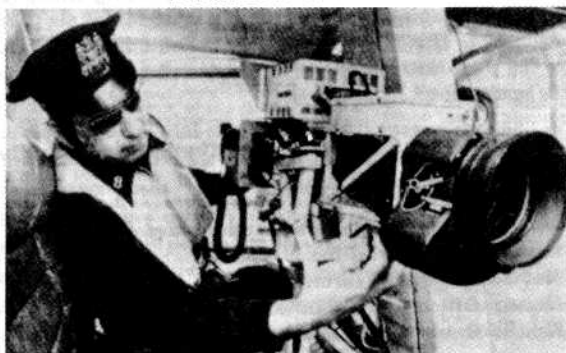


The Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA), a Defense Department research unit, hopes to have some 30 computer data centers operating in its nationwide network by fall. Usage is limited to university-related projects sponsored by Federal Government.

agencies. In New York City, for instance, television cameras mounted on helicopters relay pictures instantly to Police Headquarters or anywhere else on the department's closed-circuit network (Project Sky Knight performs a similar function on the West Coast, where police cars are now being equipped with individual computer programming and read-out terminals). In the event that prospective satellite owners choose to lease their facilities to government and law enforcement agencies for the interconnection of these and other surveillance efforts, they will do so in the absence of public consent. But given the recent Supreme Court decision upholding the constitutionality of domestic surveillance and intelligence gathering the public will have little to say about the introduction of such a communications network.¹¹

Television Camera Aboard Copter Helps Police Watch Traffic Here



Patrolman Joseph Parla adjusting helicopter-mounted TV camera during demonstration



Patrolman Joseph Padrone checking the reception on monitor in Police Department van

MEDIA CONTROL

Whether or not the private ownership of satellites will result in the application of these surveillance techniques is still a matter of some speculation; that it will add to the concentration of corporate control over the essential means of communications in this country is not. A close look at the developments currently taking place among prospective satellite owners reveals a number of new corporate alliances between those firms which control the technology used to manipulate the flow of information in this society and those that manufacture the equipment required to operate that flow.

Consider the recent formation of the American Satellite Corporation, a joint venture of Fairchild Industries and Western Union International. This corporate arrangement will join an established aerospace manufacturer and a long-standing agent of communications into a new communications enterprise. A less formal arrangement has been initiated by Western TeleCommunications, Inc., which intends to use satellites to expand its current 40,000 mile terrestrial cable television system to accommodate a number of new services, including data, computer and television transmission. The company has chosen the North American Rockwell Corporation (recently awarded the contract for NASA's \$2.6 billion space shuttle program) to design its satellites and coordinate their development, and selected the Collins Radio Company to supply the necessary terrestrial interconnections. The WTCI-North American-Collins Radio satellite plan may well become the nexus of a much larger communications corporate structure. If so, it will merely follow the example already set by Microwave Communications, Inc. (a consortium of 18 communications and electronics firms established in 1963 to transmit data and computer signals via a nationwide microwave relay system), Lockheed Aircraft, and Comsat. By mutual agreement these three firms created the CML Satellite Corporation which binds these parties into a tripartite corporate relationship; a team composed of an established satellite manufacturer (Lockheed), the world's most experienced manager of communications satellites (Comsat), and an expanding marketing firm (MCI).

Along with these mergers, the private ownership of domestic satellites will allow certain firms to assume virtual command of a communications process which includes not only the origination and distribution of information services, but also the manufacture of the equipment required to operate and maintain these services. Such will be the case for the Hughes Aircraft Company, which owns a sizeable share of the cable television industry (i.e., 49% of TelePrompster) and operates the Hughes Sports Network. Hughes' ownership of a communications satellite system will integrate its aerospace and communications plant with the production and nationwide distribution of television programs.

The most dramatic case of this phenomenon, however, is represented by RCA's Globcom Division, which operates an international telecommunications system with nearly 1,400 cable, radio, and satellite channels linking United States corporate headquarters to their associates and subsidiaries in 78 foreign countries. The ownership of domestic satellites will expand this communications empire that currently ranks second in size only to the Pentagon's. Moreover, it will contribute to the economic and social power of its parent corporation, RCA. That conglomerate's subsidiaries already cover a wide expanse of the American economy—including RCA

11. *Laird v. Tatum*, Supreme Court, 1971.