New Surveillance Technology Can Track Everyone in an Area for Several Hours at a Time

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By <u>Craig Timberg</u>, Wednesday, February 5, 1:28 PM

> ***Note from Pastor Kevin Lea:*** *Here is more evidence that the infrastructure that will turn the world into a global police state is nearly here, just as the Bible predicted in Daniel (2500 years ago) and Revelation (1900 years ago).*

DAYTON, Ohio — Shooter and victim were just a pair of pixels, dark specks on a gray streetscape. Hair color, bullet wounds, even the weapon were not visible in the series of pictures taken from an airplane flying two miles above.

But what the images revealed — to a degree impossible just a few years ago — was location, mapped over time. Second by second, they showed a gang assembling, blocking off access points, sending the shooter to meet his target and taking flight after the body hit the pavement. When the report reached police, it included a picture of the blue stucco building into which the killer ultimately retreated, at last beyond the view of the powerful camera overhead.

"I've witnessed 34 of these," said Ross McNutt, the genial president of Persistent Surveillance Systems, which collected the images of the killing in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, from a specially outfitted Cessna. "It's like opening up a murder mystery in the middle, and you need to figure out what happened before and after."

As Americans have grown increasingly comfortable with traditional surveillance cameras, a new, far more powerful generation is being quietly deployed that can track every vehicle and person across an area the size of a small city, for several hours at a time. Although these cameras can't read license plates or see faces, they provide such a wealth of data that police, businesses and even private individuals can use them to help identify people and track their movements.

Already, the cameras have been flown above major public events such as the Ohio political rally where Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) named Sarah Palin as his running mate in 2008, McNutt said. They've been flown above Baltimore; Philadelphia; Compton, Calif.; and Dayton in demonstrations for police. They've also been used for traffic impact studies, for security at NASCAR races and at the request of a Mexican politician, who commissioned the flights over Ciudad Juárez.

Defense contractors are developing similar technology for the military, but its potential for civilian use is raising novel civil liberties concerns. In Dayton, where Persistent Surveillance Systems is based, city officials balked last year when police considered paying for 200 hours of flights, in part because of privacy complaints.

"There are an infinite number of surveillance technologies that would help solve crimes . . . but there are reasons that we don't do those things, or shouldn't be doing those things," said Joel Pruce, a University of Dayton postdoctoral fellow in human rights who opposed the plan. "You know where there's a lot less crime? There's a lot less crime in China."

The Supreme Court generally has given wide latitude to police using aerial surveillance as long as the photography captures images visible to the naked eye.

McNutt, a retired Air Force officer who once helped design a similar system for the skies above Fallujah, a battleground city in Iraq, hopes to win over officials in Dayton and elsewhere by convincing them that cameras mounted on fixed-wing aircraft can provide far more useful intelligence than police helicopters do, for less money.

A single camera mounted atop the Washington Monument, McNutt boasts, could deter crime all around the Mall. He said regular flights over the most dangerous parts of Washington — combined with publicity about how much police could see — would make a significant dent in the number of burglaries, robberies and murders. His 192-megapixel cameras would spot as many as 50 crimes per six-hour flight, he estimated, providing police with a continuous stream of images covering more than a third of the city.

"We watch 25 square miles, so you see lots of crimes," he said. "And by the way, after people commit crimes, they drive like idiots."

What McNutt is trying to sell is not merely the latest techno-wizardry for police. He envisions such steep drops in crime that they will bring substantial side effects, including rising property values, better schools, increased development and, eventually, lower incarceration rates as the reality of long-term overhead surveillance deters those tempted to commit crimes.

Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl, a supporter of McNutt's efforts, has proposed inviting the public to visit the operations center to get a glimpse of the technology in action. I want them to be worried that we're watching," Biehl said. "I want them to be worried that they never know when we're overhead…"

> *To read this article in its entirety, go to:*
> http://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/new-surveillance-technology-can-track-everyone-in-an-area-for-several-hours-at-a-time/2014/02/05/82f1556e-876f-11e3-a5bd-844629433ba3_print.html