

by slums with large numbers of people and fragile housing, with the result that most civilian deaths in the war

**Afghan refugees walk back to their tents after receiving clothing and other supplies in a refugee camp on the outskirts of Kabul. (February 2005)**

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occurred in densely populated areas of Afghan cities.<sup>6</sup> Cumulatively, these numerous small death tolls meant that the US-led bombing campaign, however well-designed to minimize civilian casualties, was the most lethal in terms of bomb tonnage since the Vietnam era, resulting in between 2,214 and 2,571 civilian casualties.<sup>7</sup>

The 1990-1991 Iraq war, by contrast, resulted in 284-363 civilians killed per 10,000 tons of bombs.<sup>8</sup>

Immediately after each phase of open conflict, however, Kabul and other Afghan cities demonstrated their conflict resilience by serving as safe havens for hundreds of thousands of IDPs and returning refugees. Yet the rapid influx of new people, the legacy of traditional urban planning, weak accountabilities in a network of multiple players, and the loss of the majority of land titles during the two decades of fighting, means that as Kabul recovers from war, inter-group competition for power in a city burdened by its responsibilities could result in the failure of public security.<sup>9</sup> ●



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- 2 Marc Herold, "Urban Dimensions of the Punishment of Afghanistan by US Bombs," *Cities, War, and Terrorism: Towards an Urban Geopolitics*, ed. Stephen D. N. Graham (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) 313.
- 3 Henri Lefebvre, "Space and Politics," *Writings on Cities*, eds. Eleanore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996) 185-202.
- 4 Conrad Schetter, "Ethnoscapes, National Territorialisation, and the Afghan War," *Geopolitics* 10 (2005) 69.
- 5 Chris Johnson and Jolyon Leslie, *Afghanistan — The Mirage of Peace* (London: Zed Books, 2004) 70-71.
- 6 Herold, 317.
- 7 Herold, 316. Variances due to competing casualty figures.
- 8 Herold, 316. Variances due to competing casualty figures.
- 9 Daniel Esser, "The city as arena, hub and prey — Patterns of violence in Kabul and Karachi," *Environment and Urbanization* 16.2 (2004) 31-38.0