Tough Choices in Tough Times

The government controls a lot of things that we may or may not know about and makes decisions that we might not support. With or without public knowledge or support, the United States government and law enforcement are often faced with making tough choices that when later brought to light are subject to question and met with criticism. Today, the issues of government use of GPS/location services of a cell phone and the use of drone technology to search private property without a search warrant have found raised more than eyebrows in the public spotlight.

The fourth amendment states "It is the part of the Bill of Rights that prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause." If this is the case, then why is the government even attempting to go through a lot of effort in order to see if someone has a possibility of being in the wrong. This is definitely an invasion in privacy if the government goes out of their way just to get information about someone without a warrant from a judge.

Using drones or a private citizen’s GPS location is an invasion of privacy because the government would actually have to access someone’s property, device, or records to gain information. As you are buying your phone you aren't expecting someone to be tracking it all the time. Why does someone have to know where we are? What if someone is purposely trying not to be tracked? No one has the right to take away what an individual wants to keep hidden. Using the drone in order to access private property is trespassing. This is an invasion of privacy. The government continues to invade their privacy by intentionally flying over it for the purpose of collecting information. Whether action against a citizen is taken on land, air, or in the cyber realm, a violation of an individual’s personal rights and liberties is criminal whether it is the government or another citizen. Wrong is wrong.

Several cases have been brought forth calling into question the legality of the government using newer technology in less traditional ways for the purpose of collecting information . In 1928, Roy Olmstead was convicted in court for importing and selling liquor illegally. Police used wiretaps in order to get evidence from when he talked between his home and his office. The police had no warrant but went through with it anyway. The police had no right going into his wiretaps because of the fact that the police had no warrant. The amendment not only allows for the protection of searching his property but protection from unlawful searches of him and his private conversations. This is an invasion of privacy, and a violation of the fourth amendment.

While we know that the government and law officials are charged with great responsibility for ensuring the safety of America and her citizens and with that great responsibility often comes hard choices. The use of technology should be a tool used to ensure and protect the liberties we enjoy as Americans.