

OVERVIEW

AN INTRODUCTION WITHOUT A BEGINNING

Although the US War on Terror is waged as a response to the events of 9 / 11, the war has a history before 9 / 11 that is rooted in the post–Cold War era of globalization. Like all wars, the US War on Terror is framed as defensive and necessary in ways that elide the contributions of US imperial violence to global and US inequality. In addition, the War on Terror relies on mourning and melancholy in order to justify the defense of a national formation that never was.

Settler Colonialism · Globalization · Melancholy

CHAPTER I. MOURNING IN AMERICA

Following the events of 9 / 11, culture played a key role in making sense of the terrorist attacks. Central to the work of culture was linking US vulnerability to militarism and revising US history as an exceptional project rather than a violent one.

Homeland · The Uncanny · US / Israel Analogies

CHAPTER 2. PRIVACY AND SECURITY

Under a state of emergency, the United States expanded its capacity to violate Fourth Amendment norms of privacy in the name of national security. Moreover, increasingly militarized policing during the War on Terror has blurred the boundaries between domestic policing and global counterinsurgency warfare.

Policing · Surveillance · Counterinsurgency

CHAPTER 3. LIBERAL TORTURE

Under the War on Terror the law has been used to rationalize the use of torture to extract information. The torture program has been justified as lawful in order to confirm the US understanding of itself as respectful of the rule of law. The torture program defined any and all men captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan as “enemy combatants” undeserving of any national or international legal protection.

Torture · Lawfare · Enemy Combatants

CHAPTER 4. EXTRAJUDICIAL ASSASSINATION BY DRONE

In an effort to affirm the rule of law, the Obama presidential administration diverged from the use of torture and confinement in favor of an extrajudicial assassination program that included the targeting of US citizens. The drone program has driven some to join terrorist organizations that target the United States and has become a recent subject of rebellion and resistance against the US War on Terror.

Kill List · Extrajudicial Killing · Remote-Controlled Warfare

A CONCLUSION WITHOUT AN ENDING

Although the War on Terror is a response to contemporary historical and political conditions, it is a continuation of a long feature of US settler colonial culture in which the mourning of a lost nation that never existed becomes the pretext for state-sanctioned violence. The costs of war go well beyond economic considerations and must account for the immiseration of millions of people across the expanding geographies of the war. Moreover, the War on Terror is a normative part of everyday life in the United States and informs domestic policing.

War Profiteering · Global Solidarity

