

Keep New York City Free of Weaponized and Surveillance Drones

A Resolution by David Swanson Modified for use in New York City by the Granny Peace Brigade

DRONES, OR UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (UAV) are aircrafts without pilots. Some are operated by computers on board, others by a human being in another location. The human operator can be thousands of miles away.

WHEREAS, United States airspace is the busiest in the world, “air traffic controllers handle 50,000 flights a day;”¹

WHEREAS, unmanned aircraft (drones) have an accident rate seven times higher than general aviation and 353 times higher than commercial aviation;² On March 4, 2013 an unidentified drone came within 200 feet of an Alitalia passenger plane preparing for landing at Kennedy airport.

WHEREAS, the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act of 2012 directs the FAA to create regulations that will enable drones to fly throughout U.S. airspace by September, 2015;

WHEREAS, small drones, 25 pounds or under, are now permitted to fly in general airspace below 400 feet for the use of police and first responders, with FAA permission;³

WHEREAS, drones do not have the same capability to avoid other aircraft as aircraft piloted by humans on board;

WHEREAS, drones have at times gotten out of human control, in at least one instance having to be shot down, and drones are susceptible to electronic interference and having control seized electronically by unauthorized operators;

WHEREAS, drones can be used to film individuals or groups around the clock, in public spaces and through the windows of private homes, and to continuously monitor cell-phone and text messaging;

WHEREAS, drones are being developed that will use computerized facial images to target individuals and, once launched, to operate, autonomously, without further human involvement, to locate and kill those individuals;

WHEREAS, the rapid implementation of drone technology throughout the United States poses a serious threat to the privacy and constitutional rights of the American people, including the residents of New York City;

¹ http://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=12903

² <http://www.startribune.com/local/163304886.html?refer=y>

³ <http://www.faa.gov/news/updates/?newsId=68004>

WHEREAS, the federal and New York State governments have thus far failed to provide reasonable legal restrictions on the use of drones within the United States;

WHEREAS, police departments throughout the country have begun implementing drone technology absent any guidance or guidelines from law makers;

WHEREAS, the federal use of drones provides a poor precedent for their domestic use, drone wars having turned public opinion in Yemen and Pakistan dramatically against the U.S. government, drone strikes having killed far more non-targeted people than those targeted, targeted victims having included men, women, and children known by name and unknown, no targeted individual having been charged with any crime, no legislative or judicial or public oversight having been permitted, "double-tap" strikes having been used to target rescuers of victims of previous strikes, children and adults having been traumatized by the presence of drones, over a million people having fled their homes in heavily droned areas, drones having killed Americans in accidental "friendly fire," drone operators having been targeted and killed on a base in Afghanistan, and drone pilots having suffered post-traumatic stress disorder at a higher rate than other pilots as a result of watching families for long periods of time before killing them.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the New York City Council calls on the United States Congress and the New York State Legislature, to adopt legislation prohibiting the use of drones for surveillance, and prohibiting information obtained from the domestic use of drones from being introduced into a Federal or State court, and precluding the domestic use of drones equipped with anti-personnel devices, meaning any projectile, chemical, electrical, directed-energy (visible or invisible), or other device designed to harm, incapacitate, or otherwise negatively impact a human being.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York City Council calls on the U.S. government to immediately end its practice of extrajudicial killing, whether by drone or any other means.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the New York City Council declares New York City a No Weaponized and Surveillance Drone Zone, and performs the necessary legal tasks to transform this declaration into Code wherein weaponized and surveillance drones are hereby banned from airspace over New York City, including drones in transit, to the extent compatible with federal law.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that exemptions will be made for hobbyists to fly remote controlled model aircraft and other unmanned aerial vehicles in specified areas, away from dwellings and the urban cityscape of people and buildings as long as those devices are not equipped to monitor any person, private residence or group of persons or equipped with any weapon.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that drones will not be purchased, leased, borrowed, tested, contracted or otherwise used by any agency of the City of New York.

**For more information and to get involved, contact the
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