

Orwellian Scenario: Bringing the War Home, Preparing the Domestic Battlespace

LA County Jail to Field-Test Raytheon Pain Ray

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"Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001," the Congressional Research Service ([CRS](#)) tells us that "Congress has appropriated more than a trillion dollars for military operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere around the world."

And with our "change" administration expanding "the stealth war began in the Bush administration," as [The New York Times](#) disclosed earlier this month, why the surprise by *Times*' reporters that "virtually none of the newly aggressive steps undertaken by the United States government have been publicly acknowledged"?

After all, isn't this what imperial states, lusting to steal other peoples' resources for their own greedy corporate elites, *do*?

But foreign wars and occupations have their domestic analogues, measured not only in dollars but in broken lives as unemployment and home foreclosure rates soar; inconsequential matters for those whose business is to keep us "safe."

According to [Homeland Security Market Research](#), while the economic downturn "has had an adverse effect on the 2010 US Private Sector Homeland Security (HLS) market ... the market is positioned to recover strongly in the 2011-2014 period."

Call it a "counterterrorism stimulus package" for America's largest defense and security firms, one fully consonant with America's role as a *failing state*.

As for the rest of us? We'll have to content ourselves with mindless flag-waving, feverish fear-mongering and troglodytic nationalism, an atavistic witch's brew and media spectacle rolled-out as the hottest new game the whole family can play: the anti-Muslim pogrom.

Step out of line and you just might find yourself a long-term resident in one of exurbian America's hottest growth communities: I refer of course, to the prison-industrial complex that has replaced manufacturing as a real job creator!

According to U.S. Bureau of Justice [statistics](#), some 2.4 million Americans were incarcerated in 2010, the vast majority in federal and state prisons.

And like imported commodities piling up of the docks, "surplus populations" too, are in need of a strong management hand, and a revealing piece in the [Los Angeles Daily News](#) tell of plans to do just that.

Bringing the War Home

With prison overcrowding a real threat to the New Order during lean economic times, the *Daily News* disclosed that “guards trying to break up fights between inmates at a Castaic jail will be armed with the hottest nonlethal weapon on the market next week.”

And with product spin-offs from the Pentagon infiltrating the homeland security market at an ever-faster pace, like a Hollywood starlet making her red carpet debut, the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department is rolling-out Raytheon Corporation’s Assault Intervention Device (AID).

The 7 1/2 foot tall ceiling-mounted robo-fryer works by heating the outer layer of the skin to 130 degrees F. Known for its “goodbye effect,” the beam can penetrate clothing and will cause excruciating pain for anyone unfortunate enough to make contact with its invisible electromagnetic fangs.

A perfect addition to stun grenades, pepper spray, tasers, long-range acoustic devices ([LRADs](#)), rubber bullets or wooden dowels that can, and have been, fired at restless *heimat* natives by riot cops, the AID is touted as a “less-lethal” way to keep the lid on LA’s teeming gulags.

Indeed, the American Civil Liberties Union told us last year in a scandalous [report](#) that “brutally overcrowded conditions cause or contribute to violence and serious mental illness.”

As if life in the “shining city on a hill” weren’t bad enough for those awaiting trial, ACLU investigators found “that idleness and massive overcrowding at the jail leads to violence, victimization, custodial abuse and ultimately psychotic breakdown even in relatively healthy people, as well as potentially irreversible psychosis in detainees with pre-existing illness.”

I don’t think a blast of microwave radiation from a Raytheon pain ray was what the ACLU had in mind when they demanded LA county “stop subjecting people to the nightmarish conditions.”

Pentagon Provenance

Part of a “family” of weapons developed for imperial stormtroopers by Raytheon, like the firm’s Active Denial System ([ADS](#)), a truck- or humvee-mounted NLW or the [Silent Guardian](#), a compact version of ADS tricked-out for civilian use by the riot squad, the AID is a directed energy weapon developed as a spin-off by the Pentagon’s Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program ([JNLWP](#)).

Originally designed for use by U.S. occupation troops in Iraq, as I [pointed out](#) last year, the prospect that American “liberators” would soon be zapping “unruly mobs,” that is, Iraqi citizens objecting to the destruction of their country and the looting of their resource-rich nation by predatory corporate invaders proved to be a public relations nightmare for the White House.

Even the Bush regime’s Defense Science Board concluded that an ADS deployment was “not politically tenable,” because of a “possible association with torture” if the system were used at detention centers to ensure “compliance” from recalcitrant prisoners.

But fear not, the Pentagon and corporate sponsor Raytheon found a solution near at hand. Back in 2006, then-Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne had serious misgivings about an ADS battlefield deployment. Wynne's solution? The [Associated Press](#) reported that to avoid international sanction, the system should be used on crowds in the U.S. first!

"If we're not willing to use it here against our fellow citizens, then we should not be willing to use it in a wartime situation," Wynne said. "[Because] if I hit somebody with a nonlethal weapon and they claim that it injured them in a way that was not intended, I think that I would be vilified in the world press."

No need to worry about alarming press reports here! After all, *our* media pride themselves on their clever use of euphemisms to hide things like torture, domestic spying, corporate crime and violence or ubiquitous secret state corruption. After all, what's a zap or two to some unruly jailbird in the grand scheme of things!

Commander Bob Osborne, the director of the Sheriff's Department Technology Exploration Program told the *Daily News*, "We hope that this type of technology will either cause an inmate to stop an assault or lessen the severity of an assault by them being distracted by the pain as a result of the beam."

Touted as a more humane form of control, Osborne, with the best of intentions no doubt, told reporter C.J. Lin its deployment will have a deterrent effect so "that we have fewer injuries, fewer assaults, those kinds of things."

However, critics have pointed out that repeated exposure to high-intensity microwave beams can cause serious injuries or even death if targets are subjected to repeated weapon blasts.

A 2008 [report](#) published by the Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (DSF, German Foundation for Peace Research), written by physicist Dr. Jürgen Altmann found that:

The power and duration of emission for one trigger event is controlled by a software program. Model calculations [for the larger ADS system] show that with the highest power setting, second- and third-degree burns with complete dermal necrosis will occur after less than 2 seconds. Even with a lower setting of power or duration there is the possibility for the operator to re-trigger immediately. (Dr. Jürgen Altmann, "Millimetre Waves, Lasers, Acoustics for Non-Lethal Weapons? Physics Analyses and Inferences," Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung (DSF), 2008, p. 4)

Deputies who have field tested the grisly device-on themselves, we're told-say the beam is painful "especially when it's not expected."

"You begin to to feel this warming feeling, and then you go 'Yow, I need to get out of the way'."

Mimicking other "neat" tools in the Empire's arsenal of high-tech, democracy-killing contraptions, the AID is controlled by a computer, joystick and glitchy software program that has known "issues" that have resulted in serious injuries to other "test subjects.". Traveling at light speed, the 9 mm beam can target inmates up to 100 feet from its swivel-mounted aperture.

Financed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), the devilish device will undergo a rigorous six-month evaluation “for use in jails nationwide” according to the *Daily News*. It was installed “at no cost” to the LA Sheriff’s Department.

Although NIJ may be funding the six-month evaluation, the impetus for developing microwave weapons as a means for “crowd control” and for dispersing “rioters” comes from the Pentagon.

As I [wrote](#) back in 2008, despite all the hoopla, it should be clear by now that descriptors such as “non-lethal” or “less-than-lethal” are, strictly speaking, Orwellian constructs that mask their application as repressive tools for domination. Their primary purpose is not to “save lives” but to be used as instruments of *social control*.

And Raytheon, No. 4 on *Washington Technology’s* “Top 100” [list](#) of government contractors with some \$6.7 billion in defense revenue from secret state agencies such as the CIA, tout their suite of pain ray toys as an exemplary means of providing “a zone of protection that saves lives, protects assets and minimizes collateral damage.”

Mike Booen, a vice president for advanced security at Raytheon told the *Daily News*, “If you got in the way, you’ll know. ... When you get that many of your pain receptacles telling you brain ‘This needs to stop,’ you can’t think of anything else,” Booen said. “And that tends to be very effective.”

A spokeswoman with the firm declined to state what the AID will eventually cost taxpayers. However, a sheriff’s deputy familiar with the program “estimated just the hardware costs at least hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

“With this device, we can affect people that we need to have experience that effect and not have anything happen to other people,” LA County Sheriff’s Dept. mouthpiece Osborne told the *Daily News*. “And there’s nothing to clean up, and no injuries.”

The American Civil Liberties Union was less enthusiastic and said in a recent [press release](#): “The idea that a military weapon designed to cause intolerable pain should be used against county jail inmates is staggeringly wrongheaded,” said Margaret Winter, Associate Director of the ACLU National Prison Project.

“Unnecessarily inflicting severe pain and taking such unnecessary risks with people’s lives,” Winter averred, “is a clear violation of the Eighth Amendment and due process clause of the U.S. Constitution.”

Although the civil liberties watchdogs have a “court-appointment responsibility to monitor the Los Angeles County jails,” they were never consulted by LA County Sheriff Lee Baca.

According to the ACLU, “the military incarnation of the device was briefly fielded in Afghanistan in June and then withdrawn in July without ever being used.”

[BBC News](#) reported last month, that the U.S. Army decided against deploying the Active Denial System in Afghanistan. “The ADS was not used and was shipped from Afghanistan. The operational need for the device was not approved by commanders”, Colonel Shanks, Chief of Public Affairs for ISAF told BBC.

“While the device was being tested by the Air Force,” the ACLU stated, “a miscalibration of

the device's power settings caused five airmen in its path to suffer lasting burns, including one whose injuries were so severe that he was airlifted to an off-base burn treatment center."

No matter what, the show must go on.

Prisoners: Secret State Guinea Pigs

Although the Air Force and the LA County Sheriff's Department claim the weapon is "safe," a 2008 report by [Wired Magazine](#) undercut the Pentagon's rosy assertions.

The high-tech publication reported that "a newly-obtained accident report shows that ... the weapon's operators were dangerously undertrained-exposing test subjects, as one official puts it, 'to unconscionable risks'."

An unredacted Air Force [report](#) obtained by *Wired*, revealed that "the accident raises some basic questions about the weapon." Never meant to see the light of day the report, though unclassified, "contains privileged safety information" and should be destroyed "in accordance with AFMAN 37-123 when no longer needed for mishap prevention purposes."

"Built-in range finders," the report states, "'have been basic features of high tech line-of-sight weapons and sensors for decades' and typically will prevent operators from using systems in an unsafe fashion, says one Pentagon official familiar with weapon's development. 'Yet those critical safety features, that were integrated into the HMMWV [Humvee] ADS System 1, were removed by the AFRL [Air Force Research Lab] prior to testing, exposing the test subjects to unconscionable risks'."

Why were details of these serious accidents withheld? The Air Force will only say that "The Active Denial System 2 has incorporated many safety features based on the operating experiences of the System 1."

"By not releasing the report," journalist Sharon Weinberger, a test subject along with her husband, journalist Nathan Hodge, said "the Air Force and the Joint Nonlethal Weapons Directorate deprived volunteers of making informed decisions about their participation. But, at least we were volunteers."

The same cannot be said for prisoners in LA County jail facilities.

As guinea pigs for the development of repressive technologies to be used to keep the lid on here in the *heimat*, prisoners have been literal captive audiences for illicit secret state experiments—from inhuman, Nazi-inspired radiological and bioweapons tests, to CIA "mind control" atrocities under [Project ARTICHOKE](#) and [MKULTRA](#).

Similar motives operate today as the federal government and local police partners plan to introduce pain ray technologies into the nation's jails and prisons. And who's to say that Raytheon's devilish device won't be used as a means to elicit information from prisoners under interrogation?

As a scandalous investigative series in the [Chicago Reader](#) revealed, between 1972 and 1991 approximately 135 African-American men and women were arrested and tortured at the hands of former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and officers under his command. Some of the victims were as young as *thirteen*.

Court cases against Burge and other cops established that the methods of torture used in the interrogation of suspects included electric shock to the ears and genitalia, mock executions, suffocation, and burning. Egregious examples of police torture are not isolated to the city of Chicago.

How much easier will it be for police to abuse prisoners when they have at their disposal technologies that won't even leave a mark? As LA County Sheriff's Commander Osborne blandly remarked "there's nothing to clean up."

Fry one and who'll care? After all, they're criminals who got what they deserved.

*Tom Burghardt is a researcher and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. In addition to publishing in Covert Action Quarterly and [Global Research](#), based in Montreal, his articles can be read on [Dissident Voice](#), [The Intelligence Daily](#), [Pacific Free Press](#), [Uncommon Thought Journal](#), and the whistleblowing website [Wikileaks](#). He is the editor of Police State America: U.S. Military "Civil Disturbance" Planning, distributed by [AK Press](#) and has contributed to the new book from [Global Research](#), *The Global Economic Crisis: The Great Depression of the XXI Century*.*

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