Acknowledgements

There are several reasons why I wanted to write this book. As a scholar, I was anxious to understand the momentous events that were transpiring around me. In particular, I was curious about the kinds of language and knowledge that necessarily underpin such a massive amount of political and military activity; at the very least, going to war requires a major degree of social and political consensus – which is only possible through the deployment of language. It was a disappointment to find that apart from one or two notable exceptions little attention had been paid to the role of language and discourse in the construction of the ‘war on terrorism’. I therefore felt it incumbent to embark upon my own study. As a teacher, I wanted to write a book that my students and my friends could understand. Too often, books about the role of language are written from a deeply theoretical perspective and employ a level of specialised jargon that makes their important message inaccessible to the majority of readers. I did not want to write about the language of the ‘war on terrorism’ solely for other specialists in the field – the subject matter is far too important to be confined to the ivory towers. Finally, as a citizen and concerned individual I wanted to contribute to the crucial debate about how society should respond to political violence and whether even greater counter-violence is a sufficient answer. If nothing else, my hope is that this book will in some way help to stimulate genuinely substantive discussions, dissent, arguments, questioning and controversy – the stuff of real politics and something all too rare these days. It is never too late to reclaim the political space for genuine dialogue, even that which has been lost to the suffocating atmosphere of anxiety and acquiescence engendered by myopic leaders and a subservient press. It only requires that we rigorously interrogate every word spoken in public, we learn to abhor hypocrisy, we open our ears to alternative voices and stories and we adopt an attitude of principled scepticism to authority.

Writing a book, like raising a child or building a house, requires a community, and I would not have been able to complete this book without the assistance and comradeship of the following people. Inderjeet Parmar, a friend and colleague at the Centre for International Politics at the University of

Manchester, not only showed me what a real scholar should be – meticulous, intellectually honest and politically responsible – he also took the time to read drafts of my chapters and offer excellent suggestions for improvements. Jan Hancock and Randal Hall also proved to be true friends by reading a draft of the book and offering their considered insights. The departmental Research Colloquium, organised by Stuart Shields, provided a forum where I first presented my ideas; its able members offered real encouragement and constructive criticism. I am extremely grateful to Stuart Shields, Ilan Danjoux, Sophie Hague, Lucy Ferguson, Helen Dexter, Jonathan Gilmour, Simona Rentea and Greig Charnock. The students in my graduate course ‘The Discourses of Terrorism’ also taught and inspired me with their enthusiasm for the subject.

Other members of the Department of Government at the University of Manchester gave me advice and encouragement when I needed it. Peter Lawler, executive series editor, first suggested that I submit my proposal to Manchester University Press and then took the time to read a draft of the manuscript; his mentoring, encouragement and advocacy on my behalf have been indispensable to my first years in the department. I am also indebted to Simon Bulmer, David Farrell, Paul Cammack, Rorden Wilkinson and Adrian Jarvis for advice and assistance in matters relating to my research programme. Victoria Rees and Karen Charters were instrumental in giving me time to complete the manuscript by dealing with numerous administrative chores.

I also want to express my appreciation to those critical voices among the intellectual community and the wider global civil society that have grasped the nettle and demonstrated the courage to question accepted wisdom and challenge the discourses of the powerful. They are true examples of the role that intellectuals should play in society. Joseba Zulaika and William Douglass’s work remains, in my mind, the defining text on the discourses of terrorism (Zulaika and Douglass 1996). It was their book that most influenced my thinking on the subject and in an ideal world it would be required reading for every class on terrorism and political violence. Other contemporary writers who have inspired and influenced me and whose works deserve to be widely read include: David Campbell; Rahul Mahajan; Noam Chomsky; Paul Rogers; Ziauddin Sardar; James Der Derian; John Pilger; Robert Fisk; Arundhati Roy; Howard Zinn; John Gray; David Cole; and Michael Moore. Of course, these are only some of the most well-known authors in this great band of political critics; sagacious voices are all around, even if they are less well known.

Finally, I must thank the members of my whanau, the community of friends, family and colleagues who have stood with me in good times and bad; it is the company of a supportive whanau that gives life its vibrant colours and deep joys. My parents, David and Kathryn Wells, first taught me to pursue wisdom and seek knowledge; this lesson has led me down one of life’s greatest pathways and I am eternally grateful. The other members of this extended family to whom I owe a debt of gratitude include: the Allans, the Gilmours, the Redpaths, the Painters, the

Thompsons, Paul and Coral Bramley, Rachel, Fiona, Alan, Wendy and Bruce Jackson, Robert Jarvis, Mary Hay, Sophie Broad, Stephen and Feni Hamlin and my brothers Steven Wells and D. J. Wells and their families, Jacob Bercovitch, Robert Patman, and Chris and Manami Rudd. Special mention must go to Martin Taylor, a true friend, a great fishing companion and the most loyal opposition a man could ask for.

My deepest thanks however, go to my wife Michelle, who first suggested that I study terrorism, and who motivated me to write more like an ordinary person and less like an academic. Her enthusiasm to learn about contemporary political issues is a real inspiration. She also put up with prolonged periods of inattention while I was writing and applied her unrivalled editorial skills to the final manuscript, going well beyond the call of duty and making suggestions that vastly improved the final text. More importantly, she has supported me like no other throughout my career and I would not be where I am today without her. In large part, I wrote this book for her.

As usual, all mistakes, misconceptions, omissions and opinions expressed in this work are solely my own, and I apologise to anyone I may have forgotten to thank.

Hohou rongo.