



Prisons, Resistance and the Rise of the Narco-Drone

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Civilian Adoption of Drones



- ▶ Recreational/hobbyist
- ▶ Surveying
- ▶ Infrastructure Inspection
- ▶ Emergency Services
- ▶ Amazon, DHL, UPS, Walmart –logistics
- ▶ Delivering medicine

Rise of the Narco-drone

- ▶ Use of drones to smuggle contraband into prisons
- ▶ First prosecution in 2016
- ▶ Drones not the only option but high profile

HMP Bedford Riots

'As in so many other prisons, it is quite clear that **the ready availability of drugs**, particularly new psychoactive substances (NPS) was **having a serious impact on the safety of the prison**. [...] Our survey showed that the number of prisoners saying that it was easy or very easy to get drugs had almost doubled since the last inspection. The number saying that they had developed a drug problem while in HMP Bedford had risen from 4% to 14%. The stark reality is that prisoners told us it was **easier to get illegal drugs in the prison than it was to get clothes or sheets.**'
HM Chief Inspector of Prisons

Evaluating the Threat



- ▶ Are drones responsible for the increase in violence in prisons?
- ▶ Comparable to low staffing levels/ aging infrastructure?
- ▶ Payload limitations
- ▶ Countering drones a PR exercise?

Drugs and Resistance



- ▶ Prison is a power relationship
- ▶ Foucault observes that every power relationship contains the potential for an element of resistance
- ▶ Drug taking and black market is seen as resistance to prison authority
- ▶ Drones facilitate resistance

Immediate Counter-Measures

- ▶ Physical Options - Nets
- ▶ Electronic Options – Jamming, Geofencing
- ▶ Kinetic Options – net guns, eagles, other drones?
- ▶ Limitations
- ▶ Prison Boundary?
- ▶ Prison Airspace?

Larger Scale Counter- Measures

- ▶ Regulations and laws
- ▶ Prosecutions
- ▶ No Fly Zones
- ▶ Drone Register
- ▶ Limitations

Conclusions



- ▶ Emerging technology brings with it opportunities and challenges
- ▶ Drones are here to stay
- ▶ No silver bullet
- ▶ Opportunity for further research