

KILLER DRONES COMING TO AMERICA!

✘ Like all new fads that start overseas and eventually make their way here to the US as the next “new thing”, drones are on their way to our friendly skies. From AP via Google News:

Unmanned aircraft have proved their usefulness and reliability in the war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. Now the pressure's on to allow them in the skies over the United States.

The Federal Aviation Administration has been asked to issue flying rights for a range of pilotless planes to carry out civilian and law-enforcement functions but has been hesitant to act. Officials are worried that they might plow into airliners, cargo planes and corporate jets that zoom around at high altitudes, or helicopters and hot air balloons that fly as low as a few hundred feet off the ground.

On top of that, these pilotless aircraft come in a variety of sizes. Some are as big as a small airliner, others the size of a backpack. The tiniest are small enough to fly through a house window.

Exciting! Cops want to use them to catch speeders, monitor traffic and track suspects (that is pretty much all of us). Border Patrol and Sheriff Joe Arpaio want to use them to chase down the brown (skinned that is). Fed Ex wants them so they don't have to actually pay pilots. And the NSA wants them to spy on “suspicious” people (like the writers on this blog). Hey, it's all good; what's the loss of a little privacy when it comes to protecting America?

There is a tremendous pressure and need to fly unmanned aircraft in (civilian) airspace,” Hank Krakowski, FAA's head of

air traffic operations, told European aviation officials recently. "We are having constant conversations and discussions, particularly with the Department of Defense and the Department of Homeland Security, to figure out how we can do this safely with all these different sizes of vehicles.

Excellent! Because I will feel a lot better when the DOD and DHS have the "civilian airspace" saturated with their freaking drones; won't you? Of course you will. And we are on the way there too. From Government Executive:

The Homeland Security Department expanded the use of unmanned drones along the U.S.-Mexico border this week, flying for the first time this sort of advanced technology in west Texas.

The Predator B unmanned aerial vehicle is providing support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection to help interdict drug smugglers and detect people trying to enter the United States illegally, key lawmakers said.

Texas lawmakers have been clamoring for years to have an unmanned drone assist in border security operations, but the move had been delayed by bureaucratic wrangling between DHS and the Federal Aviation Administration. Drone flights along the Southwest border had been limited to regions in Arizona and New Mexico.

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By putting eyes in the sky along the Rio Grande, we will gather real-time intelligence on the ground to augment the good work of federal, state and local law enforcement....

Well, so drones are here among us, at least those of us near the Mexican border; and they

are here to stay. Government drones are going to be ever more pervasive and ubiquitous throughout the entirety of the country if the law and order types in the federal, state and local governments have anything to say about it. And they will have their say; count on it. Swell, eh?

So, with all of the Afghani, Pakistani and Iraqi wedding parties that have been taken out by US Predator drone strikes, how long before they hit one of our precious wedding celebrations right here in the homeland of the good old "real America"? What will the NeoCon wingnuts say when it hits their own chosen ones?

[Incredibly awesome graphic by the one and only Darkblack. If you are not familiar with his work, or have not seen it lately, please go peruse the masterpieces at his homepage. Seriously good artwork and incredible music there.]