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## U.S. to deploy powerful surveillance system in Afghanistan

By Mu Xuequan

01/03/2011

The U.S. military is set to deploy a powerful surveillance system in Afghanistan this winter that wires wide angle aerial images directly to combat troops, media reports said Sunday.

The Washington Post reported the new system, dubbed Gorgon Stare, is capable of transmitting live video images of physical movement across an entire town to soldiers on the ground or to analysts tracking militant movements.

The system is made up of nine video cameras mounted on a remotely piloted aircraft. It can send up to 65 different images to different users; by contrast, Air Force drones today shoot video from a single camera over a "soda straw" area the size of a building or two.

However, there's still doubt on whether the military has the capability to sift through the huge quantities of imagery quickly enough to convey useful data to troops in the field, and it is also acknowledged that Gorgon Stare has limited value unless they are matched with improved human intelligence.

As the unpopular war in Afghanistan enters its tenth year, the U.S. forces are increasingly relying on aerial surveillance across Afghanistan.

The monthly number of unmanned and manned aircraft surveillance sorties has more than doubled since last January, and quadrupled since the beginning of 2009, and the demand is still rising.

U.S. President Barack Obama ordered the deployment of 30,000 additional troops to Afghanistan about a year ago.

In releasing the administration's review of his war strategy last month, Obama said the war "continues to be a very difficult endeavor" and achievements made there are "fragile and reversible."

Obama said he was committed to the beginning of U.S. troops drawdown in July, 2011, but "there is an urgent need for political and economic progress in Afghanistan."

A recent survey found that six out of ten Americans oppose the U.S. war in Afghanistan, and more people now believe things are going badly over there.