

The Globalization of Repression: A Special Report to the European Parliament Censored Stories: 'The Technologies of Political Control'

The following is an edited version of a 112-page "Special Report to the European Parliament" prepared by the Omega Foundation for the European Parliament's department of Scientific and Technological Options Assessment (STOA) and published in September 1998. While this report and its subsequent updates are widely known throughout Europe, it has never appeared in the US media. The full report is available from STOA, Luxembourg, +352-4300-22511, fax: -22418, http://www.europarl.eu.int/stoa/publi/166499/execsum_en.htm.

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Luxembourg (January 6, 1998) - Nearly 30 years ago, the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS) warned that a new technology of repression was being spawned in an effort to contain civil unrest. In 1977, BSSRS published *The Technology of Political Control* which analyzed the function of these new technologies. Largely created as a result of research and development undertaken as part of Britain's colonial wars, work on this technology was further enhanced by technical developments achieved by the US' military-industrial complex.

The BSSRS was the first report to identify a whole class of technology whose principal function was to achieve social and political control. "This new weaponry ranges from means of monitoring internal dissent to devices for controlling demonstrations; from new techniques of interrogation to methods of prisoner control," BSSRS reported.

The Technology of Political Control predicted that, with the deployment of these technologies, governments would no longer reach for the machine gun when threatened at home. They would have plastic bullets that kill only occasionally, interrogation that tortures without leaving physical scars, electronics for telephone taping and night surveillance, and computers to build files on dissidents.

A massive Police Industrial Complex has been spawned to serve the needs of police, paramilitary and security forces. An overall trend is towards the globalization of these technologies.

Many major arms companies have established paramilitary/internal security operations and diversification into these markets is increasing. Weapons specifically designed to quell dissent are incredibly cheap compared to major warfare counterparts like ships, aircraft and tanks. The move into a post-Cold War world has been accompanied by a change in the nature of warfare.

The militarization of the police often begins via "special weapons and tactics squads," such as the *Grenz Schutz Gruppe* in Germany, the *Gendarmerie Nationale* in France, the *Carabinieri* in Italy, the Special Patrol Group in the UK or the federal police paramilitary SWAT teams in the US (FBI, DEA and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms). Security companies now produce weapons and communications systems for both the military and the police.

The Evolution of Repression

The 1972 US National Science Foundation's *Report on Non-lethal Weapons* listed 34 different weapons including: chemical and kinetic weapons; electrified water jets; combined stroboscopic light and pulsed sound weapons; infrasound weapons; guns that fire drug-filled, flight-stabilized syringes; stench darts that give off an obnoxious odor; the Taser, which shoots 50,000 volts into the target; and "instant banana peel," which makes roads slippery and impassable.

Many of these weapons have since achieved operational status. They include: electronic riot shields and electro-shock batons; bulk chemical irritant distributor systems (delivered by British water cannon or Israeli backpack sprayers); plastic bullet guns; hydraulically fired, slingshot rubber-bullet machines; and biomedical weapons, such as the compressed-air-fired drug syringe now commercially available both in the US and China.

Some 856 companies across 47 countries have been or are currently active in the manufacture and supply of such weapons. This global proliferation has been fueled by private companies wishing to tap lucrative security markets.

Portable electrified riot shields (manufactured since the mid-1980s) comprise a transparent polycarbonate plate through which metal strips are interlaced. A button-activated induction coil in the handle sends 40,000 to 100,000 volts arcing across the metal strips, accompanied by intermittent indigo flashing sparks and an intimidating crackle as the air between the electrodes is ionized. Deaths have been reported from both Tasers and from shock shields.

A wire barrier system dispersed by the Volcano Mine System shoots out a thin wire with something like fish hooks along it in enough mass to cover a soccer-field sized area. "It's intended to snag. It's not going to kill you," said Volcano marketing manager Tom Bierman.

Human guards are being replaced with sophisticated punishment mechanisms that vary from electroshock to kill-fences and fragmentation mines. Neural networks with semi-intelligence will play an increasing role in sentinel duties as robot technology improves. Already prototypes known as "insectoids" are being evolved to cheaply replace personnel on routine guard duties. They can be programmed to track a fence and carry either lethal or sub-lethal weapons.

"Proactive Policing"

The fastest-growing trend in surveillance technology is towards tracking certain social classes and races living in red-lined areas before any crime is committed. Such "proactive policing" is based on military models of gathering huge amounts of low-grade intelligence. With systems such as Memex, it is possible to quickly build up a comprehensive picture of virtually anyone by gaining electronic access to all their records, cash transactions, cars held, etc.

Any unique attribute of anatomy can be used to create a human identity recognition system. Cellmark Diagnostics (UK) can recognize genes; Mastiff Security Systems (UK) can recognize odor; Hagen Cy-Com (UK) and Eyedentify Inc. (USA) can recognize the pattern of capillaries at the back of the retina; while AFA Technology (UK) is capable of signature verification.

DNA fingerprinting is now a reality. Britain has set up its first DNA databank and has carried out mass dawn raids of targeted suspects. Plans are being drawn up by at least one political party to DNA-profile [British citizens] from birth. Face recognition systems are seen as being able to revolutionize crime, customs and intruder detection.

Night-vision technology developed as a result of the Vietnam war has now been adapted for police usage. Heli-tele surveillance [from helicopters] allows cameras to track human heat signatures in total darkness. Lorraine Electronics' Direct Intelligent Access Listening (DIAL) allows an operator to monitor several rooms from anywhere in the world.

Neural network bugs go one step further. Built like a small cockroach, they can crawl to the best location for surveillance. Japanese researchers have managed to control real cockroaches by implanting microprocessors and electrodes in their bodies. The insects can be fitted with micro cameras and sensors to reach places other "bugs" can't.

'Less-lethal' Weapons

The essential role of new crowd-control weapons and tactics is to amplify the level of aggression that can be unleashed by an individual officer. Much of a weapon's effect lies in creating a sense of uncertainty. Even the insectoid appearance of riot squad members is part of the threat impact. Thus the rationale behind the new US side-handle batons, riot shield charges, riot wedges, "snatch squads" and the martial arts-style arrest techniques.

The biggest growth area however, has been in what used to be called "non-lethal weapons." The fact that some of these weapons kill, blind, scalp and permanently maim led the authorities and manufacturers to come up with a new name - "less-lethal weapons" - i.e. they only sometimes kill.

Police forces have acquired many of the weapons normally associated with the military. Many shotguns specially adapted for police use (e.g., by Ithaca, Mossberg, Remington, Sage International and Wilson Arms) are literally sawn-off shotguns whose wider spread increases the number of likely targets.

Specialist shotgun ammunition enables some of these weapons to smash the cylinder block off a car or literally cut a human in half. An advertisement for the shotgun "bolo round," claims "It slices - it dices." Shotgun ammunition leaves no evidence of what weapon was used to fire it because they do not leave a "spent cartridge signature."

In urban settings, a high-velocity round could easily pass through an intended target and continue penetrating walls and go on to kill innocents beyond the observed fire zone. To obviate this problem, manufacturers are increasingly producing hollow point, expanding, or "dum-dum" ammunition for police use.

Whereas ordinary ammunition can sail through the body leaving a relatively clean hole, soft-nosed ammunition "mushrooms" in the body, causing far more serious damage. Dum-dums can take an arm or a leg off. Some these weapons, like Winchester's Black Talon or the high-explosive filled, Frag 12 cause horrific injuries.

Paradoxically, the Hague Declaration of 1989, which prohibited the use of hollow point ammunition in war, does not apply to the policing of civil conflicts.

Surveillance Technologies

Until the 1960s, most surveillance was low-tech and expensive since it involved following suspects around from place to place. Even electronic surveillance was highly labor intensive. The East German police, for example, employed 500,000 secret informers, 10,000 of which were needed just to listen and transcribe citizens' phone calls.

At the end of the Cold War, defense and intelligence agencies refocused missions to justify their budgets, transferring their technologies to certain law enforcement applications such as anti-drug and anti-terror operations. In 1993, the US Department of Defense and the Justice Department signed a memoranda of understanding for "Operations Other Than War" to facilitate joint development and sharing of technology.

"Fingerprints, ID cards, data-matching and other privacy-invasive schemes were originally tried on populations with little political power, such as welfare recipients, immigrants, criminals and members of the military, and then applied up the socioeconomic ladder," says David Banisar of Privacy International. "Once in place, the policies are difficult to remove." Ultimately, he notes, "They facilitate mass and routine surveillance of large segments of the

population without the need for warrants and formal investigations. What the East German secret police could only dream of is rapidly becoming a reality in the 'Free World.'"

Much of this technology is used to track the activities of dissidents, human rights activists, journalists, student leaders, minorities, trade union leaders and political opponents.

A huge range of surveillance technologies has evolved, including night-vision goggles; parabolic microphones to detect conversations over a kilometer away; laser microphones that can pick up any conversation from a closed window in line of sight; stroboscopic cameras that can take hundreds of pictures in a matter of seconds and individually photograph all the participants in a demonstration or march.

The Scoot surveillance system - with US-made Pelco cameras - was sold to China as an advanced traffic control system by Siemens Plessey. The system was used to faithfully record the protests that lead to the 1989 massacre in Tienanmen Square. These images were repeatedly broadcast over Chinese television, with the result that nearly all the transgressors were identified.

Passive Millimeter Wave Imaging developed by the US Millitech Corp. can scan people from up to 12 feet away and see through clothing to detect concealed weapons, packages and other contraband. Variations of this through-clothing screening under development by Raytheon Co., include systems that illuminate an individual with a low-intensity electromagnetic pulse.

The Tadiran computer supplied to Guatemala and installed in the national palace contained "an archive and a computer file on journalists, students, leaders, people on the left, politicians" that was used to select assassination victims. Europe's Harlequin system allows the automatic production of maps of who phoned whom to show "friendship networks."

The independent Commission for the Control of Security Interceptions, said that 100,000 telephone lines are illegally tapped each year in France and that state agencies may be behind much of the eavesdropping.

However, planting illegal bugs is yesterday's technology. Modern snoopers can buy specially adapted laptop computers and simply tune in to all the mobile phones active in the area by cursoring down to their number.

The UK-based research publication *Statewatch* reported that the EU had secretly agreed to set up an international telephone tapping network via a secret network established under the "third pillar" of the Maastricht Treaty. Official reports say that the EU governments agreed to cooperate closely with the FBI in Washington. Earlier minutes of these meetings suggest that the original initiative came from Washington.

According to *Statewatch*, network and service providers in the EU will be obliged to install "tapable" systems and to place under surveillance any person or group when served with an interception order. These plans have never been referred to any European government for scrutiny, despite the clear civil liberties issues raised by such a system.

The revolution in urban surveillance will reach the next generation of control once reliable face recognition comes in. It will initially be introduced at stationary locations, like turnstiles, customs points, security gateways, etc., to enable a standard full-face recognition.

It is important to set clear guidelines and codes of practice for such innovations.

‘Harmless’ Weapons?

Plastic and rubber bullets were products of British colonial experience in Hong Kong where the flying wooden teak baton round became the template for future kinetic weapons. However, the concept of a flying truncheon was regarded as too dangerous for use on white people, so in 1969, British researchers came up with a "safer" version for use in Northern Ireland.

Plastic bullets were considered too dangerous for use in mainland Britain (until 1985 when they proliferated throughout the UK's police forces). Now plastic bullets have been deployed from the US to Argentina, from South Africa to Israel and China.

Statements made by military scientists and police chiefs about "non-lethal" weapons and "minimum force," have led the public to believe that crowd-control weapons were designed for humanitarian reasons. Such sentiments have been echoed by the governments, laboratories and manufacturers creating these technologies of political control.

A 1972 report by Belfast surgeons makes for stark reading. It informs us that of 90 patients who sought hospital treatment after being hit by rubber bullets, 41 needed hospitalization. Their injuries included three fractured skulls, 32 fractures of the nose, jaw, cheek, etc., eight ruptured eye globes (all resulting in blindness), three cases of severe brain damage, seven cases of lung injury and one case of damage to liver, spleen and intestine.

The overall toll: one death, two people blinded in both eyes, five with severe loss of vision in one eye and four with severe disfigurement of the face.

In the 1970s, military researchers in the US concluded that rubber bullets had an extremely high probability of undesirable effects. Plastic bullets totally replaced rubber bullets in Northern Ireland by 1975.

But according to a 1983 report in the *Lancet*, plastic bullets are even more deadly than the rubber bullets they replaced. They cause more severe injuries to the skull and brain and therefore more deaths.

The indiscriminate deployment of plastic bullets removes people's rights of assembly and may remove their rights to freedom of movement and, in some situations, their right to life. We recommend that the European Parliament reaffirm their call for a total ban on this weapon.

More than 300 companies are currently manufacturing and marketing chemical incapacitants

to military, security, prison and police forces around the world. In high doses they can kill. Even in lower doses, there is a range of unpleasant side effects including bronchitis, asthma, lung and eye damage, contact dermatitis and prolonged diarrhea.

Less-lethal weapons are presented as more acceptable alternatives to guns. But these weapons augment rather than replace the more lethal weapons. Euphemistic labels are used to create the impression that these weapons represent soft and gentle forms of control. CS is never referred to by the authorities as vomit gas, in spite of its capacity to cause violent retching.

There is evidence that CS can cause permanent lung damage at comparatively low doses, as well as second-degree burns with blistering. In situations where high exposure to CS has occurred, heart failure, hepatocellular damage and death have been reported.

Oleoresin Capsicum (OC or "pepper gas") is a new irritant based on extracts from chili pepper. It is banned for use in war by the 1972 Biological Weapons convention. But it was not banned for internal security use. It was US companies that transformed this irritant into a commercial product that is now widely used by police, corrections departments and private citizens.

The effects of pepper gas include blindness that lasts from 15-30 minutes, a burning sensation of the skin that lasts from 45 to 60 minutes, upper body spasms that force a person to bend forward and uncontrollable coughing, making it difficult to breathe or speak for between 3 to 15 minutes.

The US Army concluded in a 1993 Aberdeen Proving Ground study that pepper spray could cause "mutagenic effects, carcinogenic effects, sensitization, cardiovascular and pulmonary toxicity, neurotoxicity, as well as possible human fatalities." Pepper spray got the go-ahead despite these reservations after the FBI gave its approval. It was subsequently revealed that the head of the FBI's Less-Than-Lethal Weapons Program, Special Agent Thomas W. Ward, took a \$57,000 bribe from a pepper gas manufacturer to give its product (Capstun) the all-clear.

Weapons of the Near-Future

In the 1990s, the revolution in so-called "non-lethal weapons" was given fresh impetus. The new policy was avidly pushed in the US by the likes of Col. John Alexander, who made his name as part of the Operation Phoenix assassination program during the Vietnam war.

This second generation of kinetic, chemical, optico-acoustic, microwave, disabling and paralyzing technologies is on the horizon.

Much of the initial new work has been undertaken in US nuclear laboratories such as Oak Ridge, Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos. The Pandora's box of new technologies includes:

- Ultra-sound generators that disturb the inner ear system that controls balance, inducing nausea, disorientation, vomiting and involuntary defecation. The system, which uses two speakers, can target individuals in a crowd.
- High-intensity strobes that pulse in the critical epileptic fit-inducing frequency.
- Illusion techniques that use holograms to project "active camouflage."
- Disabling, sleep-inducing agents mixed with DMSO [a skin-penetrating chemical that quickly delivers drugs into the bloodstream].
- Pain-causing, paralyzing and foul-smelling area-denial chemicals, some of which are chemically engineered variants of the heroin molecule. They work extremely rapidly: one touch and disablement follows.
- Microwave and acoustic disabling systems.
- Human capture nets that can be laced with chemical irritant or electrified to pack a disabling punch.
- Guns that shoot a sticky foam that expands to between 35-50 times its original volume, gluing a target's feet and hands to the pavement.
- Blinding laser weapons.
- Isotrophic radiator shells that use superheated gaseous plasma to produce a dazzling burst of laser-like light.
- Thermal guns that incapacitate through a wall by raising body temperature to 107 degrees.
- Magnetosphere guns that deliver what feels like a blow to the head.

According to the *New Scientist*, the American Technology Corp. of Poway, California has used "acoustical heterodyning technology" to target individuals in a crowd with infra-sound. This technology makes it possible to conjure audio messages out of thin air and to pinpoint them so that just one person hears them.

The US National Institute of Justice is actively soliciting ideas for such weapons from corporate bodies. While there are practical problems regarding whether it is preferable to leave an enemy or a citizen dead rather than permanently maimed (and whether hallucinogenic and psychotropic agents fall foul of the Chemical Weapons Convention), the spending call was for \$15 million annually over the next three years.

The work done so far has led to dubious weapons based on dubious research, strongly influenced by commercial rather than humanitarian considerations. There is a pressing need for a wide-ranging debate of the humanitarian and civil liberties implications of allowing these weapons.

An arsenal of new weapons and technologies of political control has already been developed or lies waiting on the horizon for a suitable opportunity to find useful work.

As the globalization of political control technologies increases, Members of the European Parliament have a responsibility to challenge the costs, as well as the alleged benefits, of so-called "advances" in law enforcement.

Set Weapon to 'Stun'

HSV Technologies Inc. is working to perfect a "stun gun" that uses a beam of UV radiation to "freeze" human targets at a distance of 330 feet (100 meters). The UV beam provides a wireless path capable of sending a 100-Hertz electric charge through the air toward a target. The 25 milliamp charge is sufficient to "tetanize" the target - causing the body's control muscles to contract, paralyzing the individual. Although portrayed as a "non-lethal" technology, such a weapon would be able to kill at a distance, simply by increasing the current above 250 milliamps.

US and UK war planners are pursuing this technology, arguing that it would provide a new weapon for the military operations. But as Nick Lewer of the Peace Studies Department of Bradford University told the *Sunday Times* of London, the device would "not be practicable in combat" and is more likely to be used "by the military police where restraint is the aim."

Genoacide

The repression of anti-globalization protests reached new heights in Genoa, Italy, with one anarchist youth shot in the head and crushed under the wheels of an armored police vehicle. In an unprovoked pre-dawn raid, police brutally clubbed scores of activists sleeping in the offices of the Genoa Social Forum. More than 70 people were injured in an assault that left floors covered with blood and broken teeth.

In preparation for the meeting of the G-8 economic superpowers, the Italian government mobilized 20,000 troops, 15 helicopters, four planes and seven naval boats. It stockpiled tear gas, water cannons, rubber bullets and 200 "body bags." Throughout the event, protesters were monitored by rooftop squads, hidden cameras and even satellite surveillance.

In a *Covert Action* cover story (April-June 2001), Episcopal Priest Frank Morales identifies what happened in Genoa as part of a "new phase in the global class war" that is directed against "those civilian sectors of the world in opposition to the global corporate agenda." The response is characterized by "an increasingly militarized and coordinated global police apparatus [that] is moving to extend its sway."

From Seattle to Philadelphia, from DC to Prague, from Davos and Gottenberg to Genoa, the forces of globalization have responded to growing civilian protests with an escalating array of "non-lethal" crowd-control technologies. The roots of this military response to public protest lies in the Pentagon's Civil Disturbance Plan 55-2 - a previously secret military plan code-named "Operation Garden Plot." As Morales notes, this covert plan to contain domestic "civil disturbance" now is being "tailored to fit the military and political requirements of American corporate global domination and social control, at home and abroad."

The report *Technologies of Political Control* only hints at the what the future holds. The face-identification systems cited in the report are now being installed in the US, UK and Israel. Visionics Corp. Face-It surveillance spy cameras have been mounted in Tampa,

Florida and other US cities. Banks will soon be using Face-It technology, retinal eye-scans and other "biometric" data to identify customers who use ATM machines.

"Americans now face a choice about how far we want to go down the road to being a surveillance society," says George Washington University Law Professor Jeffrey Rosen. Even GOP Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-TX) is worried. "We are taking a step in the wrong direction if we allow this powerful technology to be turned against citizens who have done no wrong," Armey has warned.

Resources: Waging War on Dissent, a 24-page report by the Seattle National Lawyers' Guild [PO Box 95242, Seattle, WA 98145, (206) 405-4651]. Genoa Social Forum, via San Luca 15/9 - 16124 Genova, Italy. Eyewitness reports from Genoa: www.indymedia.org .

Torture 'Liveware'

The creation of a bureaucracy practicing systematic human rights violation will often include specialists referred to as "liveware" - paramilitary, intelligence and internal security police, foreign technical advisers, counter-insurgency and low intensity conflict strategists, and other "white collar mercenaries" schooled in the ideological attitudes necessary to keep such systems in operation.

In some cases this schooling takes place at the infamous School of the Americas based at Fort Benning in Georgia - otherwise known as the "School of the Assassins." The school has been accused of training death squads in Guatemala and Honduras.

For the last decade, the export of "security" training has become a highly profitable commercial proposition. Such technologies are now entering Europe from the US.

Sadly, it no longer comes as a surprise to discover that Western liberal democracies have been colluding with the torture trade. During the 1980s, US companies such as Technipol were advertising thumbcuffs, leg irons and shackles. The Danish Medical Group of Amnesty International found that electronic prods manufactured by the US Shok-Baton Co. had been used in the violation of human rights. A repentant Uruguayan torturer confessed that he had used US-made electroshock batons.

Back in 1984, it emerged that US export regulations had special customs codes for "specially designed instruments of torture." Category codes in the export administration regulations had been extended to include: saps, thumbcuffs, thumbscrews, leg irons, shackles, handcuffs, stun guns, shock batons, electric cattle prods, straightjackets and specially designed implements of torture.

On November 13, 1995, the US Secretary of Commerce informed the speaker of the House that it had added a new section to the Export Administration Regulations - Section 776.19, "Implements of Torture." After this review took place, it was disclosed that the US government had approved the sale of thumbcuffs to Russia; blackjacks, stun guns and shock batons to Lithuania, Moldova, Panama and Tanzania; and electronic riot shields and batons to Mexico.

Execution Technologies

Us companies such as Leutcher Associates, Inc. of Massachusetts supply and service gas chambers and design, supply and install electric chairs and gallows.

The \$30,000 Leutcher lethal injection system is the cheapest system the company sells. While their electrocution systems cost \$50,000 and a gallows would cost approximately \$85,000, more and more states are opting for Leutcher's \$100,000 "execution trailer," which comes complete with a lethal injection machine, a steel holding cell for an inmate and separate areas for witnesses, a chaplain, prison workers and medical personnel.

European designers, meanwhile, are tendering for Middle Eastern prison building work with all the attendant requirements to cater to Islamic shari'a laws and requisite punishments and amputations.

EU to Spy on Anti-Globalists

Belgium - European police and intelligence officials have been ordered to "identify and track... anti-capitalist demonstrators" according to *The Independent* (London). German Interior Minister Otto Schily has called for a Europe-wide force "modeled on the FBI."

"Central to the new push," *The Independent* reports, "is the secret Article 36 committee... and the Schengen Information System, both of which allow for extensive contact and data-sharing between police forces."

Tony Bunyan, editor of *Statewatch* magazine, warned: "This will give the green light to Special Branch and M15 [British Intelligence] to put under surveillance people whose activities are entirely democratic."