴ Kitchin and Dodge, *Code/Space*; Martin, “Bombs, Bodies, and Biopolitics: Securitizing the Subject at the Airport Security Checkpoint.”

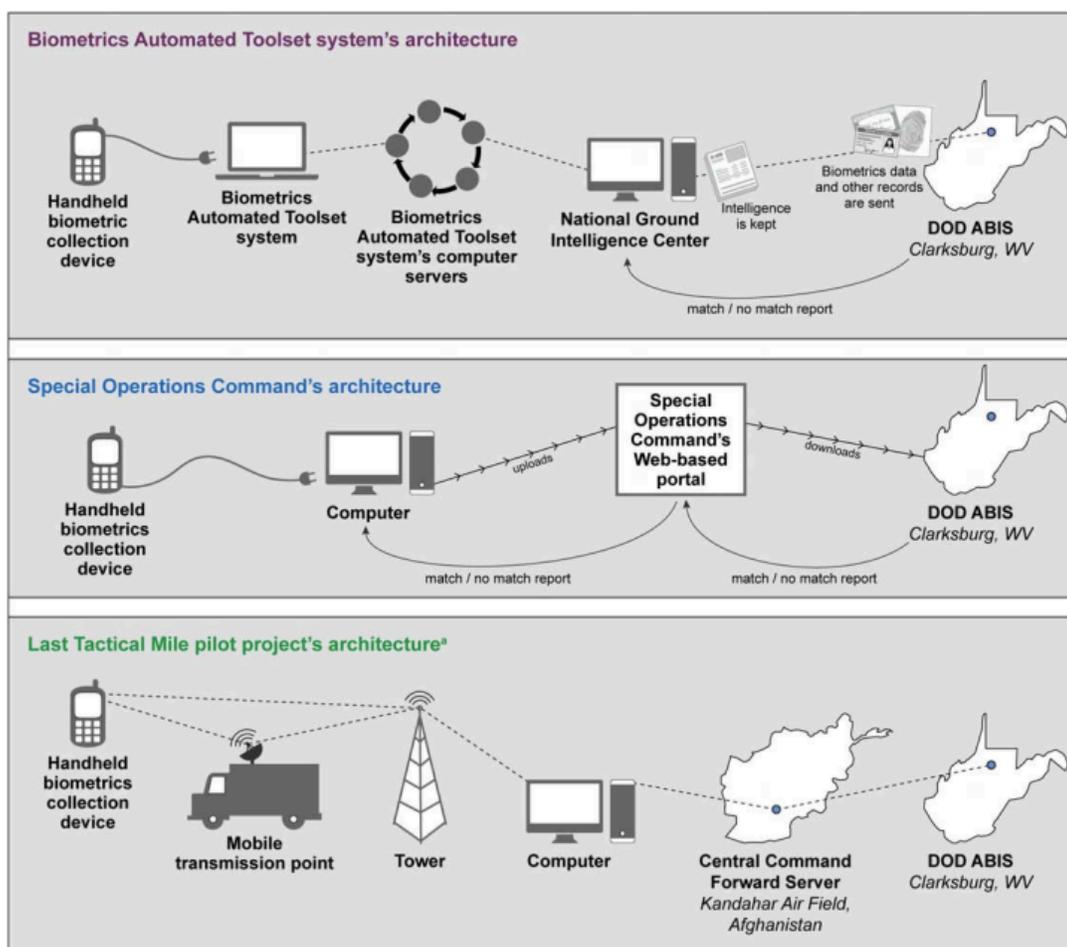


Figure 6.6: Distributed Decision-making; Three Biometrics System Architectures
(From Government Accountability Office, *Defense Biometrics*.)

contain administrative errors. Many of these arise in the process of enrolling, but some emerge through redundancies and complexities of the database structures themselves. In the summer of 2011, for example, Army officials determined that of the more than 33,000 people on Afghanistan's biometrically enabled watch-list, approximately 4,000 of the biometrical files collected from 2004 to 2008 had become separated from their associated identities and 1,800 remained separated as of October 2011.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ The Army concluded that these divisions in the data body were most likely due to synchronization issues during the data transmission process. Government Accountability Office, *Defense Biometrics*, 18. "Data synchronization is the process of establishing consistency among data

Watch List Tier	Action	Quantity
Tier 1	Detain if Encountered	1,929
Tier 2	Detain for Questioning	108
Tier 3	Collect and Enroll, US Government	0
Tier 4	Do not Hire / Deny Base Access / Disqualify for Training	16,213
Tier 5	Deny Base Access	5,997
Tier 6	Track Movement	14
Watch List Total		24,241

Table 6.3: NGIC Iraq & Afghanistan Watch List Totals: 8 August 2008-3 September 2008

(From Brian Hunt, “US Army Biometrics: From HQDA to the Soldier & Back in 420 Seconds.”)

Currently, each 9-man squad in theater is outfitted with a handheld collection device. While the utilization of the equipment varies by unit, the number of enrollments stored in ABIS has grown anywhere from 15%-40% annually over the last several years with over 6.1 million submissions on file.¹³⁶ The use of enrollment devices is not branch specific—they are used by MPs in detainee operations, but importantly by a host of other military personnel, from infantry to field artillery to transportation engineers.¹³⁷ With tools like HIIDE and SEEK, identity processing can occur anywhere, at any moment, for friend and foe alike. And this fusion of friend and enemy enrollment is key to the production of a landscape of control. Thus while Iraqis, for instance, were “added to the database when they [were] determined to be insurgents” or “found near attack sites or detained,” others have more recently been “scanned at their homes, their workplaces, or at checkpoints.”¹³⁸ In areas of increased insecurity and

from a source to a target data storage and vice versa and the continuous harmonization of such data over time.” Problems in data synchronization renders the biometrics them unreliable. Ibid.

¹³⁶ Personal email correspondence with Communications and Outreach Branch of the Biometrics Identity Management Agency, 14 October 2011.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Frank, “Identification Effort Crosses Entire War Zone.”

violence, any men of military age (between the ages of 15 and 70) may be scanned compulsorily.¹³⁹

Digital biometrics enrollment devices render the battlefield encounter as a technical process, establishing a sequence of events and procedures that must occur for an acceptable subject portfolio to be compiled. While the distribution of these devices was already widespread by 2006, with thousands in Iraq and Afghanistan, soldiers primarily learned how to use them in the field and often without official guidance. This led to a proliferation of unreadable captures and incomplete files.¹⁴⁰ Subsequently, the Army established the Training and Doctrine Command Capabilities Manager for Biometrics and Forensics with responsibilities for ensuring that user requirements are considered and incorporated into Army training. Classes are now held at Army, Marine, and Special Operations Command training centers in order to assure that enrollments meet baseline legibility standards.¹⁴¹

However, meeting these standards in the field has been difficult. BIMA itself has identified systemic errors in their biometric databases that commenced at the technological interface, as soldiers and Special Operations units were performing the space of capture. These include:

- Swapped or duplicate fingers within the left and right hands.
- Swapped hands when referencing the flat four slaps versus the individual rolled fingers.
- Flat four images that are captured without all the fingers present. Rolled fingers that are prematurely lifted. Facial images marked as frontal poses

¹³⁹ "Biometrics in Afghanistan."

¹⁴⁰ Lovelace, "Memo: From Department of the Army Headquarters to All Army Activities Subject: Initial Army Biometrics Guidance."

¹⁴¹ Government Accountability Office, *Defense Biometrics*.

- that are not frontal poses. Totally white or black facial images.
- Iris images that have shadow or mirrored eyes present in the image.
- Iris images that are not captured with proper techniques.¹⁴²

In order to introduce the power of biometric control into a population, the users of the devices themselves need to be disciplined. In response to these issues, a host of new procedures have been introduced into the training regimes of troops who will use them in order to control these digitized transactions. Indeed the interface between capture and the camp is defined by these micro-managed performances:

- Moisten enrollee's fingers before capture using the oily areas on the person.
- Slower rolling of individual fingers.
- Avoid tip prints
- Avoid early lifts
- Pay attention to finger sequencing
- Focus on the capture sequencing of fingers.
- Verify iris captures are done properly to avoid the mirror eyes
- Focus on the poses and captures of the face¹⁴³

It is through these training regimes that BIMA and the Department of Defense further discipline the capturing troops at the interface. Once, this control was primarily understood through the ethical dictates of the laws of war and the GPW. The biometric encounter is understood not in these ethical terms, nor the political terms of the conflict itself, but through the terms dictated by banal technical directives and users manuals that dictate the most efficient way of interacting with a technological object. The targeted regulation of the minute bodily performances that typifies these biometric encounters is refined to a degree that exceeds those of more traditional bodily capture.

The capturing soldier has a commitment to apprehending and circulating

¹⁴² Gabriel, "BIMA Quality Control/Accuracy Observations."

¹⁴³ Ibid.

accurate forensic evidence of the encounter. If troops fail to properly administer biometric enrollments, as they often failed to fill out capture cards in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf War, it could mean that a 'high value' individual is not apprehended, or, as cited above, it could be the difference "between detaining, retaining, or releasing an insurgent and preventing an incident or picking up the pieces."¹⁴⁴

It is through harnessing and disciplining soldiers in this exchange that defense officials move a step closer to the technophilic dream of identity dominance across the full spectrum of contemporary war. But this, of course, only considers interacting with biometric devices from one side of their digital gaze. The next section pursues an understanding of the uneven geography of the encounter by approaching the interface from the other side.

Encountering Biometrics: An Uneven Geography of Enrollment

While Defense Department officials see digital biometrics as one of the most important tools in organizing the battlefield, others worry that the data might ultimately serve as a 'hit list,' exposing civilians to violent reprisals and bodily harm.¹⁴⁵ Writing to Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, the Electronic Privacy Information Center wrote that the database itself might also be a weapons system in a way that the coders never intended. The linking of the inescapable human body with permanent

¹⁴⁴ The Center for Army Lessons Learned, *Military Police and Counterinsurgency Operations Operation Iraqi Freedom Initial Impressions Report (IIR)*, 108.

¹⁴⁵ Shachtman, "Iraq's Biometric Database Could Become 'Hit List'."

biometric identifiers in a conflict region “creates an unprecedented human rights risk that could easily be exploited by a future government.”¹⁴⁶ The authors draw attention to the underlying problems of fixing the biological body to the subject’s political identity by noting the colonial legacy of these practices:

“In Rwanda... official identification cards contained ethnic information. The classification system was a remnant from the Belgian colonial government, and was extensively used to identify victims to be killed. To have the word “Tutsi” on an identification card was a death sentence.”¹⁴⁷

As a record of compiled and stored ‘identities’, digital biometrics databases open up the distinct possibility that in attempting to reduce the state’s exposure to risk, a new risk is projected onto the bodies of the civilian population.

One of the troubling realities of having an identity fixed, essentially a marker that permanently ties the body to the ‘fact’ of the self, is that deviations and tweaks to this—many undertaken for self-protection—are rendered as threatening or at the very least suspect. As described in chapter 4, people in warzones have long carried multiple forms of falsified identification to avoid being tied to specific ethnic or political groups, or simply to attempt to remain out of the sight lines of the conflict. Many Iraqis similarly carried multiple identity cards to assure safe movement through different spatial enclaves—so as to avoid becoming targets of reprisal violence. This practice is

¹⁴⁶ Rotenberg, Davies, and Roth, “Letter to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates Regarding US Biometric Identity System of Iraqis,” 3.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid. In another example from 2011, a recently laid off employee of the Israeli Welfare Ministry stole the database—which contained the “name, date of birth, national identification number, and family members of 9 million Israelis, living and dead” as well as “information on the birth parents of hundreds of thousands of adopted Israelis—including children—and detailed health information on individual citizens”—was distributed to members of Israel’s “Hasidic Jewish criminal underworld.” See Ungerleider, “The Dark Side Of Biometrics.” For a recent investigation of the role of IDs in Israel’s occupation of Gaza, see: Tawil-Souri, “Uneven Borders, Coloured (Im)mobilities.”

rendered impossible in biometrically enabled war.

The troubling result of this is that the members of the population who seek to utilize the fluidity of identity practices in order to remain *out* of a conflict, are, by way of these permanent identity markers, drawn headlong into it. In a biometrically enabled war, there is no neutrality—you are what you are and you will deal with the ramifications. The imposition of this particular regime of legibility by an outside surveillance society—with its associated logic that you only have something to hide if you are doing something wrong—is here problematized in a deeply troubling way. Capturing the data of the body thus initiates a new terrain for the violence that the database ostensibly seeks to curtail in the first place.

The gaze of digital security is clearly unevenly directed and unevenly produced. By using hand-held devices in theater, security forces have the ability to scan through millions of digital files in a matter of seconds, from remote locations or chance encounters between civilians and security personnel, turning all interactions into a digitized dialogue with the database and the camp. It is important to note too that the moment when the data body and the biological body are apprehended, there is still an encounter—the body (as information and as biological object) must pass through an interface of some kind that is made possible by a particular organization of human actors and technological systems.

Therefore it is important that we not lose sight of the development of these control practices *in situ*, where, as one article in the *New York Times* notes, a “citizen in Afghanistan or Iraq would almost have to spend every minute in a home village and

never seek government services to avoid ever crossing paths with a biometric system.”¹⁴⁸ Below, I detail this uneven geography of data-gathering by way of two examples: first the biometric enrollment of a Western journalist in Fallujah, and second, that of civilians in the countryside of Afghanistan.

When Fallujah was garrisoned, Noah Shachtman, a journalist for *Danger Room*, *Wired Magazine*'s military technology blog, was embedded in Iraq. From there he posted a number of dispatches highlighting the implementation of this new form of biometric scanning. Writing of the city's 'biometric gates', he noted that in Fallujah, large numbers of Iraqis were getting fingerprinted and iris-scanned as they sought entry into the secure zone.¹⁴⁹ These enrollments were not unlike those that have begun to reproduce the US border at internal checkpoints, airports, and government buildings [Fig. 6.7].¹⁵⁰ But, he continued, at the same time in Baghdad, American reporters were being logged to an even greater degree of detail: getting fingerprinted, iris-scanned, and having numerous headshots taken for face recognition software. "I Wonder," Shachtman asked at the time, "what the implicit message is there?"¹⁵¹

Though a tongue-in-cheek comment about the trustworthiness of journalists, the implicit message is that from a security perspective, Shachtman's movement—indeed *all mobility*—is seen as a locus of risk and threat. As Jeremy Packer puts it, when

¹⁴⁸ Shanker, "To Track Militants, U.S. Has System That Never Forgets a Face."

¹⁴⁹ This system of physically separating entire populations resonates with the Vietnam-era Strategic Hamlet program. Intended to be replicate the 'agrovilles' used in the British counterinsurgency in Malaya, by herding villagers into these fenced-off hamlets, away from the influences of the Viet-Cong. The biometric gates of Baghdad and Fallujah emulate this spatial partitioning, but leave a much less physically imposing trace on the landscape.

¹⁵⁰ Amoores, "Biometric Borders."

¹⁵¹ Shachtman, "Iraq Diary: Fallujah's Biometric Gates (Updated)."

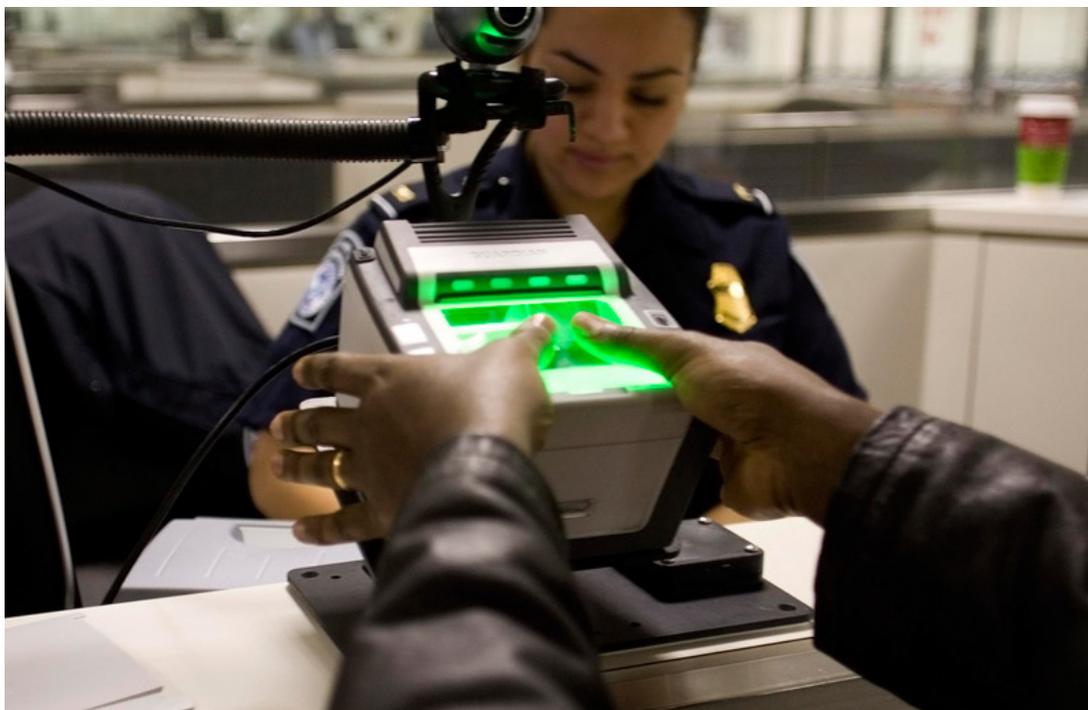


Figure 6.7: Volitional Enrollment at the Biometric Border

mobility is itself seen as a threat, citizens and non-citizens alike—all mobile subjects—“are made enemies in terms of the state’s relationship to them.” Further, in a global war the concept of the enemy is dramatically generalized such that all bodies are “imagined as combatants and all terrain the site of battle.”¹⁵² The journalist is threatening because he is more likely to move, and more likely to seek access to security classified spaces.

Yet something must be said for the fact that Shachtman has chosen, as a Western reporter for a technology magazine, to go to Fallujah. While not specifically honorific, much of the security work done through his enrollment is done with him and his safety in mind: his enrollment is to secure his movement. There is, in this example, at least a basic understanding that the person moving *wants* something, and must meet a security threshold to pass.

¹⁵² Packer, “Becoming Bombs: Mobilizing Mobility in the War on Terror,” 378.

The majority of data that makes its way into these security databases is from similarly volitional sites of exchange and circulation in the global neoliberal economy: airline ticket purchases, credit card transactions, emails, money wires.¹⁵³ These transactions produce an increased amount of visibility in the security archive, while at the same time enabling persons to accomplish some desired goal. But the same cannot be said for the Iraqi in Fallujah or the rural farmer in Afghanistan.

The idea behind the use of the biometric network in Fallujah was, according to the head of the biometrics program in Al-Anbar province in Iraq, quite different. It was not implemented to secure mobilities, but rather to deny them for certain people: to deny “freedom of movement” to insurgents.¹⁵⁴ This digital partitioning of space is, as Amoores and others have noted, evidence of a biometric border, a border “carried by mobile bodies.”¹⁵⁵ The border as a spatial threshold and organizing device, like the battlefield, is imagined as everywhere. This generates a distinctly different security encounter in the field than it does at sites of volitional access. Counter to initial attempts to enclose Fallujah (to problematize all movement), handheld enrollment puts mobility in the service of security.

In a counterinsurgency where the occupying power operates at an information deficit relative to the population within which they circulate, the black box of the

¹⁵³ Bamford, “The NSA Is Building the Country’s Biggest Spy Center (Watch What You Say).”

¹⁵⁴ He continues: “Like Mao said, insurgents are like fish swimming in the sea of the people.” These are the high-tech nets, “to keep ‘em from swimming freely.” Shachtman, “Iraq Diary: Fallujah’s Biometric Gates (Updated).”

¹⁵⁵ Amoores, “Biometric Borders,” 338.

potential threat must be functionalized and made visible and useful to the occupier.¹⁵⁶ Thus, while the mobility of some is understood as a source of threat, for others mobility is also a productive way to generate security. US security forces began to rely on their own mobile military subjects to enact security interfaces across a variety of spaces and times. In the spaces of encounter and enrollment across the Afghan countryside, the honorific elements of biometrics recede: they are not questions of choice, of securing access, or of personal security. Rather, in the borderlands, and specifically in the militarized landscape of wars of occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan, these interactions are quite distinct. In these sites and through these encounters, Sekula's 'honorific' aspects of representational tools recede dramatically.

Consider Shachtman's biometric transductions in relation to two images documenting the digital encounter with handheld devices in Afghanistan. In the first scene we encounter two men in an open field [Fig. 6.8]. A bearded man sits on the stone ground with his legs crossed. The other man, a soldier from the British Royal Air Force, is hunched down in front of him in the sand-colored desert camouflage of the contemporary military. The soldier carries on his person all of the accouterments of late-modern warfare: Kevlar vest, helmet with a hands-free microphone and top-mounted video unit. His hands are projecting out holding what looks like a large camera at the point along the path where their eyes would meet were they looking at each other.

¹⁵⁶ Galloway, "Black Box, Black Bloc."



Figure 6.8: Handheld Biometric Enrollment in Afghanistan
(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kenny Holston)



Figure 6.9: Handheld Biometric Enrollment in Afghanistan
(Copyright Rodrigo Abd/Associated Press; Published in the New York Times 13 July 2011)

The second image [Fig. 6.9] evokes the early 20th century practice of criminal anthropometry, the practice of using detailed measurements of the body to identify (and for some, predict) deviant subjects. Yet the subject here is not a criminal but simply a civilian.¹⁵⁷ Hands from what appear to be three separate soldiers are involved in enrolling the Afghan villager: one holds his head up, the other pushes his eye open, while a third uses a handheld device to document his identity. This is the encounter, the production of a limit between capture and the camp through the performance of counterinsurgency as a sorting process. This transaction sets in motion a host of networked processes that can transform this exchange into a military detainment, and these villagers into military detainees.

Handheld devices bring the border to bodies. These civilians are not seeking entry, but merely meeting a risk profile—men of military age—and living in an area classed by security forces as a warzone. There is a considerable difference in the geometries of power in Figure 6.7, an image of a traveller volitionally passing through a fixed border checkpoint. For the traveler, the interface is a relatively banal performance. That is to say, when one walks through a security checkpoint at the airport, this is at least on some level, his choice. If he sets off a risk profile then he will be set aside and potentially detained. The design of these thresholds is done so as to achieve the greatest amount of information while minimizing the disruptions to the general circulation of travelling populations. This is clearly not the case in Figures 6.8 and 6.9. Looking at these images it is not difficult to understand how this is a very different set of power issues than the

¹⁵⁷ For an exploration of criminal identification practices like anthropometry, see Cole, *Suspect identities a history of fingerprinting and criminal identification*.

traveler at the airport, or Shachtman in Fallujah. This is an incredibly subtle distinction, because to the algorithm that determines the decision to detain or release, Shachtman and the Afghan civilian are the same: a potential threat that must be catalogued, seen, transduced, and classified.

Herein lies the modulating dynamism of control. The database containing information on the journalist and the citizen and the insurgent are indistinct. But in their sites of production, they are clearly *not* the same. The proliferation of devices and specific bodily practices in theater represent the push to build a data infrastructure by force, under threat of detainment, targeting all members of the population in a clear relationship of coercion and unequal power. Enduring enrollment via handheld devices is not a question of choice, of honorific or volitional access to culturally important spaces, security zones, or sites of labor and capital accumulation. It is an expression of military and state power meant to keep order, to repress activity, to coordinate flows of bodies in a logistical society: mobility in the service of security power.

This interface functions like a wall—it organizes and enables a new form of vision, order, and control—but rather than being defined by surface, it is defined by its openness. Handheld biometrics deploy a form of spatial control that is not activated through enclosure, but through transductions of information via interfaces of control. As Alexander Galloway notes, what is complicated about interfaces is that they are not actually things, but purely relational effects.¹⁵⁸ His discussion points to the ghostly transitions at the interface:

¹⁵⁸ Galloway, “The Unworkable Interface.”

“the more a dioptric device erases the traces of its own functioning (in actually delivering the thing represented beyond), the more it succeeds in its functional mandate; yet this very achievement undercuts the ultimate goal: the more intuitive a device becomes, the more it risks falling out of media altogether, becoming as naturalized as air or as common as dirt.”¹⁵⁹

For many international travellers, biometrics systems work to break down the inside /outside distinction by performing their role as interface so well that the connections between inside and outside are obscured. But turning attention to the production of the interface on the battlefield, it is anything but concealed. While there is certainly a noticeable power dynamic at work in the performance of the data-gathering, the implications of that process remain woefully unclear. Passing through the interface is an act that seems as common as dirt, and yet, it may also serve as a gate to the city as readily as it serves as a gate to the global war prison.

Enrollment sets in motion a host of potential activities. It can result in a detention; it can result in no further action at all; or it can call for this specific body to be tracked, followed and pursued by overhead surveillance drones that, at a later time, might deploy a sudden lethal blow from the sky. These encounters, in homes, compounds and villages—but also at airports and security checkpoints—are meant to remind the occupied subject at all times of their position not as a person, but as an object of information, a target of governance, and a potential target for lethal force. These biometric encounters—which are mobile and stochastic—are meant to ensure that the population is controlled, while limiting the political vulnerabilities and financial costs that come with a high detainee population.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 931.

Conclusion:

Above I described two strikingly different forms of capture: extraordinary rendition and digital biometrics enrollment. In Part I, extraordinary rendition was presented as the coming together of bodies in circulation, an international legal order, and a drive to use sudden violence as a deterrent against an emergent enemy delinked from any straightforward territoriality. This yielded a fugitive design logic premised on spatio-temporal indistinguishability. With furtive black sites, one might not be able to discern a war prison space from an office park—the prison walls are hidden in plain sight.

With handheld digital biometrics enrollment discussed in Part II, the architectural and disciplinary clarity of detainment space is further removed from the horizons of the visual, hidden by another level of materiality—microscopic and genetic data that we all carry with us. It is us, though imperceptible: the limits of detention are here too hidden in plain sight. They erupt from our corporeal mass only to catalogue and organize, then they disappear. Here the capacity of the prison wall as a spatial organizer is complicated by a performative, invisible, and networked interface. HIIDE and SEEK systems present users with an interface *through* which (rather than over, under, or beyond) people and places are seen, understood, and governed.

Yet to attempt to draw a firm line of distinction between the more banal administrative security performances like biometrics enrollment and the violent military objectives of contemporary global counterinsurgency is a Sisyphean endeavor.

The traveler detained at a border stop may end up rendered by the CIA to Egypt for interrogation, and then make his way to a foreign detention facility or into US military custody. The same might happen to the high value detainee biometrically enrolled and subsequently detained by troops in the borderlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their captured information—their data-bodies—are co-housed in the fields of information of BIMA's database: they share a point of concentration in West Virginia.

While the line may be blurred between these encounters in the periphery and the production of interfaces of control in the core, and both are part of the suite of security encounters that make up the landscape of capture, we should be careful not to assume that this similarity erases the distinctions between war and not war. The volitional enrollment of consumer credit card information is not the same thing in practice as the forceful enrollment of biometric data on your own property, or after being awoken in the middle of the night by armed personnel who may or may not speak your language. In these encounters, no consent is requested; no political debate between the occupied population and the military exists over the intended purpose of the collection of their biometrical data. They will not read their own risk profile, and neither will they be informed of how or why they are where they are on it: enrollees are not entitled to the knowledge that they themselves *are*.

At the same time, there is nothing in the code that distinguishes these processes from those that are used to enroll any international traveller seeking entry to the United States. The key issue is not only that the US is outsourcing the detention and interrogation of bodies through rendition and redefining (again) the typologies of

military detainment, but with the extensive use of handheld biometric devices, they are also overseeing a generalized expansion in the distribution of interfaces of control, multiplying the number of spatial thresholds that exist as *almost already* military, as *almost already* detainment. The practices of security capture in the global war are distributed such that military detainment is—rather than an exceptional outside to logistical society—located on a continuum with it. The database has come to you, and with it, the limit of the camp.

CONCLUSIONS:
A Crisis of Enclosure, or, Erasing the Interface



Figure 7.1: Pete Souza Captures the Killing of Osama bin Laden, 1 May 2011
(AP Photo/The White House, Pete Souza)

Introduction: 'For God and Country - Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo'

On a moonless night in May 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed in Abbottabad, Pakistan. 23 members of Joint Special Operations Command's (JSOC) elite Navy SEAL Team Six had arrived earlier that night from Jalalabad, Afghanistan to perform the raid. They had slipped over the border undetected, riding in two modified MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters whose special radar-blurring materials had evaded Pakistan's fulsome air defenses. One chopper was forced into a crash landing, but the entire SEAL team still managed to breach the compound walls and commence the mission. After approximately 40 minutes of sporadic fighting, an unarmed bin Laden had reportedly been shot in the head and lay critically wounded on the floor.

One of the SEALs on Operation Neptune Spear claims that despite American media claims to the contrary, this was not a planned assassination mission. According to the SEAL, they had been told on no uncertain terms during their training that, if given the opportunity, they were to capture bin Laden alive.¹ Yet other reports cite intelligence officials as saying that "[t]here was never any question of detaining or capturing him—it wasn't a split-second decision. No one wanted detainees."² By all accounts, however, bin Laden was neither armed nor aggressive; nor did he attempt to surrender. Yet when two SEALs entered the room where he lay seriously wounded but still alive, they trained their weapons on his chest and repeatedly pulled the trigger, killing him.

Back in the Situation Room in Washington, DC, the Obama security team waited

¹ "Killing Bin Laden."

² Schmidle, "Getting Bin Laden."

for confirmation of the raid's success or failure. Pete Souza captured the moment in his now famous photograph (above, Fig 7.1): the agents of American sovereign power watching nervously as live video from a CIA drone beams war into their chamber. Not long after this photograph was taken, they would hear the voice of one of the SEALs over the radio from Abbottabad: "For God and Country - Geronimo, Geronimo, Geronimo." After a brief pause, the confirmation: "Geronimo EKIA."³

‡ ‡ ‡

It may seem odd to conclude a dissertation about battlefield capture with an extra-territorial and extra-legal expression of lethal force: a kill. But Operation Neptune Spear is the epitome of the contemporary kill/capture raid. The explicit purpose of these raids, which are carried out by both traditional military forces and JSOC (what some have called the President's secret army) is "strategically capturing or killing certain enemy targets, gathering information and disrupting enemy networks and capabilities."⁴

Kill/capture raids highlight the dramatic reorganization of US military geography under Presidents Bush and Obama. The questions raised by these raids and the increasing frequency with which the American military is using them resonate with several of the key issues explored in this dissertation, and highlight the dramatic changes occurring now in the space between capture and the camp. It is important to remember, for example, that the Operation Neptune Spear raid not only brought about

³ EKIA stands for Enemy Killed in Action. Ibid.

⁴ Guard, "Targeted Killing and Just War," 5. On the President's secret army, see Ambinder and Grady, *The Command*.

the death of bin Laden, but that 22 other people were killed—or captured.⁵ Who are these captives? *Where* are they?

Kill/Capture:

With the lack of a neat, convincing American victory in Afghanistan, there has been much querying the military efficacy of counterinsurgency—the targeting of a population’s hearts and minds—as a productive form of “armed social work.”⁶ The result has been increased use of more targeted counterterrorism (CT) tactics, such as kill/capture raids and unmanned aerial drone strikes that are often deployed from great distances in geographic borderlands.⁷ John Nagl, counterinsurgency advocate and co-author of the much-lauded revised edition of *Counterinsurgency Field Manual FM 3-24* (the standard guide for recent US military intervention), recently stated that the text had “overcorrected on the kill-capture—drink-tea spectrum,” leaning “a bit too heavily toward the tea drinking.”⁸ Kill/capture raids and drone strikes would reset the balance.

Operation Neptune Spear may stand out as an exceptional example of a kill/capture raid, but it is exceptional simply because of the target, not because of what actually transpired, or how. Kill/capture raids, or “night raids,” resemble nothing so much as an international disappearance campaign. On JSOC raids, for example, elite troops like Team Six fly in, touch down, deploy force, and leave with either a prisoner in tow or a mortally wounded body in their wake. Traditional forces involved in

⁵ Ackerman, “CSI Bin Laden.”

⁶ On counterinsurgency as ‘armed social work,’ see COIN scholar David Killcullen’s celebrated “Twenty-Eight Articles: Fundamentals of Company-Level Counterinsurgency.”

⁷ Gregory, “From a View to a Kill.”

⁸ Department of War Studies: Kings College London, *John Nagl on Counterinsurgency*.

kill/capture raids emulate this sequence but are limited to an area of operations within which the American military is already active. Troops on these raids frequently enter peoples' homes suddenly and under cover of darkness, which often leads to dramatic violence and civilian death, regardless of the presence of insurgents or terrorists—or the lack thereof.⁹ Many Afghans have decried the disruptive nature of such raids, complaining that they unnecessarily draw civilians into harms way, disturb communities, and result in mass detentions of all the region's men of military age for hours, days, and sometimes weeks.¹⁰

In Chapter 3, I argued that because the “fleeting enemy” of counterinsurgency often makes himself undetectable and thus un-confrontable, counterinsurgent tactics often resemble those of the insurgent. Counterterrorism, then—which is often enacted in geographies where “terrorist” state, non-state, or paramilitary actors make others undetectable (by “disappearing” them)—uses tactics that appear to closely resemble those of terrorism—particularly to the civilian experiencing a kill/capture raid.

As I said in that chapter, to apprehend the enemy in late modern war is to call on a host of new techniques that justify the military's actions in any one location because of the ‘pre-classification’ of that site and its inhabitants as ‘enemy’. In the lead-up to Operation Neptune Spear, for instance, the CIA unsuccessfully attempted a fake vaccination program in the hopes of obtaining bin Laden's DNA, of gleaning evidence that the body they were observing through the eyes of their drones was in fact, that of

⁹ Smith, “We Own the Night.”

¹⁰ Gopal, “Obama's Secret Prisons”; Open Society Foundations Regional Policy Initiative on Afghanistan and Pakistan, *The Cost of Kill/Capture: Impact of the Night Raid Surge on Afghan Civilians*.

the Enemy.¹¹ In that same chapter I also argued that sites of encounter are places where combatants trained to deploy lethal force on the enemy are suddenly tasked with considering the possibility of caring for and defending them. Clearly, the members of SEAL Team Six—either before they left their base in Afghanistan or once inside the compound in Pakistan—made a calculation that the wounded bin Laden would be killed. Where this decision sits in the field of international law is currently an open debate.¹²

In Chapter 4, I contended that in the days following the signing of the Geneva Conventions, the EPW was largely imagined as a temporary subject *hors combat*. He was an unknown, and for UN troops, that made managing his existence in the camp a source of great consternation and disorder. However, as modes of war planning and war fighting embrace the non-linear, the unpredictable, and the pre-emptive, the point of capture is increasingly represented as a result of intense planning and design, and the war fighter often knows intimate details about his target in advance. When today's kill/capture raids actually involve capture (*if* they involve capture), it can be considered an end, a culmination of massive amounts of surveillance, targeting, and war-gaming.¹³

Military strategists work very hard to present this evolution of the American way of war as a teleological drive towards a clean, technologically dominant, ethical and

¹¹ Shah, "CIA Organised Fake Vaccination Drive to Get Osama Bin Laden's Family DNA."

¹² Beyond the very important questions as to whether this targeted killing mission (and others like it) was itself a war crime, there are a number of legal analysts, including Kevin Jon Heller, who argue that by choosing not to detain the injured bin Laden, but rather kill the unarmed combatant, these SEALs committed a war crime. See Heller, "Author of 'No Easy Day' Admits to Committing a War Crime."

¹³ This 'end' immediately sets in motion a host of new activities—processing, interrogation, delousing, etc.—making it also a commencement, a beginning.

civilized form of killing. As John Nagl said of the lethal combination of drones and kill/capture raids:

“[w]e’re getting so good at various electronic means of identifying, tracking, locating members of the insurgency that we’re able to employ this extraordinary machine, an almost industrial-scale counterterrorism killing machine that has been able to pick out and take off the battlefield not just the top level al Qaeda-level insurgents, but also increasingly is being used to target mid-level insurgents.”¹⁴

Performing this killing machine requires techniques that make extra-territorial lethality possible and preferable, enabling erasures on the battlefield. Here, discourses of precision are once again screening off certain elements of war, presenting precision as the vehicle through which, and by which, military violence can be justified and deployed. This is a repetition, of sorts, of the Persian Gulf War discourse I analyzed in Chapter 5. But as there were at that time, there are still now fundamental questions regarding the management of these body-objects, body-events—these targets. What do we *see* when the expansion of networked technology has significantly altered the encounter for both the captor and the captive, and enabled Obama’s cabinet to witness it unfold in real time.¹⁵

Kill/capture raids were a cornerstone of US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. But initially, and despite the fact that they were built around a near-omniscient military surveillance apparatus, they were a fairly disorganized and inefficient military tactic. In 2005 Iraq, as one interrogator reveals, internal analyses of

¹⁴ Edge, “Kill/Capture.”

¹⁵ And, as Kevin Feldman notes, “allowing *us* to witness the witnessing of Bin Laden’s assassination, with its spectral performance registered in the attempt to represent the imperial state’s right to extraterritorial killing.” See Feldman, “Empire’s Verticality,” 326.

special operations troops attempted to deal with the variability of their raids by pitting one raid team against another. He noticed a change in the demeanor of one of the Commanders, who was “behind in the polls compared to the other commanders in Iraq—less captures, less kills.”¹⁶ Subsequently, military units would simply go “outside the wire every day for a week searching for new targets. When we [didn’t] have a target, [we’d] go trolling—that is, just looking.”¹⁷ This echoes the quotas of the Phoenix Program and the body-counts discussed in Chapter 4, and reveals that this means of pre-classifying space and bodies as enemy was not working. Once again, a suite of precision technologies was failing to generate, as I posit in chapter 4, rifle-shot precision.

But in 2006, General Michael Flynn took over JSOC, and it soon became clear that “something fairly magical was happening” to the planning and execution of kill/capture raids.¹⁸ Flynn oversaw their expansion and worked to improve the speed and efficacy of the contact zone; as a result, much of JSOC’s ‘magic’ happened in the spaces of encounter. Flynn describes this new space as a model for networked war:

“When you capture someone, take a picture of them exactly where you captured them. Take detailed notes of who was doing what with what. Don’t merge all the pocket litter...The shooters were supposed to e-mail back an image of the person they captured to Balad [JSOC’s intelligence headquarters], where analysts would run it through every facial recognition database we have, or fingerprints or what have you. We’d get hits immediately. And so our intel guys would radio back to the team in the field, ‘Hey, you’ve got Abu-so-and-so, or someone who looks like them. See if he knows where Abu-other-person is.’”¹⁹

¹⁶ Alexander, *Kill or Capture*, 68. Matthew Alexander is a pseudonym.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

¹⁸ Ambinder and Grady, *The Command*, [ebook] Location 633 of 1286.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, [ebook] Location 681 of 1286.

This is an example of what, in Chapter 6, I maintained to be a forensic war. The geographic terrain of the interface is now globalized and digitized, and biometric processing is a form of violence in which information and evidence shape how the encounter will unfold. Even the actions of the captor himself must be governed and structured by an expansive network of technologies, discourses, and decision-makers. Flynn notes as much, saying that combat troops were “schooled ... in some basic detective techniques” and “[f]ollow-up interrogations ... plotted out like dense crime dramas, with dozens of participants, including some by video teleconference.”²⁰

This reinscription of the space between capture and the camp as the place to garner extremely detailed evidence relies on establishing relationships between the black box of the enemy body and the networked connections and digital infrastructures of neoliberal capitalism: email and digital cameras, biometric enrollments and televised private investigators. We cannot extract the process of capture from these networks: from capture to the camp, evidence and information now dictate the terms of bodily practice. As part of the crime drama of Neptune Spear, then, one member of SEAL Team Six reportedly utilized a SEEK II handheld biometrics device to confirm that the biological body that had just been shot did in fact match the data body of Osama bin Laden.

Another effect of what John Nagl identifies as an “industrial-scale counterterrorism killing machine” has been the erasure of detainment itself from the suite of counterterrorism options. As I discussed in Chapter 6, President Obama’s

²⁰ Ibid.

recent moves—however nominal—to close CIA black sites and ban ‘enhanced’ interrogation and torture seem to have enabled a form of catharsis for the American public, an exorcising of the ghosts of Abu Ghraib.²¹ But there are serious consequences to this shift in the framing of wartime detention towards “living our values” on the battlefield.²²

While torture at Abu Ghraib (re-)focused the military’s attention on war prisons, the issues it raised and the enduring problems of American detention policy have resulted in post-Abu Ghraib reluctance to the idea of any kind of detainment facility at all. This has placed pressure on both traditional military units and JSOC to avoid taking new detainees—especially high value ones—even as they continue to encounter and sequester bodies. Said one Marine recently, “[t]here is no point in having an unnecessary build-up of detainees; no one wants an Abu Ghraib situation on their hands.”²³

Kill/capture raids, however, have continued to yield live bodies that need to be managed. According to Alex Strick van Linschoten and Felix Kuehn, there were 2,365 raids between 1 December 2009 and 30 September 2010. These resulted in 3,873 individuals killed and 7,146 detained.²⁴ But the US had closed its detention facilities in Iraq by July of 2010, and remains only marginally invested in the management of its newly constructed detention facility in Parwan, Afghanistan; it no longer sends

²¹ These are the same ghosts that, according to General Petraeus in a recent *Meet the Press* interview, belonged to “non-biodegradables” that had “no political half-life.” *Meet the Press*. February 21, 2010.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Sengupta, “Lock Them up Then Let Them Go.”

²⁴ Strick van Linschoten and Kuehn, *A Knock on the Door: 22 Months of ISAF Press Releases*.

prisoners to Guantánamo, and its role in Bagram in Afghanistan has become more marginal. There is no longer a detention facility that can handle JSOC's extra-territorial captures. So where do these bodies go?²⁵

Recently the US has used proxy detainees to manage many of these prisoners, as they did in Vietnam. I discussed proxy detention in Chapter 4, when I suggested that the American use of stand-ins to maximize spatial control but minimize direct costs had political fallout and dramatically destabilized the space of encounter. Like their earlier iterations in Korea and Vietnam, captives from recent kill/capture raids were sent to a violent proxy system that was heavily subsidized by US interests and frequently staffed by CIA personnel. Between 2009 and 2010, approximately 2,000 individuals captured by traditional forces in Afghanistan were sent into that country's American-funded national prison system.²⁶ However, recent United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) reports found that more than one third of the conflict-related prisoners held in these facilities "experienced treatment that amounted to torture or to other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment."²⁷ This stands in stark contrast to Flynn's vision of precision capture; indeed, many Afghan officials identified the problems in

²⁵ Bagram, often referred to as 'Obama's Guantánamo', was in the news again recently when the chief spokesman for Hamid Karzai chided the US Administration and told reporters that "detention without trial is illegal in Afghanistan" in reference to the more than 50 Afghans still being held in U.S. custody there, "even though they have been ordered released by Afghan courts." See Constable, "Karzai Orders 'full Afghanization' of U.S.-run Bagram Prison."

²⁶ United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Treatment of Conflict-Related Detainees in Afghan Custody*, 39.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3. In a number of cases, UNAMA interviewers observed injuries, marks and scars that appeared to be consistent with torture and ill-treatment, as well as instruments of torture described by detainees such as rubber hoses. *Ibid.*, vi.

their Americanized prison system as having started in the space between capture and the camp:

“Many...officials...pointed to logistical challenges related to the exigencies of detaining persons in areas with poor roads, poor security, long-distances between the point of capture or arrest and the processing and detaining facility, inadequate forensics and limited human resources.”²⁸

As the GPW prohibits states from knowingly transferring individuals into the custody of another power when there is substantial risk that those individuals will be tortured, the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan selectively stopped transferring prisoners into Afghan custody in 2011. The result is another problem of space: the resources available for holding ‘traditional’ battlefield captives are now as restricted as they are for ‘high value’ counterterrorism captives.

Simultaneous with an increase in kill/capture raids and a reduction in detention space has been an overwhelming upsurge in the use of lethal aerial drone strikes. All three merge to form the shifting landscape of contemporary apprehension. In this space, things move fast: SEAL teams move in, split-second decisions are made, drones strike from overhead in an instant, deployed by pilots in the US who have been waiting for the most opportune moment. Both kill/capture raids and drone strikes have recently been used in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as in areas where the US has not ‘officially’ committed to military engagement: North Africa, Pakistan, and Yemen.²⁹

The growing reliance on drones belies the fact that, despite years of secrecy, abuse, and the general marginalization of detainee operations and war prison space in

²⁸ United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), *Treatment of Conflict-Related Detainees in Afghan Custody*, 46.

²⁹ Scahill, “JSOC: The Black Ops Force That Took Down Bin Laden.”

the military imaginary, the US does not have an affective detention policy that can keep up with the shifting landscape of war. Indeed, as one official recently said, if the US captures a high value detainee now, “[t]here is nowhere to put them.”³⁰ I suggested reasons for this lack in Chapter 5, where I argued that detention carries with it an exceptional number of political risks, financial costs, and logistical complications. To set up a camp requires money, training, a local population at least nominally sympathetic to military objectives, and an international legal space within which prisoners who don’t align with (US readings of) the contours of IHL can be held. The kill/capture decision with which Special Operations team members are now faced is increasingly a foregone conclusion. “What the hell,” they ask, “do we do with this guy if we get him?”³¹

The answer to this question does not require much probing. As the technological sophistication of the US military enterprise continues to advance, both traditional and Special Forces soldiers and policy makers are likely to utilize the “five-cent solution’ — a bullet.”³² And counterterrorism tactics seem driven more and more by the \$4.5 million solution—a drone. Drones offer the unitary executive all of the potential of precision killing with none of the precarity and political fallout associated with violent night raids, or the setting up of a new Strategic Internment Facility such as Guantánamo or Bagram.

In public discourse, Obama Administration intelligence officials balk at the idea that killing might ever be the first choice, as John O. Brennan recently said:

³⁰ Entous, “Special Report.”

³¹ Ibid.

³² Trombly, “The Logic and Risks of Capture Operations.”

“Intelligence disrupts terrorist plots and thwarts attacks. Intelligence saves lives. And one of our greatest sources of intelligence about al-Qa’ida, its plans, and its intentions has been the members of its network who have been taken into custody by the United States and our partners overseas. So I want to be very clear—whenever it is possible to capture a suspected terrorist, it is the unqualified preference of the Administration to take custody of that individual so we can obtain information that is vital to the safety and security of the American people. This is how our soldiers and counterterrorism professionals have been trained. It is reflected in our rules of engagement. And it is the clear and unambiguous policy of this Administration.”³³

Brennan’s vision overlaps neatly with Obama’s new definition of detention I discuss Chapter 6: a suite of “temporary holding pens whose primary purpose is to gather intelligence.”³⁴ Capture here is simply understood in the short-term: as a data-driven enterprise that exists to produce information. The body of the detainee is but a vessel for this ‘intelligence,’ for capturing the data body. As I suggested in Chapter 3, the detainee is a black box that must be functionalized within the American vision of global war. Here, that reading is taken to an extreme: a detainee body and a space to sequester him are only conceivable if they are thought to have intelligence that can be extracted. Information and data drive detainment, not any kind of humanitarian impulse.

In the present climate of kill/capture raids and aerial drone violence, detainee doctrine is obsolete, the EPW has disappeared³⁵, and the capture of one man by another has given way to the fleeting and unknowable objectives of human intelligence. The battlefield is both everywhere and indefinite. In everywhere war, capture for intelligence purposes is no longer the one-for one removal of bodies from the space of

³³ Brennan, “Strengthening Our Security by Adhering to Our Values and Laws.”

³⁴ Dozier, “Afghanistan Secret Prisons Confirmed By U.S.,” NP.

³⁵ It is incredibly unlikely that a person captured in a JSOC kill/capture raid in Yemen, for instance, will under current legislation be granted EPW status

the battlefield with which this dissertation began. Indeed, that kind of capture can work against the American military:

“When we go into a house and kill or capture a terrorist, we remove one guy from the insurgency. When we go into a house and detain an innocent guy, we may very well be creating dozens more terrorists. Raid missions invariably leave a lasting impression on the population. If we are going to win their hearts and minds, we have to conduct them the right way and can’t take our eyes off the long-term goal.”³⁶

What *are* the long-term goals of capture in kill/capture raids? Why maintain the slash between kill and capture at all? If we remove apprehension from the ethical framing of war, what does this say about the capacities of International Humanitarian Law and the elusive imaginary of international liberal order?

Regardless of the policies of the Obama Administration, even if we believe JSOC’s extra-territorial and extra-legal raids were not simply assassination runs, even if we believe drones are not simply the most cost-effective way to strike fear into the hearts and minds of the global population, the fact remains that the United States no longer has adequate detention facilities or adequate detention policy. It is not and has not been equipped to detain individuals pulled from Yemen, North Africa, and Pakistan, from places where a ground war has not been declared and where there is no logistical footprint in place to establish war camps. If a body is captured, there is no doctrine and no legally plausible space for it to be taken. For the military, drone killing is—for lack of a better word—*easier*.

³⁶ Alexander, *Kill or Capture*, 99. This clearly echoes former ISAF Commander Stanley McChrystal’s definition of counterinsurgency math: “If you encounter 10 Taliban members and kill two, you don’t have eight remaining enemies. You have more like 20: the friends and relatives of the two you killed.” Thomas, “McChrystal’s War.”

A recent story detailing the drone strike that killed Adnan al Qadhi in Yemen would appear to give credence to this theory. US officials may well paint drone violence as a last resort, but those on the ground in Yemen insist that it “is nearly inconceivable to imagine that he could not have been taken into custody alive.” They suggest that al Qadhi’s friends, neighbors, and family would have been willing to assist those who wanted to question him. Adnan’s own brother notes that “[w]e could have made sure he turned himself in. If Adnan was guilty of any crime, then arrest him, put him on trial.”³⁷

‡ ‡ ‡

Kill/capture raids extend and complicate the narratives I have explored over the course of this dissertation. The question is no longer one of locating and apprehending the enemy, nor of where and when to detain, but whether the American military considers the battlefield space represented by architectural and institutional enclosure to be a useful wartime space at all. The war prison is enduring a crisis of enclosure. In its place, technologies such as digital biometrics have emerged to redistribute the organizing capacities of the interface between capture and the camp; between inside and out; between friend and enemy. In place of the camp, then, is a spatially expansive and technologically enabled space of fluid control.

And yet, the question remains: once an enemy is found, once a body is deemed killable or detainable, *what happens next?* American military detention policy has long been in a state of flux and disarray. But kill/capture raids highlight a troubling new state

³⁷ Baron, “Family, Neighbors of Yemeni Killed by U.S. Drone Wonder Why He Wasn’t Taken Alive.”

of affairs, wherein the technologies of precision, distant war increasingly work to establish forms of violence in which bodily encounters are only imagined as lethal, and in which the political, economic, and administrative burdens of detention are cast aside by the assumed efficacy of overhead drone war and effervescent targeted strikes. What is potentially pushed aside is the very possibility of capture and evacuation from the performance of American military violence: an erasure of the interface between capture and the camp from the mental mapping of the US military and its proxies.

Future Directions

In addition to reflecting and refracting many of the spatial transformations introduced in this dissertation, Operation Neptune Spear, and kill/capture raids more generally, generate a number of questions that can guide future research. According to a number of sources, targets for kill/capture raids are pre-designated for either one fate or the other.³⁸ An expression of the growing consolidation of security power in a unitary executive, much attention has been focused on Obama's so-called 'kill lists'. But if these are also capture lists, this introduces the possibility that an entirely different analytical metric is at work. What types of deliberations go into this decision? Are people only singled out for capture if they present intelligence value? How much knowledge keeps you alive? What are the ethical questions of such a list? Is a capture list any less troubling than a kill list and why? As the definition of detention space has been so thoroughly reworked in the past decade, what, exactly, do these targeted captures offer the CIA, JSOC?

³⁸ Guard, "Targeted Killing and Just War."

My archival findings have also put me in a good position to explore other aspects of the military detainment assemblage. Chief among these is to pursue an investigation of transformations in the administrative processing of detainees. In compiling the archival data for this project I became interested in thinking about the ways in which military detainment spaces function as archives themselves, and further, how those archives have shifted over time. It seems to me that the practice of detainee identity processing offers a parallel yet distinct narrative to the one I explored above. If this project outlined the making of the enemy body, I'd like to focus more explicitly on the ways in which that body was governed and spatially managed relative to its position in specific categories. In particular, I am interested in the actual practices of archiving within the camps—the administration of bodies in detainee logs, medical files, and interrogation transcripts. How was the archive produced? How has the nature of the archive shifted as the camps have become more automated? How is the process of archiving the enemy enmeshed with discourses of the enemy body?

In addition to my work on military detention, I see my future research extending into other areas of overlap between territorial power, security, and technology. For instance, I aim to further my understanding of the spatiality of capture begun in my dissertation by conducting a detailed study of domestic policing and apprehension techniques. Recent news about the militarization of American police forces, and the rise of practices like 'stop-and-frisk' by the New York Police Department point towards the integration of anticipatory logics into the everyday performance of urban control. How have these techniques, which require imagining, locating, targeting, and intervening in

an urban landscape populated by a seemingly unlimited supply risky bodies, evolved over time?

Conclusion

Above I have traced a genealogy of the spatial and technological limits of the interface between capture and the camp. Over the course of the past sixty years, these liminal spaces, balanced precariously between the lethality of war and a logic of care, have been transformed from largely unregulated sites of inter-personal encounter to technologically mediated, highly choreographed, and spatially expansive interfaces that seek to administer and control entire populations. I highlighted a diverse and shifting terrain on which these threshold spaces came to be known, came to be knowable, and came to be governed. Beginning from a rather self-evident starting point—the point of capture—I moved through a series of conceptual and historical iterations in order to re-address and reconsider the spatial limits of American-managed wartime detention.

What has emerged over the course of this study is a vision of military detention that is inseparable from the networks of circulation and flow that enable everyday life in logistical societies. New, spatially distributed forms of apprehension are today increasingly performed outside of the prison walls, in the spaces of everyday life in both war zones and peaceful landscapes: the interface between inside and outside of the war prison is no longer necessarily a violent occurrence between a war fighter and war fighter, but is increasingly mediated by networked technologies whose aim is the management of a global population of potential threat.

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