

DEFENSE & SECURITY

Urban Warfare: Cities, Crime, and the Future of Conflict

JULY 18, 2026

In this Orion Talks episode, hosted by Suat Cubukcu, John Sullivan, Nathan Jones, and Daniel Weisz Argomede explore how urban warfare is reshaping modern conflict. Drawing on their book *Urban Operations: War, Crime, and Conflict*, they examine the increasingly blurred lines between conventional warfare, organized crime, terrorism, and criminal insurgencies in cities around the world. The conversation also explores how emerging technologies, evolving non-state actors, and the challenges of protecting civilians are transforming military operations and raising new questions for scholars and security practitioners.

John Sullivan was a career police officer, now retired. Throughout his career, he has specialized in emergency operations, terrorism, and intelligence. He is a Senior El Centro Fellow at Small Wars Journal and Contributing Editor at Homeland Security Today. He served as a lieutenant with the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, where he served as a watch commander, operations lieutenant, headquarters operations lieutenant, service area lieutenant, tactical planning lieutenant, and in command and staff roles for several major national special security events and disasters.

Nathan Jones is an Associate Professor of Security Studies in the College of Criminal Justice at Sam Houston State University. He is the author of *Mexico's Illicit Drug Networks and the State Reaction* (2016) with Georgetown University Press. His areas of interest include organized crime violence in Mexico, drug trafficking organizations, social network analysis, border security, and the political economy of homeland security. Dr. Jones is also a Senior Fellow with the Small Wars Journal-El Centro, a Rice University Baker Institute Drug Policy and US-Mexico Center non-resident scholar, and the book review editor for the *Journal of Strategic Security*.

Daniel Weisz Argomedeo is a Non-Resident Fellow at Orion Policy Institute. He earned his PhD in Political Science at the University of California Irvine with a focus on International Relations and Comparative Studies. His dissertation focused on the war on drugs and its impact on women's security in Mexico. He is an associate with the Small Wars Journal and the managing editor for the International Journal of Police Science. He wrote "Climate Change, Drug Traffickers and La Sierra Tarahumara" for the special issue on climate change and global security at the Journal of Strategic Security. He is a lecturer for a variety of departments including criminology, political science and security studies. He is fluent in Spanish, and his research interests and publications include cyberwarfare, climate change, the war on drugs, terrorism, organized crime, women's security and contemporary Latin American politics and history.