

Corona Crisis and Leviathan: Big Brother Comes to Your Town and iPhone. Drones and Contract Tracers

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Rep. Bobby Rush of Illinois is proposing the Orwellian (and improperly capitalized) COVID-19 Testing, Reaching, And Contacting Everyone (TRACE) Act, offering states and locales \$100 billion with which to become total police states.

The bill would provide funds for localities to contact trace, test, and quarantine infected individuals, and while its sponsor claims testing and quarantining would be on a “voluntary” basis, given how states and localities are already accessing and using technology in the name of the CoronaCrisis, more funding would provide them even more tools that would make Big Brother green with envy:

“Armies” of Contract Tracers

States across the country are building “armies” (their term) of contract tracers: Gov. Newsom says California will “start” with 20,000 and may build to 100,000; Washington, West Virginia, Iowa, North Dakota and Rhode Island are using the National Guard for their contract tracing “armies;” while [former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg](#) committed \$10.5 million to create an “army” of Tracers for New York, in coordination with New Jersey and Connecticut.

And just what will all these soldiers do when they’ve traced the infection to your door? Assess the suitability of your home as a quarantine location, and if they deem it *not* suitable, you may well find yourself escorted to an “[isolation center](#),” which in New Jersey could include a “field hospital,” or in New York, Mayor de Blasio suggests following the Chinese model of using sports facilities such as the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in Queens.

Drones

Police agencies are already [using drones](#) to enforce stay at home orders and social distancing, as well as detect fevers—which they do very inaccurately. Even without Rep. Rush’s additional funding, 43 law enforcement agencies in 22 states have already purchased drone technology from just one Chinese company. Who knows how many others there may be?

Cameras

Face recognition cameras are being hawked to governments to track people violating mandatory quarantine orders. American technology apparently falls behind in this area: an

[ACLU study](#) of Amazon's "Rekognition" software showed it misidentifying 28 members of Congress against a mug shot database. Once again, China offers a better way for Big Government, including [technology](#) that provides recognition of even people wearing masks (think: Hong Kong protestors).

Technology company [Clearview AI](#) is in talks with the government to create a system that would use face recognition in public places ostensibly to identify unknown people who may have been infected by a known carrier. The proposal, however, would in reality result in a massive surveillance infrastructure, linked to billions of social media images, that could allow the government to readily identify *all* people in public spaces for *any* reason.

License-plate reading cameras are another handy way for Big Brother to keep tabs on where you are. In Kentucky, [church attendees](#) were so surveilled, then issued orders to self-quarantine for 2 weeks.

Phone Tech

China, again, seems to lead the way in quarantine tech a/k/a keeping you where the government wants you. There, residents are assigned [color-coded QR codes](#) on their phones—yours must be green to leave home. But American companies such as [Apple and Google](#) are eagerly stepping forward to offer home-grown tech: proximity tracking Apps and location data for enforcing social distancing and contract tracing; and all manner of [House Arrest Tech](#), from GPS-enabled ankle bracelets to smartphone tracking apps, are being retooled and/or developed for quarantine enforcement. The maker of the detainee-tracking smartphone app E-Cell was asked by a state agency to swap out the word "client," the company's term for arrestees, to "patient."

Apple and Google promise that their technology will protect individual privacy by "anonymizing" the location data, but [our cell phones are already tracking and providing our locations to tech companies and the government all the time](#)—which data is stored to allow for virtually anyone's location to be pin-pointed, any time.

Most alarmingly, under the guise of a coronavirus pandemic, local law enforcement, bureaucrats, and lowest-rung clerks are gaining access to massive surveillance capabilities and police powers, with *no* provision for privacy protection or redress against their misuse.

We've already learned—in full, gory detail from [NSA whistleblowers](#) and others—the massive number of people who have access to and can misuse our personal data collected by the federal government. Now just imagine all your personal data in the hands of your local beat cop, public health employee, or city hall clerk, now endowed with the power to use it as they see fit.

Because remember, this is a "Crisis:" the ordinary Rule of Law and rights don't apply. As Louisville's chief of public services, in imposing GPS-enforced stay-at-home orders, put it, "We don't want to take away people's freedoms but at the same time we have a pandemic."

But just try to get your freedoms back once the "pandemic" has passed. As [Crisis and Leviathan](#) and recent history has shown, once they have a power, they keep it. The only way to keep your rights is to keep them *all the time*. Just say "No" to TRACE and every other "emergency" decree.

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