

# THE DRONE REPORT

*Drone-Free LAPD / No Drones, LA! Campaign*

*December 8th, 2015*





# Table of Contents

<b><i>Executive Summary</i></b>	<b>1</b>
<b><i>I. Introduction: The Game of Drones</i></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>II. The Rise of the Machines: A History of Drones</i></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><i>III. If You Got the Money, I Got the Drones:</i></b>	
<i>The Drone Industrial Complex</i>	<b>6</b>
<b><i>IV. Machines of Ever-Loving Grace:</i></b>	
<i>LAPD's Drones and the Costs of a Drone Program</i>	<b>7</b>
<b><i>V. Big Brother is Watching:</i></b>	
<i>Drones and the Architecture of LAPD Surveillance</i>	<b>8</b>
<b><i>VI. Mission Creep: Drones in the Homeland</i></b>	<b>10</b>
<b><i>VII. Psychological Impacts of Drones</i></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><i>VIII. The People Speak: Community Concerns and Responses</i></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><i>IX. Get Up, Stand Up: A Call to Action</i></b>	<b>18</b>

# Look Up: LAPD's Drones in Context

## - Executive Summary -

In May of 2014, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) was gifted two DraganFlyer X6 drones from the city of Seattle--where they had been rejected after intense community pressure. Seattle PD was able to unload this political hot potato onto the LAPD, whose lust for new gadgets is well known.

The following report concludes that LAPD's recently acquired drones pose a significant threat to our communities. These machines are a dangerous step forward in the further militarization of law enforcement, and their implementation here in Los Angeles will have national implications. While the LAPD claims to want to use the drones only in special situations, historical evidence of "Mission Creep"--whereby the use of policing tactics and technologies expands beyond their original functions and goals--puts this intent in serious doubt. The LAPD can't be trusted. The evidence shows that these new weapons pose a serious cost both in public resources, public safety and the mental and physical health of targeted communities.

We discuss the history of drone use, investigate the growing industrial complex surrounding drone use and manufacturing, particularly the manufacturer of LAPD's drones and its costs. In addition, we look at LAPD's history of breaking the community's trust, LAPD's massive architecture of surveillance and militarization and how the new drones fit, the psychological impact of drones on communities, police history of "Mission Creep" and dishonesty, and community feedback in the form of survey data and focus group results and conclude with what we feel is the appropriate call to action.

The Drone-Free LAPD Campaign has collected over 3,000 petition signatures adamantly rejecting the use of drones by law enforcement. There were several focus groups and over 200 surveys collected capturing the community's sentiment in regards to LAPD and drones. Those we surveyed were familiar with drones, and overwhelmingly believed the use of drones by local police is a step forward in the militarization of law enforcement. 83% of survey participants believe LAPD's use of drones will result in unnecessary or unreasonable invasions of privacy. On November 11, 2014 over 200 people attended a town hall to learn more about LAPD's acquisition of drones. This town hall was aired live over KPFK airwaves allowing more people to become informed.

The fight against the drones is not over. To date it is unclear if they have been tested, taken out for maintenance, or if administrative orders or city ordinances are being drafted for drone usage in secret without public knowledge. Recent requests<sup>1</sup> to get an update from the Mayor and the LA Police Commission on the status of these drones have fallen on deaf ears. Due to this silence, the Drone-Free LAPD/ No Drones LA Campaign is pushing forward to get these drones out of Los Angeles. People in Seattle did it, so can we. Join us in this fight! We can win this! Drone-Free LAPD/ No Drones, LA!

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<sup>1</sup> <http://stoplapdspying.org/letter-to-la-mayor-demanding-drone-free-lapd/>

# Look Up: LAPD's Drones in Context

## I. Introduction: The Game of Drones

Quietly, and swiftly, in the Spring of 2014, the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) received two Draganflyer X6 drones: unmanned aerial vehicles. They came aboard a commercial jet, checked as baggage by a high ranking police official from Seattle, Washington. Each drone--“operated by a handheld controller with a video screen--is equipped with a digital still camera, high-resolution video camera and infrared night-vision capabilities”--and can stay in the air for twenty-five minutes on battery power. The Seattle Police Department (SPD) had witnessed an unprecedented reaction to the acquisition of such militarized equipment for police in a major US city<sup>2</sup> and were happy to “gift” these drones to LAPD.

By then, the drones had been collecting dust on a shelf at SPD. That’s because when the then chief of police unveiled the three-foot wide machines, a public uproar erupted. This occurred at a time when the SPD was facing scrutiny for their brutality.<sup>3</sup> Community members denied officials’ attempts to unveil the program in tranquility,<sup>4</sup> and stole the show before it began. Already, the public viewed SPD and these drones with suspicion. One person spoke candidly, saying, “We don’t trust you with the weapons you do have,” referring to SPD’s current arsenal. Other’s compared the project to dystopian science-fiction like George Orwell’s *1984*.<sup>5</sup>

After several tense public meetings, Seattle’s Mayor pulled the plug on SPD’s nascent drone program. The department struggled to get rid of them for more than a year. The drones had originally been funded by a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) program known as the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI).<sup>6</sup> Federal officials made clear to the SPD that, as such, no money could change hands. SPD found an eager recipient in Chief Charlie Beck and his Los Angeles Police Department. The \$82,000 drones headed south to the notorious LAPD.<sup>7</sup> This comes as no surprise to those who follow the LAPD’s machinations. A few months prior to the surreptitious delivery of drones from Seattle, the LAPD had sent a high-ranking delegation to Israel to study their data collection technologies and drone equipment used by the Israeli Defense Force on the ground and in the skies over Gaza and the Occupied Territories of Palestine.<sup>8</sup>

As soon as the drones were received, the LAPD’s public relations juggernaut went into action. Carefully avoiding use of the word, “drone,” they repeated the mantra that the department would use the drones only under special circumstances, that they were “gifts.” They committed to seek public input before getting them off the ground.<sup>9</sup> LAPD name-dropped the local American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) chapter in an effort to

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.laweekly.com/news/game-of-drones-how-lapd-quietly-acquired-the-spy-birds-shunned-by-seattle-4794894>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.geekwire.com/2012/video-protestors-hijack-seattle-police-meeting-aerial-drone-program/>

<sup>5</sup>

<http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/protesters-steal-the-show-at-seattle-police-gathering-to-explain-intended-use-of-drones/?prmid=4939>

<sup>6</sup> <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/535330/coburn-homeland-security-report.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://motherboard.vice.com/read/lapd-seattle-surveillance-drones>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.jewishjournal.com/los\\_angeles/article/lapd\\_scopes\\_out\\_israeli\\_drones\\_big\\_data\\_solutions](http://www.jewishjournal.com/los_angeles/article/lapd_scopes_out_israeli_drones_big_data_solutions)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-lapd-adds-drones-to-arsenal-20140530-story.html>

placate public concerns. The ACLU, however, denied they were crafting a policy with the LAPD around the drones, and questioned their necessity.<sup>10</sup>

Not long after these developments, during Summer and Fall of 2014, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition launched what it dubbed the “Drone-Free LAPD/No Drones, LA!” campaign to defeat the drones.<sup>11</sup> As a part of this campaign, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition mobilized the community: holding rallies, demonstrations, and press conferences,<sup>12</sup> as well as collecting over three-thousand signatures against the use of drones by police over our skies. Despite this, the pro-cop rubber-stamp Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners (LAPC) transferred the drones closer to the department, removing them from DHS custody and placing them in the possession of LAPD’s Office of the Inspector General.<sup>13</sup> So far, the drones are grounded, the LAPD has not unveiled the specifics of the drone program, and the LAPC claims that they will keep the drones out of the air until a policy is formed around them.<sup>14</sup> The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, however, wants to ground the drones permanently. We demand that they either be destroyed or returned to their manufacturer: ***No policy, No guidelines, No drones for the LAPD!***

This report concludes that LAPD’s recently acquired drones pose a significant threat to our communities. These machines are a dangerous step forward in the further militarization of law enforcement. The use of drones here in Los Angeles will have national implications. Historical evidence of “Mission Creep,” whereby the use of policing tactics and technologies expand beyond their original functions and goals, puts LAPD’s claim to want to use these drones only during special circumstances in serious doubt. The LAPD can’t be trusted. The evidence shows that these new weapons pose a serious cost in public resources, public safety and the mental and physical health of targeted communities.

This report demonstrates the above using a variety of findings and evidence obtained through independent and community-based research. It has been crafted collectively by the History and Research Working Group of the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition--made up of diverse individuals, community groups, and advocacy groups, throughout Los Angeles. We discuss the history of drone use in the United States and abroad and investigate the burgeoning industrial complex accompanying the proliferation of drones globally and examine the company profiting from manufacturing LAPD’s latest gadgets. We also look at the cost of drones. Furthermore, we look at LAPD’s history of breaking the community’s trust, and their current facade of community input, manipulated to justify their practices. Highlighted in this report will be LAPD’s massive architecture of surveillance and militarization, and how the DraganFlyer X6 Drones fit into this context. The psychological impacts of drones on people targeted overseas is also detailed. LAPD’s history of mission creep and dishonesty is shown too. Lastly, we present community feedback through survey data and focus group results and conclude with what we feel is the appropriate call to action.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-lapd-drone-20140606-story.html>

<sup>11</sup> [http://nodronesla.org/No\\_Drones,\\_LA!/home.html](http://nodronesla.org/No_Drones,_LA!/home.html)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-anti-police-drone-protest-20140915-story.html>

<sup>13</sup>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/gregorymcneal/2014/10/31/los-angeles-city-council-instructs-los-angeles-police-department-to-create-drone-policy/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.dailynews.com/government-and-politics/20140915/commission-grounds-lapds-drones-until-guidelines-formed>

## II. The Rise of the Machines: A History of Drones

The use of drones by states did not arise overnight. The history of unmanned flying apparatuses for the purpose of surveillance and warfare goes back over one hundred and fifty years. In the 19th century, Austrian military commanders were launching unmanned balloons to bomb the Venetians before Italy was even a country.<sup>15</sup> Contemporaneously, both Union and Confederate armies were launching sorties using similar balloons during the US Civil War.<sup>16</sup> A few decades later, in the Spanish-American War, the US Military used kites with cameras attached as reconnaissance tools. Later, the Nazis were developing radio-controlled unmanned rockets to bomb cities.<sup>17</sup> As the horse fell victim to industrialized warfare in the Twentieth Century, it fell out of favor as a tool for scouting and reconnaissance. New optical surveillance mechanisms were coveted. Drones, in particular, came to be used in military operations as wars began to grow larger in scale and take on a “forever” feel to them.<sup>18</sup>

As radio technology advanced, new drone programs proliferated. A U.K. based project during the Second World War attempted to use US B-17 “Flying Fortresses” and B-24 bombers filled with bombs. A small crew would fly over the English Channel and then parachute out before entering German-controlled territory. Then, a “mothership” would take over, receiving live-feed from an onboard TV camera. This program ended up being a complete failure, and even killed future US President John F. Kennedy’s older brother Joseph after his B-17 blew-up over the English countryside.<sup>19</sup> However, the promise of unmanned killing machines was too much of a good idea--for military use--to be left in the circular file. By 1946, the US Air Force had it’s own “Pilotless Aircraft Branch.” After Gary Powers--spying on the Soviet Union in a U-2 spy plane--was shot down, the military scrambled to find a new aerial surveillance system, with the Ryan Aeronautical Company’s “Lightning Bug” used to fly pre-programmed routes and then recovered via helicopter by “Drone Recovery Officers.” This sort of program seems to have slowly encroached upon the prevalence of manned spy-missions over US adversaries. Chinese officials claimed at the time to have shot down a US reconnaissance aircraft with no pilot.<sup>20</sup> “Lightning Bugs” were used extensively during the US aggression in Vietnam as well, with over one thousand of them used in thirty-four thousand missions.<sup>21</sup> By the 1980s, however, the laurels of drone technology passed to Israel, whose military utilized drones against Syrian forces.<sup>22</sup>

The US advances in Drone technology were hamstrung by the short ranges and durations that drones could fly. While the US military toyed with drones during the Bosnian conflict of the 1990s, there was little advancement in the field until General Atomics developed its Predator Drone. So impressed were the directors of the US war machine, that they soon established a drone squadron housed at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada, the current hub of US drone operations.<sup>23</sup> Used in reconnaissance in conjunction with ship-launched Tomahawk missiles, it

<sup>15</sup> [http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/rpav\\_home.html#Beginnings](http://www.ctie.monash.edu/hargrave/rpav_home.html#Beginnings)

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/the-rise-of-the-killer-drones-how-america-goes-to-war-in-secret-20120416?page=2>

<sup>18</sup> <http://dronecenter.bard.edu/wwi-photography/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://understandingempire.wordpress.com/2-0-a-brief-history-of-u-s-drones/>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/spiesfly/uavs\\_09.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/spiesfly/uavs_09.html)

<sup>22</sup> <https://understandingempire.wordpress.com/2-0-a-brief-history-of-u-s-drones/>

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

wasn't until the early 2000's that the Predator turned from surveillance to being an actively armed and deadly device.

From the year 2000, the CIA had been flying Predators over Afghanistan and Pakistan. After September 11th, 2001, the CIA was given authority to kill individuals via targeted airstrikes. “‘The gloves come off,’ J. Cofer Black, the director of the agency’s Counterterrorist Center, told Congress early in 2002.” The CIA’s first drone strike was used on a sight called Zhawar Kili, where a group of poor men--collecting scrap metal from previous US military bombings--from the villages of Lalazha and Patalan were “mistaken” by officials for being Osama Bin Laden...because he was tall. And wearing long robes. At 5’11”, Daraz Khan--31-- was six inches shorter than Bin Laden.<sup>24</sup> Since 2004, according to the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, US drone strikes have killed over three thousand, eight hundred people in Pakistan alone.<sup>25</sup> To date, the Obama administration has used a covert drone program to assassinate nearly 2,500 people.<sup>26</sup> This, as a part of a never-ending war which in the last ten years has claimed the lives of some 1.3 million people.<sup>27</sup>

Just this year, The Intercept released a large cache of documents from a Defense Department whistleblower, revealing the intricacies of the US drone program and its operations across the globe. The whistleblower wanted to expose the truth, and inform the public on the vast landscape of presidentially-approved assassinations, kill lists, civilian casualties, and global reach of the US’s deadly drone program.<sup>28</sup>

Drones generally, also have a poor track record of safety (putting aside the on-purpose carnage): over 400 US military drones have fallen out of the skies.<sup>29</sup> A police drone in the Houston, Texas area crashed into a lake and divers had to be hired at taxpayer expense to search for it.<sup>30</sup> That same drone, for the very-same agency, tragically-comically, crashed into a truck full of police weapons and equipment two years prior.<sup>31</sup>

These machines, of course, are little more than remote controlled model aeroplanes built up to scale for different purposes. Hobbyists have been using and building them for decades. In the last several years or so, however, the implications of drone technology have been seeping into the private sector for everything from photography to delivery services.<sup>32</sup> The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) predicts ten thousand active commercial drone systems in the next few years,<sup>33</sup> and is proposing regulations for their use in US airspace.<sup>34</sup> Domestic police forces in the US,--mirroring the military--reliant on counterinsurgency as a part of their overarching strategy, have taken notice. Agencies across the country have applied for licences to use drones

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.thenation.com/article/166124/brief-history-drones>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/category/projects/drones/>

<sup>26</sup>

<http://www.commondreams.org/news/2015/02/02/almost-2500-now-killed-covert-us-drone-strikes-obama-inauguration-six-years-ago>

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body\\_Count\\_first\\_international\\_edition\\_2015\\_final.pdf](http://www.ippnw.de/commonFiles/pdfs/Frieden/Body_Count_first_international_edition_2015_final.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> <https://theintercept.com/drone-papers/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/investigative/2014/06/20/when-drones-fall-from-the-sky/>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.chron.com/neighborhood/woodlands/article/250K-police-drone-crashes-into-Lake-Conroe-5435343.php>

<sup>31</sup>

<http://www.policeone.com/police-products/vehicles/specialty/articles/5195787-Drone-crashes-into-SWAT-vehicle-during-police-test-in-Texas/>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2015/04/09/faa-amazon-drone-approval-prime-air/25534485/>

<sup>33</sup> <http://uavs.insct.org/commentary/>

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.faa.gov/news/press\\_releases/news\\_story.cfm?newsId=18295](http://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=18295)

with the FAA.<sup>35</sup> LAPD is only one of the many agencies wanting to use drones as a way of monitoring and controlling its population. Seattle was one of the communities to prevent this from happening. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition hopes to accomplish a similar result here in Los Angeles.

### III. If You Got the Money, I Got the Drones: The Drone Industrial Complex

In December of 2014, several members of the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition and Code-Pink interrupted the key-note address by Austin Blue--whose family owns General Atomics, producer of the predator drone--at the Los Angeles Drone Expo, put on by the nascent Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Systems Association.<sup>36</sup> With chants of "Austin Blue, Shame on You!" and "How many deaths were caused by you!?"<sup>37</sup> Protesters were met with racial slurs<sup>38</sup> and were escorted away by security. But the convention itself represents the beginnings of a hungry and expansive industry. While the military applications of drones are well known by now, as Coalition member Aloni Bonilla phrased it, industry pushes like these are "...just a way to commercialize it." Indeed, those touting the benefits of these machines echoed this sentiment, such as economist Tom Marcesello who made clear that there's a lot of money to be made in commercialized drones.<sup>39</sup> LAPD's newly acquired drones come from a company on the forefront of this new industry. DraganFly Innovations, whose founders equate themselves to the Bill Gates and Steve Jobs of the industry, was formed in 1998 and have now produced dozens of unmanned vehicles for use in a variety of sectors.<sup>40</sup>

The prognosis, however, that this new industry will operate in a way which benefits the public--both in its application and usage of resources--is not good. If we look at police and commercial drone use as a mirror to their usage in the international military arena, we can foresee an industry which will be intimately linked to the corruption which runs the United States from the municipal level to the national level. Let's take a look at some of the US defense contractors whose business is expanding thanks to the growing global market for drone equipment:

- Boeing, which made \$80.5 billion in 2012, has developed a drone that can stay airborne for days.
- General Atomics, signed deals to sell nearly \$200 million worth of drone equipment to the United Arab Emirates. Their CEO made over \$600 million in 2012.
- Lockheed Martin, who raked in over \$47 billion in 2012, is also creating a multi-day airborne drone. They've been under fire in the press for funding pro-drone PBS documentaries.
- Northrop Grumman, based in California and Virginia, is expanding drone technology in Asia, selling over \$1.2 billion worth of drones to South Korea.
- AeroVironment, a firm developing a small "Hummingbird" drone for the Pentagon for surveillance purposes in urban areas.
- Prox Dynamics AS, whose palm-sized drone is being deployed in Afghanistan.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2013/02/faa-releases-new-list-drone-authorizations-your-local-law-enforcement-agency-map>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.uavsa.org/droneexpo/>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.sgvtribune.com/technology/20141214/drone-expo-sees-protests-promotes-new-uses-for-unmanned-vehicles>

<sup>38</sup> <http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/12/16/drones-expo>

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.sgvtribune.com/technology/20141214/drone-expo-sees-protests-promotes-new-uses-for-unmanned-vehicles>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.draganfly.com/our-story/>



- Denel Dynamics, a South African firm, has boomed with a 20% increase in drone sales in the last four years.<sup>41</sup>

And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Drones are not just machines for surveilling, falling, and killing...but also for making piles of money for already wealthy people. With money, of course, comes power. The Drone Caucus (of late, renamed the Unmanned Systems Caucus for Political Correctness) is made up of 50 members of the US House of Representatives. Headed by Los Angeles area Republican Congressman Buck McKeon--who led the nation in 2012 for campaign contributions from drone manufacturer General Atomics--this caucus has exercised extreme political gymnastics to win contracts for drone builders across the country, including border-patrol drones, whose use was widely criticized by the US Border Patrol's own Inspector General. This group backed an amendment which spent \$4.5 billion taxpayer dollars on drones to patrol the US border.<sup>42</sup> The coziness between big business and our elected representatives mirrors the local level--where LAPD's own coziness with private contractors is questioned over their procurement of electronic surveillance equipment and body cameras.<sup>43</sup> It's clear that the development of drone technology is dynamized by a growing and global industrial complex that puts profit making above all concerns, at the expense of our privacy, safety, public resources, and human rights.

#### **IV. Machines of Ever-Loving Grace: LAPD's Drones and the Costs of a Drone Program**

The LAPD, much like any armed force, is tangled in a web of money. As we will examine later on, new policing equipment tends to have its mission grow beyond its original uses and scope. This, in turn, contributes to a different sort of industrial complex than the more global one examined above, but one that--none the less--puts profit over public safety or human rights. In 2011, over 70% of the Los Angeles' budget was dedicated to public safety--LAPD, and the Los Angeles Fire Department. The LAPD's staff levels have not shrunk in years, despite a recession that saw other city services cut.<sup>44</sup> Today, LAPD's annual budget totals close to \$1.2 Billion, and funding is ever-increasing.<sup>45</sup> This year, over \$4.5 million has been dedicated to the new "magic cure" for police brutality--Body Cameras--whose price-tag will double if Mayor Garcetti fails to secure federal matching grants.<sup>46</sup>

The newly acquired TASER Axon body cameras--and accompanying evidence retention software and costs associated are a great example of LAPD gadgetry gone wild, and the way in which LAPD procures its equipment with little public oversight. Often, procurement of new equipment comes via shady 501(c)3 corporations like the Los Angeles Police Foundation (LAPF) who receive donations from private companies and then donate new devices to the LAPD, such as the recently acquired body cameras. To examine this, we quote the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition Report on Body Cameras:

Under this arrangement, private companies can legally donate tax-exempt software and

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/11/companies-making-drones\\_n\\_2849569.html#slide=2196681](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/11/companies-making-drones_n_2849569.html#slide=2196681)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/12ae6c96-0f2a-11e3-8e58-00144feabdc0.html>

<sup>43</sup>

<http://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Stop-LAPD-Spying-Coalition-Report-on-Use-of-Body-Cameras-by-Law-Enforcement-April-2015.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2011/01/04/lapd-unlikely-to-cut-jobs-amid-budget-crisis/>

<sup>45</sup> <http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2015/04/20/la-mayor-unveils-8-5b-budget-plan-to-boost-services-lapd-staffing/>

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.scp.org/news/2015/04/20/51139/public-safety-police-body-cameras-cleanups-in-la-s/>

equipment to the [Los Angeles Police Foundation] LAPF, which, subject to the City Council's and its Public Safety Committee's approval for "gifts" over \$10,000, donates these items to the LAPD often with minimal-to-no public oversight or discussion. As ProPublica has documented, many times donors to the LAPD become recipients of lucrative contracts with the LAPD. According to LA Police Commission President Steve Soboroff, this process is innocuous in that it is designed to fast-track projects that would otherwise become mired in bureaucratic red tape...

The current TASER International-LAPD contract exemplifies the LAPC's lack of respect for an open, competitive bidding process for contracts as is standard city protocol, illustrates blatant conflict of interest between LAPD and TASER, and facilitates the irresponsible, undemocratic, and profligate use of taxpayer money for a police department that already garners a disproportionate amount of funding in comparison to other city departments all while enriching a private company. The record profits that body-worn video manufacturers like TASER, Viveu and others entering this nascent market stand to reap from contracts with cash flush police departments such as LAPD have to be accounted for not only in privacy terms but financial ones as well despite claims that this will save time and money via reduced lawsuits, court dates, officer overtime, and so forth.<sup>47</sup>

This brings us to the underlying premise of the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition work. A practice in our vision is the need to question and redefine concepts of "public safety." If 70% of the city budget is dedicated to "public safety," then what does it achieve? Fire-fighting aside, the militarized enforcement arm of public safety, i.e. the LAPD, seems to be all that our civic leaders confine their notion of "safety" and "security." A community isn't secure when a third of its adults can't read.<sup>48</sup> Or when you need to work ninety-two hours a week to rent a one bedroom apartment.<sup>49</sup> The point we're making here, is that we as a society need to look at and redefine public safety that gets to the root of insecurity, rather than funding and arming an incompetent urban paramilitary force.

## **V. Big Brother is Watching: Drones and the Architecture of LAPD Surveillance**

Drones have been a surveillance tool of choice for the US military since the 1990's. But as always it is only a matter of time when War Abroad becomes War at Home. The War on Terror unleashed battle tested technology and equipment to become an integral part of monitoring and policing people all across the U.S. The use of drones for domestic surveillance going back to 2006 was formally acknowledged by the FBI.<sup>50</sup> The U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Agency has been using drones since 2007, and a December 2014 "scathing"<sup>51</sup> audit of CBP Drone program<sup>52</sup> by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Inspector General

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<http://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Stop-LAPD-Spying-Coalition-Report-on-Use-of-Body-Cameras-by-Law-Enforcement-April-2015.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.colorlines.com/content/more-third-adults-are-illiterate-many-cities-what-do-we-do>

<sup>49</sup>

<http://www.bustle.com/articles/89725-can-you-afford-a-one-bedroom-apartment-on-minimum-wage-not-according-to-the-national-low>

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.paul.senate.gov/files/documents/071913FBIresponse.pdf>

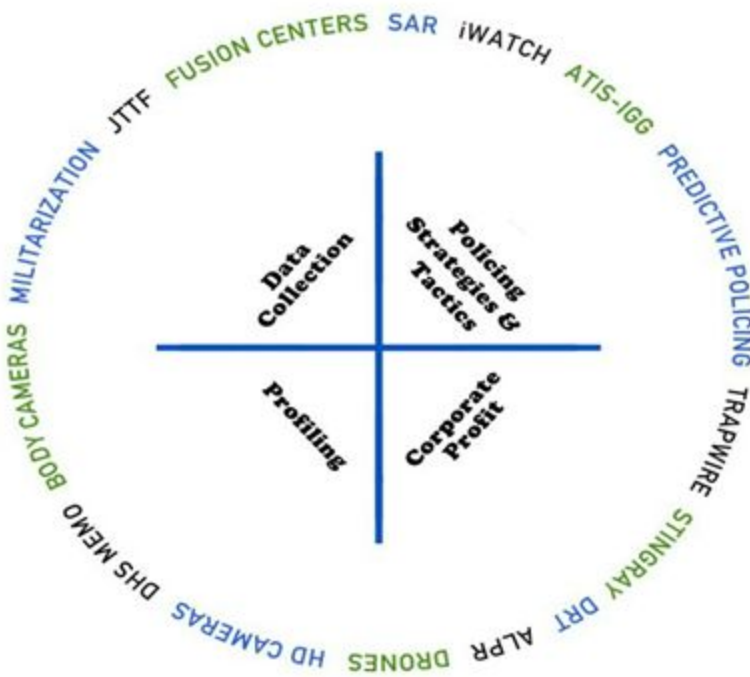
<sup>51</sup> <https://www.revealnews.org/article-legacy/scathing-audit-on-border-agency-drones-comes-as-police-interest-rises/>

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1391532-dhs-ig-drone-audit-2014.html>

Office revealed the use of CBP Predator Drones for domestic policing and surveillance by local law enforcement agencies.

Seizing the opportunity and building upon its long history of surveillance, spying, and infiltration, the Los Angeles Police Department has created a massive architecture of surveillance.<sup>53</sup> Every aspect of people's' lives is being traced and tracked.<sup>54</sup> Automatic License Plate Readers, Hi Definition Cameras, Trapwire, Stingray, Digital Receiver Technology, Body Cameras, Suspicious Activity Reporting, iWATCH - “See Something, Say Something”, Predictive Policing, Fusion Centers, and several other tactics and programs are key to LAPD’s intersectional surveillance, spying, and infiltration apparatus. All in the name of “Community Policing.”

The Draganflyer X6 Drones come equipped<sup>55</sup> with high-powered video and still cameras, thermal forward looking infra-red and dusk/dawn cameras, and remote control tilt, zoom and shutter capacity. This gives the LAPD tremendous capacity to peek, probe, and spy into our most private spaces. The addition of these Draganflyer X6 Drones to LAPD’s Architecture of Surveillance complete the full spectrum of covert and overt information gathering, storing, and sharing.



With the advancements in technology, traditional policing tactics are being reconfigured and driven by counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency prerogatives. Intelligence-Led Policing (ILP) methodologies are increasingly implemented. ILP, or more aptly *speculative or hunch-based policing*, involves the collection of information using physical or electronic surveillance; confidential informants; undercover operators, other overt and covert sources; and processing and analysis of information. Using databases, software and personnel, sharing and disseminating intelligence between the intelligence community, federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, as well as their private

and public partners, a range of information is gathered, stored and shared. Drones add greatly to the operational aspects of ILP.

The Los Angeles Police Department has been at the forefront of establishing and promoting speculative and hunch-based policing. The LAPD’s Architecture of Surveillance demonstrates the scale and depth of such policing strategies and tactics. But there are dire implications with allowing LAPD to collect huge amounts of information and to use it as an alleged guide for “preventing criminal activity.” Not only is the logic flawed, but history has revealed countless incidents where innocent people and organizations have been victimized and surveilled by LAPD for their race, national origin, religion, political beliefs, activism, or perceived threat based

<sup>53</sup> <http://stoplapdspying.org/policing-strategies-and-tactics/>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.laweekly.com/news/forget-the-nsa-the-lapd-spies-on-millions-of-innocent-folks-4473467>

<sup>55</sup> [https://www.eff.org/files/filenode/seattle-pd-2010\\_aircraft\\_system.pdf](https://www.eff.org/files/filenode/seattle-pd-2010_aircraft_system.pdf)

on other personal characteristics. Such policies systematically incentivize racial profiling and the invasion of privacy, and also place the establishment of guilt on hunches and suspicion rather than on factual occurrence of crime, thus eroding the principle of *innocent until proven guilty*. By assuming certain individuals or behaviors are suspicious, this new style of speculative policing treats people as *guilty until proven innocent*.

A glaring example of racial profiling was highlighted by the recent audit released by the LAPD Office of Inspector General in January 2015<sup>56</sup> of the LAPD Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR) Program, a key part of LAPD's Architecture of Surveillance and anchored in LAPD counter-terrorism tactics. The audit revealed overwhelming racial profiling of LA's Black community. In the race/ethnicity/gender data, of the total SARs sent to fusion centers by LAPD, 30% were identified as Black. In the gender count, Black women comprised 50% of the total number of women listed. African-Americans comprise less than 10% of the city's population, yet the audit clearly highlighted 3 to 1 disparate impact and Black women impacted at a 5 to 1 ratio by this counter-terrorism program.<sup>57</sup> Notably, a previous audit of the SAR program released by the LAPD Inspector General in March 2013<sup>58</sup> revealed that out of a four month sample of race/descent data over 82% of SARs were filed on individuals belonging to non-white racial groups. The largest number of SARs were filed on African-Americans.

The acquisition of Draganflyer X6 Drones give LAPD extraordinary power. LAPD, a police department that leads the country in people killed by law enforcement in 2015,<sup>59</sup> has a long history of racial profiling, corruption and violence especially against poor people and people of color. Through our extensive surveys, focus groups, townhalls, and petitions we have found thousands of people in Los Angeles who reject the use of drones by LAPD and demand LAPD to be prohibited from further militarization. People speak about deep distrust of LAPD, falsification of evidence by LAPD officers, and the violation of people's basic constitutional rights. In April 2014, the Los Angeles Times revealed how LAPD officers broke antennas<sup>60</sup> on the digital in car video and audio equipment in 90 out of 300 patrol cars. The installation of these devices was a key condition for the lifting of the federal consent decree. The addition of drones would further add and greatly strengthen LAPD's massive toolkit of militarized equipment and architecture of surveillance. We cannot allow that to happen.

## VI. Mission Creep: Drones in the Homeland

While the LAPD claims to only want drones for limited situations, evidence of domestic drone usage in the U.S. shows a much different trend--one which parallels the habit police forces have of expanding the use of novel techniques and technologies beyond their original stated intent. The biggest player in the rise of domestic surveillance and weaponized drones is the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Formed after the 9/11 attacks, the DHS is reported to be launching Predator Drone missions "on behalf of a diverse group of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies for missions beyond immigration issues" and without sufficient transparency or oversight.<sup>61</sup> According to the Electronic Frontier Foundation, among the parties that have been lent DHS drones are the county sheriff's department in North Dakota and the Texas Rangers. The former is

<sup>56</sup> [http://www.lapdpolicecom.lacity.org/012715/BPC\\_15-0014.pdf](http://www.lapdpolicecom.lacity.org/012715/BPC_15-0014.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> <http://stoplapdspying.org/lapd-inspector-general-absurdly-denies-evidence-of-racial-profiling-in-the-sar-audit/>

<sup>58</sup> <http://stoplapdspying.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/IG-audit.pdf>

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-map-us-police-killings>

<sup>60</sup> <http://articles.latimes.com/2014/apr/07/local/la-me-lapd-tamper-20140408>

<sup>61</sup> Timm, Trevor. "Homeland Security Wants to More Than Double Its Predator Drone Fleet Inside the US, Despite Safety and Privacy Concerns." *Electronic Frontier Foundation*. N.p., 20 Nov. 2012. Web. <<https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2012/11/homeland-security-wants-more-double-its-predator-drone-fleet-inside-us-despite>>.

notable for being the first state in the country to approve the use and deployment of “less than lethal” weaponized drones. North Dakotans can now be assaulted from the air by drone technology equipped with rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear gas, sound cannons, and Tasers.<sup>62</sup> Thanks to pressure from both the Grand Forks County Sheriff’s Department as well as industry groups like the North Dakota Department of Commerce and the Association for Unmanned Vehicles Systems International, human and civil rights concerns have been sidestepped in favor of a burgeoning industry. The ramifications of this technology have not been fully considered and debated within the public and private realm, although this hasn’t stopped the momentum and drive of investors eager to forge ahead in a potentially-lucrative, multi-billion dollar market.

If these “less than lethal” drones sound innocuous to some readers, consider the documented lethal effects of Tasers,<sup>63</sup> rubber bullets and other projectiles. As *The Guardian* reports, Tasers employed by law enforcement have already killed forty-seven people as of November 2015 by inducing cardiac arrest in victims and other projectiles like teargas canisters pose their own dangers as well, particularly when employed by overzealous cops.<sup>64</sup> Besides these more physical threats, the surveillance capabilities of drone technology are reported to be advancing at a rapid pace. According to a comprehensive report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, “drones can be equipped with, among other capabilities, facial recognition technology, fake cell phone towers to intercept phone calls, texts and GPS locations, and in a few years, will even be able to see through walls.”<sup>65</sup> This tangible threat to our human and civil rights is guaranteed to metastasize as the DHS is doling out \$4 million to various police agencies in order to spur more widespread drone use.

Another troubling aspect of the DHS drone program, in particular Customs and Border Protection’s usage, is illustrated by the poorly-planned manner in which the latter procured their ten predator drones, as evinced in a report by the Office of Inspector General of the Department of Homeland Security. By having “very little idea of what exactly they wanted to do with them,” *The Atlantic* reports that the CBP’s possession of drones are almost assured to mission creep beyond their original mandate of protecting the U.S. border. The Inspector General noted, “Although CBP identified stakeholders and has flown missions on their behalf, it has not implemented a formal process for stakeholders to submit mission requests and has not implemented a formal procedure to determine how mission requests are prioritized.”<sup>66</sup> Evidence of this mission creep is apparent as agencies ranging from NOAA to FEMA, the National Guard, and the U.S. Army all employ drones in one fashion or another.<sup>67</sup> And this doesn’t even factor in the commercial uses of UAVs as estimates from the Federal Aviation Administration predict that “as many as 30,000 drones could be flying over US territory by the end of the decade.”<sup>68</sup> Both surveillance and weaponized drones are all but assured to become more prevalent within U.S. airspace in the years to come.

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62 Ibid

63 Laughland, Oliver, Jamiles Lartey, and Ciara McCarthy. “Bolts from the Blue.” *The Counted*. The Guardian, 5 Nov. 2015. Web.

<<http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/05/police-tasers-deaths-the-counted>>.

64 Goodman, Amy. “Iraq War Vet Hospitalized with Fractured Skull After Being Shot by Police at Occupy Oakland Protest.” *Democracy Now!* N.p., 27 Oct. 2011. Web. 03 Dec. 2015.

<[http://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/27/iraq\\_war\\_vet\\_hospitalized\\_with\\_fractured](http://www.democracynow.org/2011/10/27/iraq_war_vet_hospitalized_with_fractured)>.

65 Timm, Trevor. “Homeland Security Want to More Than Double Its Predator Drone Fleet.”

66 Madrigal, Alexis C. “What the Heck Is Homeland Security Doing With \$180 Million in Drones Mostly Sitting Around?” *The Atlantic*. 13 June 2012. Web.

<<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/06/what-the-heck-is-homeland-security-doing-with-180-million-in-drones-mostly-sitting-around/258474/>>.

67 Ibid..

68 Timm, Trevor. “Homeland Security Wants to More Than Double Its Predator Drone Fleet.”

Besides weaponized drones, there are also Micro Aerial Vehicles (MAVs) that appear to be the next generation in drone technology. According to the Air Force, these insect-sized drones “could be as tiny as bumblebees and capable of flying undetected into buildings, where they could photograph, record, and even attack insurgents and terrorists.”<sup>69</sup> Applied within a domestic context, these drones, as highly powerful surveillance tools, pose significant challenges to privacy as well as allow law enforcement to track citizens, especially historically criminalized communities of color, with much greater ease than warrantless GPS coordinates could allow. Compounding the issue further, drones can be tied into the apparatus of Fusion Centers through “video analytics to identify ‘suspicious’ movement patterns” and whole cities are soon to be covered by the unblinking Gorgon stare of the drone from altitudes above 20,000 feet, thanks to gigapixel cameras that allow for remarkable zoom-in detail.<sup>70</sup>

Groups including the ACLU and the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) have raised the alarm over this unchecked power that the state commands and for good reason. Besides the DHS flying Predator drones along the U.S./Mexico border looking for individuals crossing illegally, universities both private and public are tied into the drone-industrial complex through research grants and, as mentioned, police departments have already begun manhunting criminal suspects through this technology.<sup>71</sup> In a joint petition, the ACLU and EPIC laid out the pernicious effects of drones especially in relation to political activists and other undesirables: “The consequences of increased government surveillance through the use of drones are even more troubling. The ability to link facial recognition capabilities on drone cameras to the FBI’s Next Generation Identification database, the largest collection of biometric data in the world, increases the First Amendment risks for would-be political dissidents. In addition, the use of drones implicates significant Fourth Amendment interests and common law privacy rights.”<sup>72</sup>

Skeptics of the mission creep concept would be wise to examine Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams. An innovation of the 1960s, authorities claimed SWAT teams would only occur in high risk situations such as confronting barricaded/armed suspects and active shooter scenarios.<sup>73</sup> A few decades on, however, the use of SWAT has expanded exponentially. A recent report by the ACLU found that 79% of SWAT deployments were for executing search warrants. Sixty-two percent were for drug searches and 65% of SWAT raid targets were unarmed.<sup>74</sup> SWAT teams have proliferated in the failed War on Drugs despite, as the report notes, its increasing unpopularity.<sup>75</sup> This illustrates the tendency of law enforcement tactics and technology to expand beyond their original aims and stated goals. New victims are ensnared by these operations and new classes of criminals are created. Taking SWAT as an example of mission creep, over time these goals shift in nature as the economic imperative of weapons and tactical equipment sales comes into play. Given the similar profit imperative of the drone-industrial complex, the public should be wary of proponents’ claims that this technology will be employed for limited purposes that are palatable. The historical record is littered with examples where technology has far outpaced legislation, public discourse, and ethical concerns. In these respects, drones are far from unique.

69 Smith, Ms. "Smile for the Drone: Coming to Police Stations near You Soon." *Network World*. N.p., 24 Feb. 2012. Web.

<<http://www.networkworld.com/article/2221771/microsoft-subnet/smile-for-the-drone-coming-to-police-stations-near-you-soon.html>>.

70 Ibid.

71 Epatko, Larisa. "How Are Drones Used in the U.S.?" *PBS*. PBS, 18 Apr. 2013. Web. <<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/run-down/how-are-drones-used-in-us/>>.

72 Smith, Ms. "Smile for the Drone."

73 <http://www.newsmax.com/FastFeatures/law-enforcement-SWAT-history/2015/06/17/id/650916/>

74 <https://www.aclu.org/report/war-comes-home-excessive-militarization-american-police>

75 Ibid.

## VII. Psychological Impacts of Drones

There are substantial harms in the use of drones--particularly the psychological impacts on those they monitor and patrol as well the inevitability of this technology to “mission creep” beyond its stated aims by encroaching into the domestic realm. Drones shatter not only bodies,<sup>76</sup> but their constant methods of surveillance also destroy the mental well-being of innocent civilians who often comprise the world's poorest populations racked by decades of war and occupation. And, with attention paid to their domestic usage, states like North Dakota have now approved police use of weaponized “non-lethal” drones to target and apprehend U.S. citizens, which could very well usher in yet another repressive means of technology commanded by the neoliberal state to deal with looming economic, social, political, and environmental calamities through targeting, spying, and intimidation. It is for these reasons that globally-minded U.S. citizens must gauge how best to combat the menace of militarized and surveillance drones.

Proponents of drones have hailed and exalted this “humanitarian weapon” as one that finally achieves the long-desired military dream of warfare without loss. What’s implied here is that the blood of *our* soldiers would not have to be spilled in conflict areas.<sup>77</sup> The reciprocity of combat, indeed, is impossible for the teams of analysts and operators who command the Reapers, Predators, and other violent toys from the safety and comfort of air-conditioned trailers thousands of miles away. As John Kaag and Sarah Kreps, in their book *Drone Warfare*, write, “The use of drones provides a win-win proposition for the president, who could appear strong on defense without responsibility for body bags coming home.”<sup>78</sup> Within these foreign theaters of war goals are ambiguous and counterinsurgency strategy, a “kinder” alternative to traditional warfare, has failed to win over the hearts and minds of the occupied. To a war-weary American public, drones promise the advent of warfare without risk and, sadly, for many that’s good enough.

What is even more attractive about the prospect of targeted killings by drones is their seeming precision, which is repeated ad-nauseum within the corporate media. The perpetual slaughter thus continues unabated without protest. Americans are told that civilian casualties are extremely rare, are merely technical, though tragic, blunders: collateral damage. One can only wonder how U.S. civilian deaths by militarized drones will be legitimated by law enforcement once this technology gains greater ubiquity. No doubt, some degree of other-ing will be employed on black and brown bodies as well as others who challenge racism, patriarchy, and capitalism.

One account of the fear and hopelessness that omnipresent drones elicit in those who suffer from their persistent gaze and ordinance is that of a mother from Waziristan, Pakistan. When this woman's family hears the distant whine of an American drone overhead, she states, “[b]ecause of the terror, we shut our eyes, hide under our scarves, put our hands over our ears. Why would we not be scared?”<sup>79</sup> An even more descriptive and startling account is given by David Rohde, an American journalist held captive for several months by the Taliban: “The drones were terrifying. From the ground it is impossible to determine who or what they are tracking as they

76 “Living Under Drones.” Living Under Drones. September 1, 2012. Accessed November 22, 2015. <http://www.chrgi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Living-Under-Drones.pdf>.

77 Cohn, Marjorie. “US Policy of Targeted Killing with Drones: Illegal at Any Speed.” In *Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues*, 145. Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2015.

78 Kaag, John J., and Sarah E. Kreps. “Drones and Democracy.” In *Drone Warfare*, 65. Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2014.

79 Friedersdorf, Conor. “Every Person Is Afraid of the Drones’: The Strikes’ Effect on Life in Pakistan.” *The Atlantic*. September 25, 2012. Accessed November 22, 2015.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/09/every-person-is-afraid-of-the-drones-the-strikes-effect-on-life-in-pakistan/262814/>.

circle overhead. The buzz of a distant propeller is a constant reminder of imminent death.” Rohde further stated that, even in areas where drone strikes were less common, people still lived in perpetual fear.<sup>80</sup>

This violence stems from hierarchies within the “kill chain” where intelligence analysts potentially work from thousands of miles away looking for any abnormal human behaviors on which to base their “signature strikes” (the international and lethal equivalent of the U.S. Suspicious Activity Reporting program, which documents abnormal human activities that are often quotidian in nature). In fact, one senior official within the Obama administration recalled a joke attesting to the laxness behind “signature strikes” and the trigger-happy tendencies of drone pilots, stating that “when the CIA sees ‘three guys doing jumping jacks,’ the agency thinks it is a terrorist training camp...Men loading a truck with fertilizer could be bombmakers-but they might also be farmers.”<sup>81</sup>

These strikes are no laughing matter for those on the ground and cause psychological trauma. Their emotional maladies originate, in part, from what a study by the law schools of Stanford and NYU described in their report *Living Under Drones* as “striking one area multiple times, and its record of killing first responders, [which] makes both community members and humanitarian workers afraid to assist injured victims.”<sup>82</sup> This practice, known as the “double tap,” is deplorable in that it needlessly murders those who wish to help their neighbors, family, and friends in the event of a blast from a Hellfire missile. Adding insult to injury, so-called “triple taps” will focus on funeral attendees for those killed by prior strikes. Realizing that they too could be the targets of a double, or even a triple, strike, community members are reluctant to lend their assistance to others and attend funeral processions should they or their families be singled out for retaliation as enemy combatants.<sup>83</sup>

The fear that shreds the fabric of these communities is illustrative of a psychological process known as “anticipatory anxiety.” Those who suffer from this are prone to persistent worry about possible future trauma.<sup>84</sup> One psychiatrist who has treated Waziri patients with anticipatory anxiety described their constant fears as ruminating over when “the next drone attack going to happen.” He continued, “When they hear drone sounds, they run around looking for shelter.” This same report has also described women and children feeling so terrified that they scream and hide whenever they hear a knock on their door.<sup>85</sup>

Drones are a privileged weapon used as a surrogate for a viable, sustainable strategy to combat terrorism. The Obama Administration has, instead, focused on short term “wins” that only maim, kill, and terrorize those populations we should be helping through infrastructure projects and non-military foreign aid. Both the physical and psychological impacts of drones will not soon be forgotten around the world as they make a mockery of international humanitarian law, violate the sovereignty of nations and set a dangerous precedent for the scores of other states pursuing this technology in its weaponized guise. The day may very well come when foreign countries commit their own targeted assassinations on U.S. soil against potential enemies such as human rights and political activists as well as whistleblowers. It is for these dire implications of weaponized drones that this technology must be banned at the local and international level.

<sup>80</sup> <http://www.chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Living-Under-Drones.pdf>.

<sup>81</sup> Cohn. "Introduction: A Frightening New Way of War." In *Drones and Targeted Killing: Legal, Moral, and Geopolitical Issues*, 13. Northampton, Massachusetts: Olive Branch Press, 2015.

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Living-Under-Drones.pdf>.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Taylor. "Drones Don't Just Kill."

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Living-Under-Drones.pdf>.



## VIII. The People Speak: Community Concerns and Responses

Starting in the Summer of 2014 the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition organized a series of focus groups whose main purpose was to elicit the community's attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in surveys and discussions about drones. The focus groups were used to understand what people know about drones, how they feel about Los Angeles Police Department using drones in their community, if drones signify a further militarization of the police department, and if there is a significant human impact. Included in these focus groups were high school students, health care providers, activists, and other local community members.

*“Drones are used by US military in Iraq and Pakistan- people who are using it [drones] are detached from human beings. framed as 'collateral damage', which makes it easier for people to normalize violence... the military does not look at people as family members or human beings”- Focus Group Participant*

While engaging in these focus groups it was important to first attain a general baseline assessment of what the community knew about drones before any information exchange regarding LAPD's Draganflyer X6 drones occurred. In general, community members were shocked to learn that LAPD acquired drones and that they did not have any say over this process. It's not surprising that concern was expressed considering the unfortunate reality that many people's only association to a drone is with war overseas in the Middle East. Participants knew drones to be weaponized and used for bombing and spying. Furthermore it was stated and known that drones operate remotely, with their pilots situated in a completely different part of the world, flying the drone as if it were a videogame.

Once the facilitators introduced the topic of the drones, the conversation switched to the community's experience and view of the Los Angeles Police Department. There was a lack of trust in the LAPD. Community members spoke at length of LAPD's history of racial profiling and human/civil rights abuse in the Rampart Division. They also expressed that they felt as if they had no other option but to turn to the police when faced with violent situations even though they knew the police would engage in racial profiling and biased policing. It is this abuse of power many participants continued to speak about. One person described the LAPD as a gang that acts “as if the law is theirs”

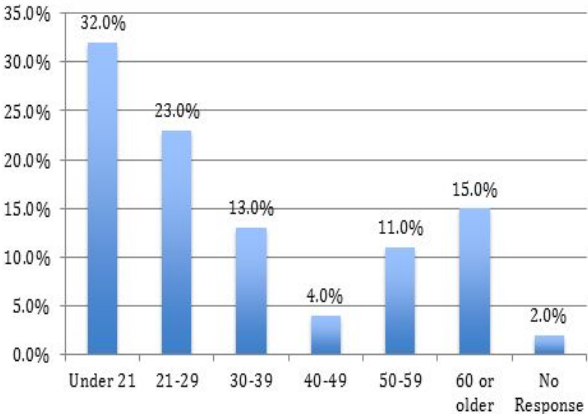
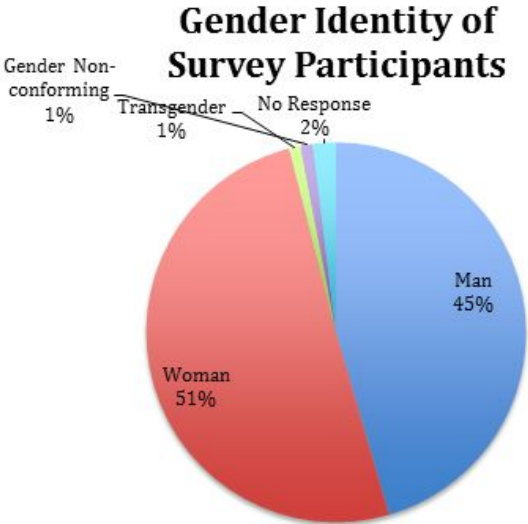
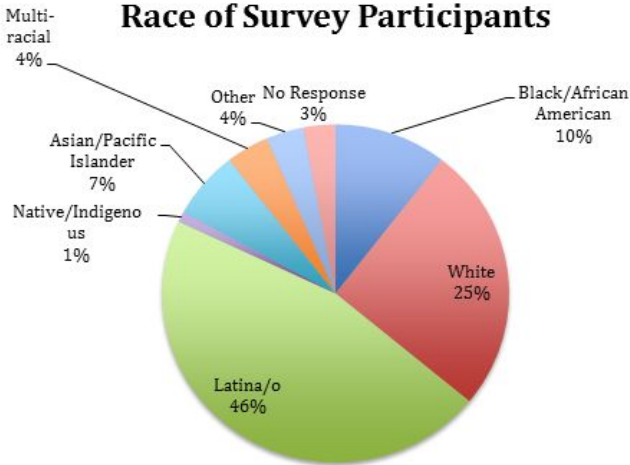
Community members were informed that LAPD claimed it would only use the drones for hostage situations, crowd control, search and rescue--and subsequently asked if they could trust LAPD to use drones for these sole purposes. Responses included: “Police get to define what a situation is”; “Because police have the power to define and describe a situation they can use the drones how they want.” Other community members made parallels between the use of gang injunctions and profiling to the use of drones and profiling. “If you are a person of color you are easily profiled and stopped.” Drones were clearly perceived as another tool to monitor people of color.

The next stage of the focus groups drew attention to LAPD's access to surveillance and military equipment and whether folks felt this was necessary. The overall sense was that LAPD was already a militarized force and an extremely intimidating entity to the community. Many participants were aware that LAPD receives military equipment from the federal government and did not approve of this process.

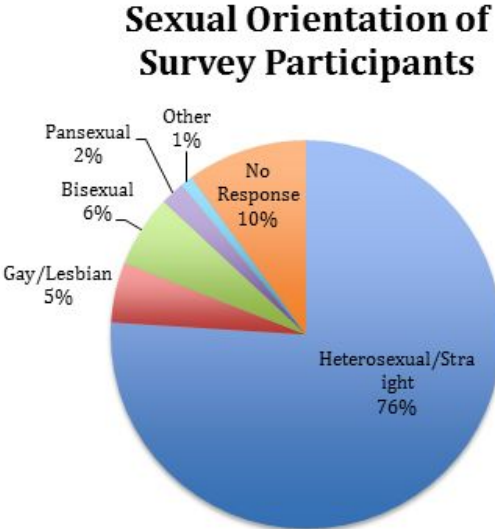
Many people expressed the immediate sense of being criminalized through the use of surveillance technology like drones. The idea of more military equipment made some participants allude to the fact that people will become less social and less inclined to speak with each other because of the fear of being watched. There was also a specific intersection between surveillance capacity and the social justice community. Knowing the history of the Counterintelligence Program one participant saw the use of drones and surveillance technology as a way to instill fear and mistrust between communities that are trying to create change.

These focus groups demonstrate that diverse communities across Los Angeles are not in favor of drone usage by LAPD. Drones are seen as a tool of war and LAPD is not an agency that people trust with drones. Already militarized, the LAPD is seen by the community as an entity that actively engages in racial profiling and never operates with the communities best interest in mind.

Since the summer 2014, the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition also conducted public surveys to document the views of



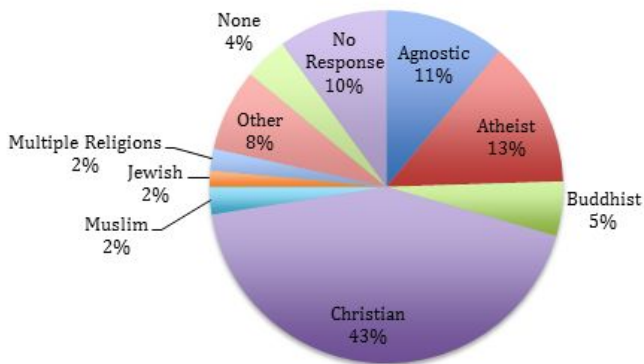
Angelenos in order to present them to our elected officials and the the Board of Police Commissioners. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition collected one hundred and seventeen (117) paper surveys and another eighty-three (83) online. At public venues such as: the STEM Academy of Hollywood, the Revolutionary Autonomous Community Mutual Aid Food Program located in MacArthur Park, Jim Gilliam Park, in Baldwin Hills, and Los Angeles Community Action Network events in Skid Row. The findings below are representative of these 200 total respondents, collectively.



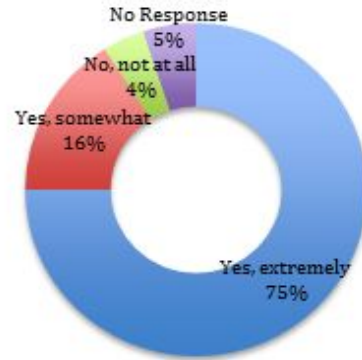
The race, gender and age breakdown of our survey respondents are demographically representative of the race, gender and age breakdown of residents of the City of Los Angeles, as seen in the graphs provided.

Furthermore, respondents of our survey reflect a diverse range of sexual orientations and faiths/religions.

### Religious Affiliation of Survey Participants



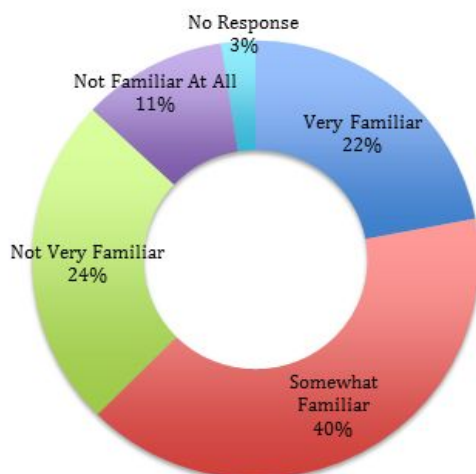
### How Troubling if Law Enforcement has Drone Technology?



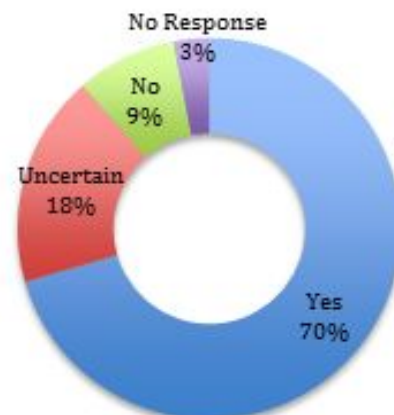
Overwhelmingly, Angelenos who participated in this survey:

- are familiar with drones.
- believe the use of drones by our police force is a step towards the militarization of our enforcement agencies.
- believe the use of drones by our police force may result in unnecessary or unreasonable invasions of privacy. While 83% of respondents believe drone usage by LAPD may result in unnecessary or unreasonable invasion of privacy, only 4.5% believe it will not.
- find it troubling if our law enforcement personnel is supplied with technologies that gives them the ability to watch you 24/7, even if you have not engaged in any criminal activity.
- believe their privacy is important.
- do not believe LAPD is very trustworthy.
- think LAPD should not be allowed to use drones for law enforcement purposes.

### Familiarity with Drones



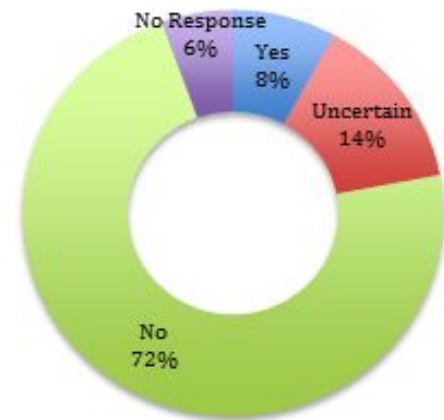
### Drones are a Step Towards Militarization



Our public survey finds an overwhelming mistrust of LAPD, which relates to the public's opinion about LAPD drone usage. Specifically:

- A majority of respondents, 84.9%, who believe LAPD cannot be trusted at all also believe LAPD drone usage is a step towards militarization. 27.7% of community members who believe LAPD is very trustworthy also believe LAPD drone usage is a step towards militarization;
- An overwhelming number of respondents, 95.3% who believe LAPD cannot be trusted at all also believe LAPD drone usage may result in unnecessary or unreasonable invasion of privacy.
- 91.9% who believe LAPD cannot be trusted at all also believe LAPD drones should not be approved for law enforcement purposes. Nearly half, 45.5% of respondents who believe LAPD is very trustworthy also do not favor LAPD's drone usage;
- 93% who believe LAPD cannot be trusted at all also find it extremely troubling if LAPD is given more technology to watch the public 24/7, even when a person is not engaging in any criminal activity. Furthermore, 27.3% of respondents who believe LAPD is very trustworthy also find it extremely troubling.

### Should LAPD Use Drones?



We find that regardless of how familiar the people of the Los Angeles community are with drones, overwhelmingly, respondents feel *concerns that drone usage by LAPD is a step towards militarization*, and over 80% of respondents--regardless of their familiarity with drones--express a high level of concern that LAPD drone usage will *result in unnecessary and unreasonable invasion of privacy*.

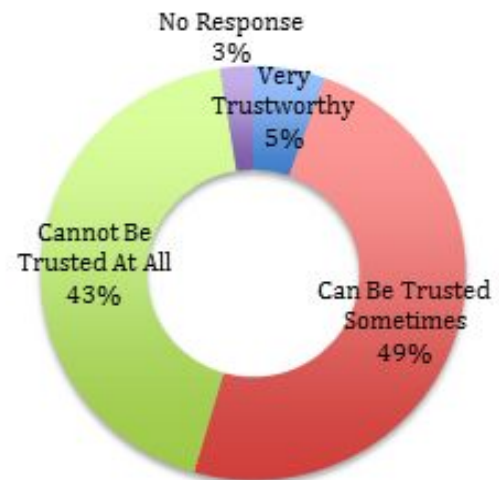
### IX. Get Up, Stand Up: A Call to Action

Our fight against the drones started on June 10, 2014 with a visit to the Los Angeles Board of Police Commissioners. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition sent a clear message to the Commission that drones were not welcome in our communities.

The following month a diverse group of community members came together to form the Drone Free LAPD/ No Drones, LA Campaign. The launch of the campaign was on August 21, 2014.

With this launch, the Campaign sent a letter to Mayor Eric Garcetti's Office laying out the case as to why the community of Los Angeles did not need drones. In response to the letter the members of the Drone Free LAPD Campaign were able to meet with two policy advisors from the Mayor's Office. In this meeting information was

### General View of LAPD



exchanged and a promise was made by the Mayor's advisors that a meeting would later happen with Mr. Garcetti himself. That promise hasn't been kept.

In September 2014 the California State Assembly attempted to pass AB 1327 which would require law enforcement to obtain a warrant to use drones. The Drone-Free LAPD/No Drones, LA Campaign came out clearly against this state law arguing that any law crafted would ultimately legitimize and codify drone usage by law enforcement. The Drone-Free LAPD/No Drones, LA Campaign firmly stated that no drones should be used by law enforcement.

While keeping pace with local and state officials the Drone-Free LAPD campaign also sought support among the local Los Angeles City Neighborhood Councils. On September 23rd 2014 the Echo Park Neighborhood Council passed a resolution and wrote a letter to Mayor Garcetti opposing the LAPD Drones. A month later on November 6th, 2014 the Highland Park Neighborhood Council passed a resolution opposing the use of drones as well.

The Drone-Free LAPD Campaign has collected over 3,000 petition signatures adamantly rejecting the use of drones by law enforcement. There were several focus groups and over 200 surveys collected capturing the community's sentiment in regards to LAPD and drones. On November 11, 2014 over 200 people attended a town hall to learn more about LAPD's acquisition of drones. This town hall was aired live over KPFFK airwaves allowing more people to become informed.

The fight against the drones is not over. To date it is unclear if they have been tested, taken out for maintenance, or if administrative orders or city ordinances are being drafted for drone usage in secret without public knowledge. Recent requests<sup>86</sup> to get an update from the Mayor on the status of these drones has fallen on deaf ears. Due to this silence, the Drone-Free LAPD/ No Drones, LA Campaign is pushing forward to get these drones out of Los Angeles. People in Seattle did it, so can we.

Join us in this fight! We can win this! Drone-Free LAPD / No Drones, LA!

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<sup>86</sup> <http://stoplapdspying.org/letter-to-la-mayor-demanding-drone-free-lapd/>



# Stop LAPD Spying Coalition

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*The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition is comprised of concerned individuals from every sector of our community, including youth, immigrants, formerly incarcerated people, academics, un-housed folks, artists, lawyers, LGBTIQ community members, journalists, students, faith based and community-based organizations. Since the summer of 2011, the Coalition has been actively engaged in grassroots organizing, extensive community outreach and education including townhalls, community forums, conferences, surveys, teach-ins, and policy advocacy to dismantle LAPD surveillance, spying, and infiltration programs. We reject all forms of police oppression and any policy that make us all suspects in the eyes of the State. Our vision is the dismantling of government-sanctioned spying and intelligence gathering, in all its multiple forms.*

## **Our primary goals are:**

- 1. First and foremost to advance public participation and dialogue on police spying and surveillance, demystifying the issues and helping people relate to them personally.*
- 2. To expose policies like Suspicious Activity Reporting program, and build a diverse grassroots campaign to rescind these policies, going beyond the framework of legal/constitutional challenges to build public awareness, participation, mobilization and action.*
- 3. To sustain long-term movement building that is intersectional to the core on issues, experiences, demographics and resources.*