Intelligence Bulletin 06/02/19

Securitas Intelligence Unit

2018 saw major disruptions caused by Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV's), commonly referred to as 'drones'. The use of drones has proved highly effective in disrupting services, causing public nuisance and a developing security threat and it is likely that 2019 will see a proliferation in drone use. UAV's are predominantly used for recreational and research purposes; however, they are also used in a broad range of criminal activities and pose a security threat.

What are the threats posed by UAV's?

- **Nuisance / Reckless use**: 140,000 passengers were victims to a 36-hour delay at Gatwick between the 19th & 21st December due to drone sightings [1]
- **Protest:** Activist groups have used drones to investigate sites that they are unable to access. Drone camera footage has also been used to back up their claims of unjust arrest.
- **Terrorist Threats**: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro was the first political figure to be the target of an attempted assassination by drone in 2018. [3] Houthi rebels in Yemen have threatened to launch more drone attacks after a deadly strike last week on a Yemeni government military parade killed seven people. [2]
- **Smuggling**: Seven members of a gang which used drones to fly more than £500,000 worth of drugs into prisons have been jailed collectively for 37 years. Drone use, for this type of activity is an issue for prisons across the UK. [4]

What are the rules for flying UAV's in the UK?

The law around UAV use is constantly evolving with the Police being granted further powers over the coming year. Current legislation states that:

- Your drone must weigh under 20kg
- You can't fly above 400 feet in altitude or 500 metres from you horizontally
- You ensure your drone is always in sight
- You keep the drone at a distance of 1 kilometre away from airfields.
- You must not fly within 50 metres of people, vehicles, buildings or vessels

Anti-UAV Technology

A Gatwick spokesperson confirmed that it had now spent £5m to prevent future attacks. Counter-drone systems employ sensors, software and telecommunications to monitor and identify airborne drones. Signal jammers, ballistics, lasers, and nets are used to take drones down, if it's safe and legal to do so. The affordability of UAV's has made them more accessible than the technology to detect and deter them. However, with the speed of advancement in this field an affordable solution will not be too far away.

1. https://www.strategypage.com/htmw/htecm/articles/20190128.aspx
2. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/13/houthis-threaten-more-drone-strikes-after-yemen-airbase attack
3. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-45073385
4. https://news.sky.com/story/gang-sentenced-for-using-drones-to-drop-drugs-in-prisons-11536134

If you would like any further information on any of the elements mentioned in this bulletin, please email the Securitas Intelligence Unit at: