Introduction

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A Short History of Urban War

Urban Conflict in WWII
- Large Forces
- Evacuated Cities

Urbanization
- Population Boom
- Rapid Expansion of Urban Areas

Decrease in Military Force
- Higher Investments into Technology
- Volunteer Services

Urban Conflict in the 21st Century
- Small Squads Targeting Specific Area
- Densely Populated Battle-spaces
Dromology
The Logic of Speed and Acceleration

To Virilio, speed and acceleration underpin most human innovation. As one party innovates, others must do the same to remain competitive.
Dromology Continued

The counter to speed

Speed and acceleration are dangerous

So, planners, politicians, and military engineers turn cities into “deceleration machines” (Virilio 2006).
Challenges in Urban Areas

Operations and Ethics

Complex Terrain

“The terrain makes detection and identification difficult, as surface and subterranean areas can cover and conceal military objectives and be used to launch attacks from.”

(Muhammadally 2020)

Civilian Presence

“Iraq’s infrastructure was extensively damaged – roads, bridges, communications, electricity supplies, water and sewage systems, weapons factories, health care facilities, administrative centers, warehouses, homes and much more.”

(Salvage 2002)
Military Solutions

Drones and Technology

Calls for more investment into weapons technology

(Spencer et al. 2023)
Military Solutions

Precision Airstrikes

US Operations in Mosul utilized precision airstrikes to strike enemy combatants while limiting risk of collateral damage or casualties.

(Khan and Gopal 2017).
Military Solutions

AI Targeting Systems

"The Gospel" uses AI to identify Hamas targets and strike quickly before they can relocate.

(Davies et al. 2023).
Military Solutions - The Fallout

Precision Airstrikes
One in five strikes resulted in civilian deaths
(Kahn and Gopal 2017)

AI Targeting
The system has emphasized speed over accuracy with little human oversight
(Cook 2024, Davies et al. 2023)
Recommendations

- Engage in dialogue with military analysts and theorists
- Create legislation that enforces speed limits on military technology and operations
- Leverage Global Connections to place pressure on international institutions
Targeting speed and acceleration in International Humanitarian legal language can stop the cycle of military innovation that leads to death and destruction.