London 2005: Welcome to the Terrordome Is the US turning into want to be shot dead for looking a bit NAEEM MOHAIEMEN grants tend to ethnicise their relicomplaints against him, shot a "In the process of helping reduce homeless man at point blank range. crime, sometimes there is a longfunny." Indigo Jo's Blog dissected gious identity, failing to make the

EW YORK City, 1999. A city that can bring immigrant dreams to life. You move here, you work hard, you carve out a space for yourself, and then one day your name is on New Yorkers' lips. TV personalities discuss you, your parents are greeted at the airport by cameras and a motorcade. Sitting in a crowded town hall in Harlem, they listen to strangers praise you. Your boss, a Bangladeshi migrant named Shahin Chowdhury says, "He was a iewel. I will never forget him.'

For Kadiadou and Saikou Diallo of Guinea, this was the reality. They had come to New York to pick up the bullet-riddled body of their son Amadou -- shot to death by New York City police in a case of mistaken identity. The police claimed that Diallo was mistaken for a suspect. But as columnist Angela Ards pointed out, Amadou resembled the suspect "in the most generic sense: eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, male, black, young.

Amadou Diallo was a 22-year-old West African immigrant who lived in the Bronx. He studied English and Computer Science before coming to America. A devout Muslim, he worked twelve hours a day selling videos to earn enough money to finish his bachelor's degree. On February 4, 1999, as he was standing in the vestibule of his apartment -four undercover police

approached him. As they yelled commands, a frightened Diallo reached for his wallet. The officers had fired 41 shots before his hand was out of his pocket -- somehow, 22 of the 41 shots missed their target, even though the officers aimed into a space the size of a telephone booth. Of the 19 bullets that did hit, 11 were in the legs, 5 pierced the torso, 1 hit the right arm, 1 went through the chest and 1 entered through the back. This was the grisly consequence of a police system that institutionalized racism and built a vision of the feral, "wilding" Black male -- Public Enemy Number One.

In Mayor Giuliani's New York, a steep drop in crime had been accompanied by a relentless increase in racial profiling and police violence. According to the Civilian Complaints Review Board, between 1993 and 1998, complaints about police brutality had risen 39 per cent to 4,975. Between January and June of 1998 alone, there was a 58 per cent increase in police beatper cent increase in "drag/pull" allegations and 30 per cent increase in the use of the painful pepper spray against suspects. In 1996, Amnesty International issued a report reviewing 90 cases of police brutality in New York. Giuliani savagely attacked the report as "exaggerated." At the same time, a Bronx judge acquitted Officer Francis Livoti, who choked Latino teenager Anthony Baez to death during a routine arrest. When another officer, with seven civilian

the Mayor called it an "ambiguous situation

New York in the 1990s was in midst of an "end justifies the means" frenzy. The argument was familiar -the city was out of control, and only excessive force would bring it back to normal. In 1997, two officers shot an unarmed black man 24 times. A Brooklyn grand jury returned a verdict of "not guilty" against the officers. Police also fired seventeen

lasting sense of something else in a generation of young men. You're breaking their spirit. You're breaking their will." Columnist Bob Herbert, a long-time voice for New York's poor, wrote: "Some parents and civic leaders are teaching black and Hispanic children to quickly display their hands during any encounter with the police, like little criminals. This is to show that the youngsters are not armed and therefore should

another tabloid. The Daily Mail: Twaddle in the Daily Mail today. Stop and search in the streets and on the Underground, police road blocks, snooping, increased detention powers. Oh, and don't even think of listening to the anti-racist crowd. Never mind treading on the toes of ethnic minorities or invading their 'family sanctums.' This is the war on terror."

In 2000, while marching in huge

Urban histories display parallels and circular logic. More tragedies like this week's shooting are in our foreseeable future if we don't speak up now. Don't let the rhetoric of the "war on terror" and violence by the terrorist fringes push us to sacrifice civil liberties. Learn from the mistakes and excesses committed in post 9/11 America



Stockwell tube station cordoned off after police shooting tragedy.

times at 16 year-old Michael Jones, mistaking his toy gun for a real firearm. The Mayor later issued a statement blaming lack of "adult supervision" for the incident. Black immigrants were frequent targets and in the most infamous case before Diallo, Haitian immigrant Abner Louima was brutally beaten and sodomised by a group of four police officers.

This pattern of violent police behavior had a traumatising impact on the psyche of black New Yorkers. 27 year-old Floyd Coleman told the New York Times. "Even when it's cold, I try not to wear my hood. Especially at night, because you're going to get stopped." Coleman, who worked with young children in Youth Ministries for Truth & Justice, said, "It makes me want to cry. Here I am steering young people in the right direction. And we have cops approaching us for no reason. I feel like we're in prison." Alexie Torres, director of the youth center, added: not be blown into eternity at age 10 or 15 or 20 by a trigger-happy stranger in a blue uniform. Amadou Diallo has been on my

mind recently. On Friday, London police shot dead an unarmed man in the rattled frenzy that followed the two sets of London bombings. The rhetoric around this case is eerily similar to that of New York, circa 1999. Just as American tabloids iustified homicidal police force in response to "crime sprees." London's Daily Express ran banner headlines: "Shoot All Bombers: Demand Grows For Suicide Fanatics To Be Shown No Mercy" (this was before police revealed the man was innocent). Blogger Curious Hamster responded to the Express' view: "While we're at it, why don't we shoot all brown skins, all non-Christians, all people with rucksacks, all people with bulky clothing, all people who look at me in a funny way. Crap, I might even be forced to stop wearing my hoodie. Wouldn't Harlem rallies for Diallo. I was struck by the absence of Asian faces in the crowd. Of course there were the stalwart activists of South Asians Against Police Brutality & Racism (SAPBR) and Federation of Indian Leftists (FOIL). But the brown masses of New York seemed to see this as a "black issue," choosing to stay away in a mixture of fear and indifference. "Don't they get it?" said one of the Bengali activists of FOIL. "Do they really think this will stop with black New Yorkers? Racial profiling always finds new targets."

These days, maybe many people do "get it." The post 9/11 security sweeps have decimated neighbourhoods like the formerly Pakistani enclave of Coney Island Avenue in New York. The immigrant populations that are left have a nervous, intimidated air. Racial profiling has gone deep into South Asian and Arab immigrants, and "driving while black" has been replaced by "flying while brown." Most Muslim immiconnection with similar struggles waged in the past by the Black and Latino underclass. There is also among Muslim populations a sense of historical injustice and particularity. By seeing the current crisis as some continuation of centuries old 'Crusade" dynamics, they fail to see how it continues a pattern of violence endemic to any heavily policed state.

For the last few weeks, I've been in London for screenings of a documentary film I have directed. At every venue I go to, I bring my laptop n case the tapes won't work. Carrying a big bulky backpack on the London Tube is a dicey proposition these days. The "stiff upper lip" has been replaced by rush-hour frayed nerves. Over time, I've developed a set of visual cues that are my way of saying, "It's OK, I want to get to my stop alive, just like you." I smile, make eye contact (remember the fuss over the Arab passengers who wouldn't), I pull out my book slowly and start reading. Jean Charles de Menezes of Brixton had not developed these "reassurance" mechanisms. On Friday, when plainclothes policemen suddenly chased him with guns, he panicked and ran (which of us would not have done the same?). The tragic finale was the Stockwell station platform, where Menezes lay dead from multiple gunshot wounds at close

This week's killing comes at a crucial juncture for London police. At a time when they had taken the offensive, demanding more guns, more policing and surveillance power the random shooting of a frightened electrician illustrates the dangers of overwhelming force in the hands of a nervous, triggerhappy and racist police force. In 1990s New York, a beefed-up police force and the decline of the crack epidemic led to a drop in the crime rate. But increased police presence came with heavy deployment of racial profiling, which brutalised a generation of young African-Americans. Black Britain (Asian, Arab and black) will now face similar dehumanising tactics. The Europhobia blog offers this comforting advice: "Note to anyone who looks remotely dark-skinned, has black hair, etc. -- if police are present, DO NOT RUN."

New York 1999, London 2005, urban histories display parallels and circular logic. More tragedies like this week's shooting are in our foreseeable future if we don't speak up now. Don't let the rhetoric of the war on terror" and violence by the terrorist fringes push us to sacrifice civil liberties. Learn from the mistakes and excesses committed in post 9/11 America.

Naeem Mohaiemen is New York correspondent for

a security state?

In the first years of the War on Terrorism the US has learned a disturbing lesson. The country has been willing to give up some of its precious and hard-earned freedoms for the sake of security. After reading Fortress America, I was left wondering: how much more freedom will we lose when terrorists strike once again on our soil.

RON CHEPESIUK

T is not an overstatement to say that America has changed dramatically since the traumatic events of September 11, 2001. The sight of the World Trade Center towers crumbling to the ground and the Pentagon under attack left the American people feeling vulnerable to the threat of fanatical terrorists who have vowed to destroy their way of life. Since 9/11, a growing number Americans, whether rightly or wrongly, now feel that freedom has a price, and a part of it may have to be sacrificed in the interest of national security. Matthew Brzezinski, a contribut-

ing writer to the New York Times Magazine, takes us for an interesting and timely look at "Fortress America." the rise of the surveillance state and how the concern about homeland security is changing the country. The book grew out of a series of articles that the New York Times Magazine commissioned Brzezinski to write in the wake of 9/11. With its first person point of view, conversational style, and poignant subject matter, Fortress America is a page-turner brimming with fascinating anecdotes. It's also a disturbing look at what it may take to secure our homeland and what it will be like to live in the emerging security state.

The book begins with a vivid description of the environment in the US after the 9/11 attacks. As Brzezinski writes: "Our imagination was truly running wild: security risks were now everywhere, threatening the very foundations of an open society." He describes how security has become so much "the order of the day" at the White House that even the proceedings of academic conferences were being classified. The media didn't help the situation either. It fueled the new climate of fear, leading some Americans to experience some form of posttraumatic stress disorder.

Adding to what Brezezinski describes as the "hysteria" was the realisation of how woefully unprepared we were to combat terrorism on our soil. We didn't have enough counter terrorism experts. The 4,000 miles of border were porous. Bridges, highways, airports, metro systems had to be protected. And now there was the sobering realiza-

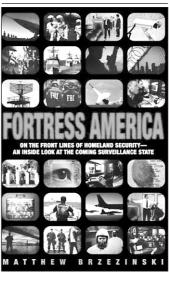
tion that fighting terrorism would cost us dearly. As Brzezinski explained, "Combating terror is likely going to rank among the biggest, costliest and most daunting domestic challenges in US history, up there with the New Deal and the war effort that followed the attack on

Brzezinski takes an inside look at security in Israelthe poster nation for

BOOK REVIEW

Fortress America by Matthew Brzezinski Published by Bantam

Books, New York (2005) pp 272, \$25.00



the "Maximum Security State." Israel has become a country where "counter terrorist considerations factor into just about every corporate, civic, military and even personal decision." What's remarkable is how Israelis accepts their security state and one is left wondering if the Israel experience will become that of the US and with what cost to liberty and the American way of life.

In terms of adopted security measures, Brzezinski believes the gap between America and Israel appears is narrowing, and he provides plenty of technological examples to show how Americans are being bugged and monitored.

They include:

The use of software programs that can scan facial features.

break them down into threedimensional plots and compare them to a vast database of student IDs. Cameras at airport ticket coun-

ters so sensitive they can tell if someone is stressed.

Satellites and ease dropping equipment so sophisticated they

can see through walls of a home. Electronic monitors installed in major American urban areas that can pinpoint just about any vehicle, so long as it has been equipped with a microchip encoded with registration data.

The development of so called smart cards encoded with personal, financial and medial information, which can serve as a national ID and be used by police for spot checks. "Enemy of the State," the most

chilling chapter of the book, makes it personal by profiling Hady Hassan Omar, an Egyptian who was one of the 762 people detained on immigration charges during the post 9/11 investigations. Omar, like the other 761 detainees, did not have any links to terrorism, but he had to endure a 73-day nightmare in which he ended up in a maximum-security cell before being finally released. Brzezinski doesn't blame the

Justice Department for its actions though, given what he said was. "the context of what was at stake in September 2001." But he does acknowledge that "a dangerous legal precedent has been set."

The author doesn't provide any real conclusions about where this move toward more and more security and surveillance is leading the US. He does, however, show that in the first years of the War on Terrorism the US has learned a disturbing lesson. The country has been willing to give up some of its precious and hardearned freedoms for the sake of

After reading Fortress America, was left wondering: how much more freedom will we lose when terrorists strike once again on our soil, a move, the experts are predicting will surely come.

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Recruiting for life

MONA ELTAHAWY

HERE is no more "us" and "them" It is all "we." When London, Beirut, and Sharm el-Sheikh are all attacked in less than 48 hours, there is no more Muslim or Christian or Jew. There is no more believer or infidel. There is no more East or West

When the dead in Sharm el-Sheikh included Britons. Dutch. Egyptians, French, Kuwaitis, Spaniards, and Qataris, it is all we and we are all in this together.

For just one example of how small the world has become and how nowhere is immune from terrorism anymore, look no further than London policeman Charlie Ives who survived the bombings in Sharm el-Sheikh. He was on holiday in the Egyptian resort after dealing with the aftermath of the July 7 London bombings.

I am writing this column just a few hours after terror ripped through Sharm el-Sheikh. As the death toll rose amid news of the coordinated suicidal attacks. I remembered something that Syrian human rights lawver Anwar al-Bounni told me in Damascus recently.

"Our problem is that we have ideology and we use people as fuel for it. Ideology is supposed to be in the service of a person, to make his life better not so that he can die for it. This is a culture of death -- that people die for an idea. I want an idea that will die for me," Anwar told me. "If it doesn't serve people it should

Stop for a second and reflect on what a beautiful concept that is -that an idea or an ideology should die if it doesn't serve people or improve their lives. In the face of so much carnage, how do we kill ideas and not people?

How do we stop these "holy cowards" (I refuse to call them warriors as they label themselves) from dying for a twisted nihilism that takes too many of us along with them?

One way to start is give faces to all those whose lives these holy cowards ended. We've heard a lot about the video tapes that use

images of Muslim suffering around the world to recruit many of these

So let's see those who have suffered from the barbaric violence of these cowards. How many children did a victim have? What was the name of their wife or husband? What was their dream?

One of the most heartbreaking images from the July 7 bombings in London was of Marie Fatavi-Williams who flew to London from Nigeria to look for her son, who had been on the Number 30 bus that

Anthony, 26, was an oil executive who was born and raised in London. He loved rap music and hoped to launch his own record label, the New York Times said. His mother is a Catholic, his father is Muslim. Anthony's cousin told a British paper that his ambition was to become a

politician and fix Nigeria's problems. It was important to get this sketch of Anthony's life. As British police released closed-circuit television images of the bombers on their way to wreak mayhem on the London transport system, it was important to

Sharm el-Sheikh attacks as real as the British media made Anthony.

In addition to giving faces and names and life stories to those who were so brutally killed, let's show the livelihoods that were killed in Sharm el-Sheikh.

The Sharm el-Sheikh attacks were the worst in Egypt since the 1997 Luxor massacre that killed 58 tourists and four Egyptians. That bloody attack at the temple of Hatshepsut was brutal not just in the terrorists' use of machetes but for the damage it and other attacks on

I am sick and tired of hearing that young Muslim men were recruited for death through video tapes. Where are the video tapes that should be recruiting them for life? When are we going to stop telling them that they should die for ideas? When will we start telling them that ideas should die for them instead?



Ghazala Hotel in Sharm-el-Sheikh devastated by terrorist bombs on July 23

exploded in Tavistock Square. He had taken the bus to work that morning because of Underground train delays.

Holding her son's photograph in her hand, Marie said it was time to stop "this vicious cycle of killing. How many mothers' hearts shall be maimed?" the BBC reported.

see Anthony's face as clearly as we

saw the bombers' In Egypt, we must know about those who were murdered as they slept in their hotel rooms or as they drank coffee and smoked shisha at an outdoor cafe. Arab media needs

to start injecting human interest

stories that make the victims of the

tourists wreaked on Egypt's tourism

Tourism in Egypt is the country's highest foreign currency earner.

And it is the country's largest private sector employer. So let's show all those Egyptians who have lost their livelihoods.

Alongside the profiles of whatever

group of cowards claims responsibility for these attacks, we must profile those Egyptians who will no longer be able to support their families because tourists have been scared away.

Is there anything more pressing for the majority of Egyptians than poverty and unemployment? Weekly demonstrations have for months now been saying Kifaya not just to authoritarian rule and lack of democracy but to unemployment.

During my recent visit to Cairo, I spoke to several people who had joined the growing opposition movement. Most of them said unemployment was the reason. In June, some of the opposition groups took their demonstrations to poor and working class Egyptian neighborhoods to show solidarity with Egyptians whose lives every day are a strug-

How morbidly ironic that while the opposition movement is trying to involve more and more Egyptians in the political process and to concentrate on the issues that most concern them, this latest group of holy cowards effectively blows all that apart by sending hundreds of Egyptians if not thousands into the ranks of the unemployed.

Not only are they deliberately targeting innocent civilians from around the world, but they are deliberately targeting an industry that keeps many Egyptian homes

Death came in many forms in Sharm el-Sheikh -- the immediate and brutal of those who were ripped apart in the explosions and the economic death of those whose livelihoods have been ruined.

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ideas should die for them instead? Egyptian columnist Mona Eltahawy worked as Reuters correspondent in Cairo and Jerusalem and also wrote for the Guardian from the Middle

Democracy only an afterthought

"We're taking the fight to the terrorists abroad, so we don't have to face them here at home," Bush declared in June -- and repeated endlessly -- finally appearing vindicated with the London attacks. London, like Iraq and Afghanistan, is "there," not "here."

SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

N the day of the London bombings, President Bush proclaimed: "The war on terror goes on." Through the 2004 campaign, his winning theme was terror. He achieved the logic of a unified field theory connecting Iraq to Afghanistan by threading terror through both, despite the absence of evidence. He insisted that if we didn't fight the terrorists there, we would be fighting them at home.

In January, the CIA's thinktank the National Intelligence Council, issued a report describing Iraq as the magnet and training and recruiting ground for terrorism. The false rationale for the invasion had become a self-fulfilling prophecy. With his popularity flagging, Bush returned to the formulations that succeeded in his campaign.

In Bush's "global war on terror," Iraq and Afghanistan present one extended battlefield against a common enemy -- and the strategy is and must be the same. So far as Bush is concerned, it's always either the day after 9/11 or the day before the Iraq invasion. Time stands still at two ideal political moments. But his consequences since are barely managed chaos.

"I was horrified by the president's last speech [on the war on terror], so much unsaid, so much disingenuous, so many half truths," said James Dobbins, Bush's first envoy to Afghanistan, now director of international programmes at the Rand Corporation. Afghanistan is now the scene of a Taliban revival, chronic Pashtun violence, dominance by US-supported warlords who have become narco-lords, and a human rights black hole

From the start, he said, the effort

in Afghanistan was "grossly underfunded and undermanned." The military doctrine was the first error. "The US focus on force protection and substitution of firepower for manpower creates significant collateral damage." But the faith in firepower sustained the illusion that the mission could be "quicker, cheaper, easier." And that justification fitted with Afghanistan being relegated into a sideshow to Iraq.

According to Dobbins, there was also "a generally negative appreciation of peacekeeping and nation building as components of US policy, a disinclination to learn anything from Bosnia and Kosovo." Lack of accountability began at the

top and filtered down. On the day of President Hamid Karzai's inauguration in Afghanistan, in December 2001, Dobbins met General Tommy Franks, the Centcom commander, at the airport. As they drove to the ceremony, Dobbins informed Franks of press reports that US planes had mistakenly bombed a delegation of tribal leaders and killed perhaps several dozen. "It was the first time he heard about it. When he got out of the car, reporters asked him about it. He denied it happened. And he denied it happened for several days. It was classic deny first, investigate later. It turned out to be true. It was a normal

Democracy was an afterthought for the White House, which believed it had little application to Afghans. At the Bonn conference establishing international legitimacy for the Kabul government, "the word 'democracy' was introduced at the insistence of the Iranian delegation," Dobbins points out.

However, democracy -- now the overriding rationale for the global war on terror -- does not include support for human rights. "In terms of the human rights situation in Afghanistan, Karzai is well meaning and moderate and thoroughly honourable," said Dobbins, "but he's overwhelmed.'

Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon and the White House removed restraints on torture. "These were command failures, not just isolated incidents. You didn't have the checks and balances. They've had consequences in terms of public image." In April, the US succeeded in abolishing the office of the UN rapporteur on human rights for Afghanistan.

Dobbins believes that the operation in Afghanistan has improved, but that the administration "hasn't readily acknowledged its mistakes, and corrected them only after losing a good deal of ground, irrecoverable ground. Most of the violence is not al-Qaida type, but Pashtun sectarian violence. It's not international terrorism.'

Facts on the ground cannot alter Bush's stentorian summons to the global war on terror. "This is a campaign conducted primarily, and should be, by law enforcement, diplomatic and intelligence means, Dobbins said. "The militarisation of the concept is a theme that mobilises the American public effectively, but it's not a theme that resonates well in the Middle East or with our allies elsewhere in the world."

"We're taking the fight to the terrorists abroad, so we don't have to face them here at home," Bush declared in June -- and repeated endlessly -- finally appearing vindicated with the London attacks. London, like Iraq and Afghanistan, is 'there," not "here."

Courtesy: The Guardian.

Sidney Blumenthal, a former senior adviser to esident Clinton, is author of The Clinton Wars