GlobalResearch
Center for Research on Globalization

Big Brother USA: Surveillance Via "Tagging, Tracking, and Locating"

The Militarization of U.S. Public Service Agencies

By Laurel Federbush
Global Research, September 03, 2007
3 September 2007

Region: USA
Theme: Intelligence, Police State & Civil Rights

According to the 2005 *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, "the terrorist enemy now considers the US homeland a preeminent part of the global theater of combat, and so must we."

The program of "defense transformation," initiated by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, included, among other things, two particular concepts: "persistent surveillance" and the need to "deny the enemy sanctuary." In military thinking, these concepts give rise to the need for constant monitoring of individuals suspected of being terrorists.

There is a special term for that: "Tagging, Tracking, and Locating." The Defense Science Board's 2004 Summer Study entitled *Transition To and From Hostilities* has a whole chapter on this, called "Identification, Location, and Tracking in Asymmetric Warfare." "Asymmetric warfare," incidentally, refers to war not against other countries but against unconventional enemies, such as "terrorists." According to the first paragraph of the Study: "U.S. military forces currently have a superb capability for finding and tracking conventional war targets, such as weapons and military facilities. However, these intelligence assets have a poor capability for finding, identifying, and tracking unconventional war targets, such as individuals and insurgent or terrorist groups that operate by blending in with the larger society."

The study suggests: "Tagging individuals and material can provide a powerful new tool for locating these modern threats. A tag is defined as something that is attached to the item to be located and/or tracked, which increases its ability to be detected or its probability of identification by a surveillance system suitably tuned to the tag. Tags can be either active (such as radio-emitting tags) or passive (such as radio frequency identification [RFID] tags)." It also says: "The technologies for tagging and associated surveillance represent a very important area for research and technology development." The report goes so far as to recommend a "Manhattan Project"-like focus on tagging, tracking, and locating. (The Manhattan Project was the effort during World War Two to develop the first nuclear weapons.)

One organization working on tagging, tracking, and locating technologies is the Technical Support Working Group. The Technical Support Working Group, or TSWG, is funded by the Department of Defense and the Department of State, and has many divisions, all of which do research in counterterrorism technology. One of these divisions is the Surveillance, Collection, and Operations Support Subgroup. This Subgroup includes the National Security Agency, the Secret Service, the FBI, the Special Operations Command, the Defense

Intelligence Agency, and the National Reconnaissance Office. One of its projects is Tagging, Tracking, and Locating, which is sometimes referred to as "TTL." The Secret Service, in fact, has been specifically charged by the Department of Homeland Security with spearheading the use of TTL. The subgroup also works on special sensor technologies–sensors being frequently associated with target tracking and other military surveillance applications. According to this subgroup's own literature, its programs are "classified or highly sensitive. Program requirements, the success of programs, and specific program capabilities cannot be discussed in an open document."

One of TSWG's member entities, the Special Operations Command (SOCOM), has been given power, under the Bush administration, to engage in counterterrorism actions all over the world. SOCOM is allowed to operate within the United States under certain circumstances. According to the SOCOM 2002 Report Layout, the Special Operations Command "is more heavily involved in Homeland Defense taskings than originally had been expected, with no let-up in sight." The Report also observes: "…there is a tendency to suggest new roles and missions for the American military, and in particular SOF [i.e. Special Operations Forces] in the Homeland Defense realm." The Report expressed the opinion that "care must be taken to avoid diluting SOF's capabilities by diverting forces to domestic missions, which other agencies should be performing." Exactly what these domestic missions are, however, is not public knowledge.

Another organization working on TTL technology is the National Law Enforcement and Corrections Technology Center–Northeast Region (NLECTC-NE). The NLECTC-NE is actually co-located with the Air Force Research Laboratory's Information Directorate, in Rome, New York, which develops various kinds of surveillance technology. The fact that these two entities share a location is no coincidence; in fact, they have a partnership which includes the transfer of military technology to law enforcement.

Another radio frequency identification project being sponsored by the military and developed at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, at least some of whose details are publicly available, is called "Total Asset Visibility," and it calls for implantable sensors to be used in American soldiers to monitor their physiological reactions to warfare and to keep track of location. The Army Research Office's Soldier Status Monitoring Project envisions a day when implantable sensors will enable the military to control soldiers' physiological reactions from afar. If this kind of dehumanizing technology is being developed for American soldiers, one can only wonder what the U.S. government would be willing to do to those it labels "terrorists."

These tracking methods are dependent on certain radio systems' being in place.

The Integrated Wireless Network, or IWN, is a project to link the Departments of Justice, Treasury, and Homeland Security, and later, the Department of Defense, with one secure, interoperable communications system. "Interoperable" means, basically, that all the radio systems and other communications equipment of one department would be compatible with those of the other departments and all the personnel of these different departments could talk to each other without any technological barriers. Development of the IWN has been assigned to the military contractor General Dynamics, along with its various subcontractors. Its systems would be APCO Project 25-compliant, meaning that they would conform to a set of standards developed by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials – International (APCO) to facilitate interoperability. The Special

Operations Command, it should be noted, uses APCO Project 25-compliant radios.

The Integrated Wireless Network would operate at 700 MHz, a frequency that enables it to penetrate walls and buildings easily. Needless to say, it also penetrates people easily, and there is evidence linking the 700 MHz frequency to increased risk of cancer.

The Integrated Wireless Network contains an IP backbone, which enables the operation of a number of wireless surveillance devices in the 2.4 Ghz range. Given that this is the same frequency range used by microwave ovens, it is hardly surprising that devices in the 2.4 Ghz range have been linked in certain studies to cancer and other health risks.

Zigbee is one of the 2.4 GHz wireless technologies enabled by the IWN, and it is used in wireless sensor networks, a means of location tracking. Zigbee, of which the Eaton Corporation is a chief proponent, is being marketed as a means of tracking cattle, but it also has the capability for the location tracking of individual people, which is one of the aims of the Secret Service, a primary user of the Integrated Wireless Network.

The militarization of U.S. public service agencies, and the co-opting of public safety radio systems for use as surveillance instruments to track dissidents' every move, must be resisted if Americans hope to retain any degree of freedom or dignity.

Laurel Federbush is a freelance harpist based in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is also an activist against intrusive government surveillance projects as a result of personally witnessing their use against low-income African-Americans in the Detroit area.

Articles by: **Laurel Federbush**