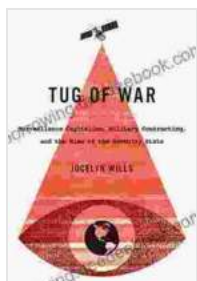


Surveillance Capitalism, Military Contracting, and the Rise of the Security State



Tug of War: Surveillance Capitalism, Military Contracting, and the Rise of the Security State (Carleton Library Series Book 242) by Dave Levitan

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In the wake of the 9/11 attacks, the United States embarked on a global "War on Terror" that has profoundly reshaped the nation's security apparatus. This war has been characterized by an unprecedented expansion of surveillance and data collection practices, both domestically and abroad. The rise of surveillance capitalism, marked by the commodification of personal data by private companies, has played a significant role in this transformation. This essay will explore the symbiotic relationship between surveillance capitalism, military contracting, and the rise of the security state. It will argue that this relationship has serious implications for privacy, civil liberties, and democratic values.

Surveillance Capitalism and the War on Terror

Since 9/11, the US government has invested heavily in surveillance technologies and capabilities. This investment has been driven by the need to combat terrorism and other national security threats. However, the government has also increasingly turned to private companies to provide these services. This privatization of surveillance has led to the rise of surveillance capitalism, a new form of capitalism based on the exploitation of personal data.

Surveillance capitalism companies collect vast amounts of data about our online activities, our location, our social networks, and even our physical health. This data is then used to create detailed profiles of our behavior and preferences. These profiles are then sold to advertisers, governments, and other organizations.

The War on Terror has provided a major boost to the surveillance capitalism industry. The government's demand for surveillance technologies has created a lucrative market for companies such as Palantir, Booz Allen Hamilton, and SAIC. These companies have developed sophisticated data collection and analysis systems that are used by the government to track and monitor individuals.

The rise of surveillance capitalism has had a profound impact on our privacy. Our personal data is now collected and used in ways that were once unimaginable. This has raised serious concerns about the potential for abuse. For example, our data could be used to target us with personalized advertising, to discriminate against us in employment or housing, or to even manipulate our behavior.

Military Contracting and the Privatization of War

The War on Terror has also led to a dramatic increase in the use of military contractors. These private companies provide a wide range of services to the government, including logistics, training, and combat operations. The use of contractors has allowed the government to wage war without having to increase the size of the military.

The privatization of war has raised a number of concerns. First, it has led to a decrease in accountability. Contractors are not subject to the same rules and regulations as military personnel. This can make it more difficult to hold them accountable for their actions. Second, the use of contractors can make it more difficult to distinguish between civilians and combatants. This can lead to increased civilian casualties.

The use of military contractors has also had a negative impact on the environment. Contractors are often not held to the same environmental standards as the military. This can lead to pollution, deforestation, and other environmental damage.

The Rise of the Security State

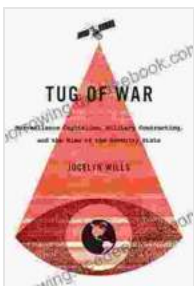
The War on Terror has led to the rise of the security state, a state characterized by a focus on national security and the suppression of dissent. The security state has been accompanied by a decline in civil liberties and democratic values.

The security state has been built on the foundation of surveillance capitalism and military contracting. Surveillance capitalism provides the government with the tools it needs to monitor and track individuals. Military contracting provides the government with the ability to wage war without having to increase the size of the military.

The rise of the security state has serious implications for our democracy. The security state is based on the idea that the government must be able to do whatever it takes to protect national security. This can lead to the erosion of civil liberties and democratic values. For example, the government may use surveillance to target political opponents or to suppress dissent.

The War on Terror has had a profound impact on our society. It has led to the rise of surveillance capitalism, military contracting, and the security state. These developments have serious implications for our privacy, civil liberties, and democratic values. It is important to be aware of these developments and to work to protect our rights and freedoms.

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- William J. Astore, *The Pentagon's Private Army: Contractors in the Shadow of Empire* (New York: Nation Books, 2016).
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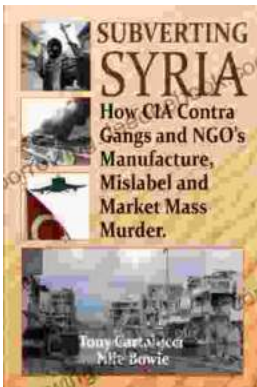
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