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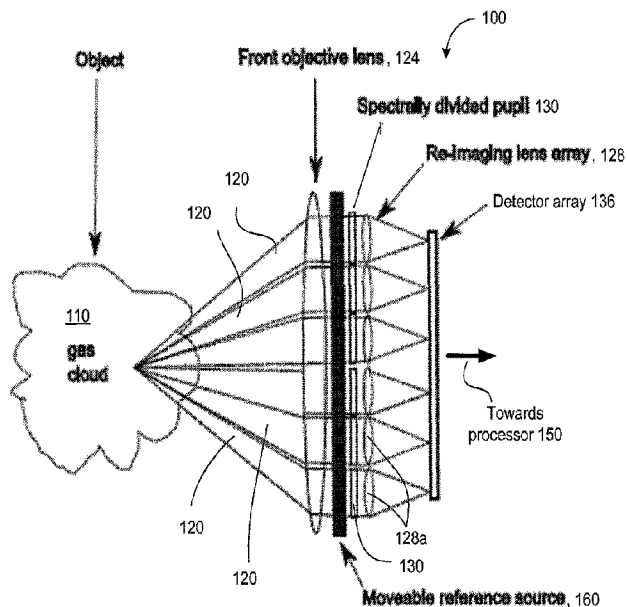
(72) Inventeurs/Inventors:
KESTER, ROBERT TIMOTHY, US;
HAGEN, NATHAN ADRIAN, US

(73) Propriétaire/Owner:
REBELLION PHOTONICS, INC., US

(74) Agent: MACRAE & CO.

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(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

In one embodiment, an infrared (IR) imaging system for determining a concentration of a target species in an object is disclosed. The imaging system can include an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The optical system can have components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another. Each of the at least two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The system can include a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. Said optical system and said processing unit can be contained together in a data acquisition and processing module configured to be worn or carried by a person.

ABSTRACT

In one embodiment, an infrared (IR) imaging system for determining a concentration of a target species in an object is disclosed. The imaging system can include an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The optical system can have components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another. Each of the at least two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The system can include a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. Said optical system and said processing unit can be contained together in a data acquisition and processing module configured to be worn or carried by a person.

MOBILE GAS AND CHEMICAL IMAGING CAMERA

[0001] Continue to [0002].

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention generally relates to a system and method for gas cloud detection and, in particular, to a system and method of detecting spectral signatures of chemical compositions in infrared spectral regions.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED TECHNOLOGY

[0003] Spectral imaging systems and methods have applications in a variety of fields. Spectral imaging systems and methods obtain a spectral image of a scene in one or more regions of the electromagnetic spectrum to detect phenomena, identify material compositions or characterize processes. The spectral image of the scene can be represented as a three-dimensional data cube where two axes of the cube represent two spatial dimensions of the scene and a third axis of the data cube represents spectral information of the scene in different wavelength regions. The data cube can be processed using mathematical methods to obtain information about the scene. Some of the existing spectral imaging systems generate the data cube by scanning the scene in the spatial domain (e.g., by moving a slit across the horizontal dimensions of the scene) and/or spectral domain (e.g., by scanning a wavelength dispersive element to obtain images of the scene in different spectral regions). Such scanning approaches acquire only a portion of the full data cube at a time. These portions of the full data cube are stored and then later processed to generate a full data cube.

SUMMARY

[0004] The systems, methods and devices of this disclosure each have several innovative aspects, no single one of which is solely responsible for the desirable attributes disclosed herein.

[0005] In one embodiment, an infrared (IR) imaging system for determining a concentration of a target species in an object is disclosed. The imaging system can include an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The optical system can have components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another. Each of the at least two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The system can include a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. Said optical system and said processing unit can be contained together in a data acquisition and processing module configured to be worn or carried by a person.

[0006] In another embodiment, an infrared (IR) imaging system for determining a concentration of a target species in an object is disclosed. The imaging system can comprise an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The optical system can have components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another. Each of the at least two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The system can include a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. Said data acquisition and processing module can have dimensions less than 8 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches.

[0007] In another embodiment, an infrared (IR) imaging system for determining a concentration of a target species in an object is disclosed. The imaging system can include an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The optical system can have components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another. Each of the at least two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The system can include a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. Said data acquisition and processing module can have a volume of less than 300 cubic inches.

[0008] In yet another embodiment, a method of identifying a target species or quantifying or characterizing a parameter of the target species in an object is disclosed. The method can include wearing or carrying a data acquisition and processing module. The data acquisition and processing module can comprise an optical system and a processing unit in communication with the optical system, the optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit. The method can include capturing multispectral infrared (IR) image data at the FPA unit from at least two optical channels that are spatially and spectrally different from one another. The method can include acquiring

multispectral optical data representing the target species from the IR radiation received at the FPA.

[0009] In another embodiment, a system for monitoring the presence of one or more target gases at one or more installation sites is disclosed. The system can include a plurality of infrared (IR) imaging systems, each imaging system comprising a data acquisition and processing module. The data acquisition and processing module can be configured to capture infrared images of the one or more target gases in real-time. The data acquisition and processing module can be configured to associate each captured infrared image with a location at which the one or more target gases are present. The data acquisition and processing module can be configured to transmit image data associated with the one or more target gases and location data associated with the location of the one or more target gases to a central server.

[0010] In yet another embodiment, a method for monitoring the presence of one or more target gases at one or more installation sites is disclosed. The method can comprise receiving image data from a plurality of IR imaging systems located at a plurality of installation sites and configured to be worn or carried by a person. Each IR imaging system can be configured to capture infrared images of the one or more target gases in real-time and to associate each captured infrared image with a location at which the one or more target gases are present. The method can include processing the received image data to identify the installation sites at which the one or more target gases is detected.

[0011] Details of one or more implementations of the subject matter described in this disclosure are set forth in the accompanying drawings and the description below. Other features, aspects, and advantages will become apparent from the description, the drawings and the claims. Note that the relative dimensions of the following figures may not be drawn to scale.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] Fig. 1 shows an embodiment of an imaging system including a common front objective lens that has a pupil divided spectrally and re-imaged with a plurality of lenses onto an infrared FPA.

[0013] Fig. 2 shows an embodiment with a divided front objective lens and an array of infrared sensing FPAs.

[0014] Fig. 3A represents an embodiment employing an array of front objective lenses operably matched with the re-imaging lens array. Fig. 3B illustrates a two-dimensional array of optical components corresponding to the embodiment of Fig. 3A.

[0015] Fig. 4 is a diagram of the embodiment employing an array of field references (e.g., field stops that can be used as references for calibration) and an array of respectively corresponding relay lenses.

[0016] Fig. 5A is a diagram of a 4-by-3 pupil array comprising circular optical filters (and IR blocking material between the optical filters) used to spectrally divide an optical wavefront imaged with an embodiment of the system.

[0017] Fig. 5B is a diagram of a 4-by-3 pupil array comprising rectangular optical filters (and IR blocking material between the optical filters) used to spectrally divide an optical wavefront imaged with an embodiment of the system.

[0018] Fig. 6A depicts theoretical plots of transmission characteristics of a combination of band-pass filters used with an embodiment of the system.

[0019] Fig. 6B depicts theoretical plots of transmission characteristics of a spectrally multiplexed notch-pass filter combination used in an embodiment of the system.

[0020] Fig. 6C shows theoretical plots of transmission characteristics of spectrally multiplexed long-pass filter combination used in an embodiment of the system.

[0021] Fig. 6D shows theoretical plots of transmission characteristics of spectrally multiplexed short-pass filter combination used in an embodiment of the system.

[0022] Fig. 7 is a set of video-frames illustrating operability of an embodiment of the system used for gas detection.

[0023] FIGS. 8A and 8B are plots (on axes of wavelength in microns versus the object temperature in Celsius representing effective optical intensity of the object) illustrating results of dynamic calibration of an embodiment of the system.

[0024] FIGS. 9A and 9B illustrate a cross-sectional view of different embodiments of an imaging system comprising an arrangement of reference sources and mirrors that can be used for dynamic calibration.

[0025] FIGS. 10A – 10C illustrate a plan view of different embodiments of an imaging system comprising an arrangement of reference sources and mirrors that can be used for dynamic calibration.

[0026] Figure 11A is a schematic diagram illustrating a mobile infrared imaging system configured to be carried or worn by a human user.

[0027] Figure 11B is a schematic diagram illustrating an installation site that can be monitored by multiple infrared imaging systems.

[0028] Figure 12 is a schematic system block diagram showing a mobile infrared imaging system, according to one embodiment.

[0029] Figure 13A is a schematic system diagram of an optical system configured to be used in the mobile infrared imaging systems disclosed herein, according to various embodiments.

[0030] Figure 13B is a schematic system diagram of an optical system configured to be used in the mobile infrared imaging systems disclosed herein, according to other embodiments.

[0031] Figure 14A is a schematic perspective view of a mobile infrared imaging system mounted to a helmet, according to various embodiments.

[0032] Figure 14B is an enlarged schematic perspective view of the mobile infrared imaging system shown in Figure 14A.

[0033] Figure 14C is a perspective cross-sectional view of the mobile infrared imaging system shown in Figures 14A-14B.

[0034] Like reference numbers and designations in the various drawings indicate like elements.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

I. OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS

[0035] The following description is directed to certain implementations for the purposes of describing the innovative aspects of this disclosure. However, a person having ordinary skill in the art will readily recognize that the teachings herein can be applied in a multitude of different ways. The described implementations may be implemented in any device, apparatus, or system that can be configured to operate as an imaging system such as in an infra-red imaging system. The methods and systems described herein can be included in or associated with a variety of devices such as, but not limited to devices used for visible and infrared spectroscopy, multispectral and hyperspectral imaging devices used in oil and gas exploration, refining, and transportation, agriculture, remote sensing, defense and homeland security, surveillance, astronomy, environmental monitoring, etc. The methods and systems described herein have applications in a variety of fields including but not limited to agriculture, biology, physics, chemistry, defense and homeland security, environment, oil and gas industry, etc. The teachings are not intended to be limited to the implementations depicted solely in the Figures, but instead have wide applicability as will be readily apparent to one having ordinary skill in the art.

[0036] The spectral image of the scene can be represented as a three-dimensional data cube where two axes of the cube represent two spatial dimensions of the scene and a third axes of the data cube represents spectral information of the scene in different wavelength regions. The data cube can be processed using mathematical methods to obtain information about the scene. Some of the existing spectral imaging systems generate the data cube by scanning the scene in the spatial domain (e.g., by moving a slit across the horizontal and vertical dimensions of the scene) and/or spectral domain. Such scanning approaches acquire only a portion of the full data cube at a time. These portions of the full data cube are stored and then later processed to generate a full data cube.

[0037] Various embodiments disclosed herein describe a divided-aperture infrared spectral imaging (DAISI) system that is structured and adapted to provide identification of target chemical contents of the imaged scene. The system is based on

spectrally-resolved imaging and can provide such identification with a single-shot (also referred to as a snapshot) comprising a plurality of images having different wavelength compositions that are obtained generally simultaneously. Without any loss of generality, snapshot refers to a system in which most of the data elements that are collected are continuously viewing the light emitted from the scene. In contrast in scanning systems, at any given time only a minority of data elements are continuously viewing a scene, followed by a different set of data elements, and so on, until the full dataset is collected. Relatively fast operation can be achieved in a snapshot system because it does not need to use spectral or spatial scanning for the acquisition of infrared (IR) spectral signatures of the target chemical contents. Instead, IR detectors (such as, for example, infrared focal plane arrays or FPAs) associated with a plurality of different optical channels having different wavelength profiles can be used to form a spectral cube of imaging data. Although spectral data can be obtained from a single snapshot comprising multiple simultaneously acquired images corresponding to different wavelength ranges, in various embodiments, multiple snap shots may be obtained. In various embodiments, these multiple snapshots can be averaged. Similarly, in certain embodiments multiple snap shots may be obtained and a portion of these can be selected and possibly averaged. Also, in contrast to commonly used IR spectral imaging systems, the DAISI system does not require cooling. Accordingly, it can advantageously use uncooled infrared detectors. For example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 300 Kelvin. As another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 273 Kelvin. As yet another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 250 Kelvin. As another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 200 Kelvin.

[0038] Implementations disclosed herein provide several advantages over existing IR spectral imaging systems, most if not all of which may require FPAs that are highly sensitive and cooled in order to compensate, during the optical detection, for the reduction of the photon flux caused by spectrum-scanning operation. The highly

sensitive and cooled FPA systems are expensive and require a great deal of maintenance. Since various embodiments disclosed herein are configured to operate in single-shot acquisition mode without spatial and/or spectral scanning, the instrument can receive photons from a plurality of points (e.g., every point) of the object substantially simultaneously, during the single reading. Accordingly, the embodiments of imaging system described herein can collect a substantially greater amount of optical power from the imaged scene (for example, an order of magnitude more photons) at any given moment in time especially in comparison with spatial and/or spectral scanning systems. Consequently, various embodiments of the imaging systems disclosed herein can be operated using uncooled detectors (for example, FPA unit including an array of microbolometers) that are less sensitive to photons in the IR but are well fit for continuous monitoring applications. For example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 300 Kelvin. As another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 273 Kelvin. As yet another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 250 Kelvin. As another example, in various implementations, the imaging systems disclosed herein do not include detectors configured to be cooled to a temperature below 200 Kelvin. Imaging systems including uncooled detectors can be capable of operating in extreme weather conditions, require less power, are capable of operation during day and night, and are less expensive. Some embodiments described herein can also be less susceptible to motion artifacts in comparison with spatially and/or spectrally scanning systems which can cause errors in either the spectral data, spatial data, or both.

[0039] In various embodiments disclosed herein, the DAISI system can be mobile. For example, the DAISI system can be configured to be worn or carried by a person, e.g., the DAISI system can be miniaturized to fit in a relatively small housing or compartment. For example, the components of the DAISI system can be sized and shaped to fit within small dimensions and can have a mass sufficiently small to enable the human user to carry or wear the system without undue exertion. As explained herein, in

some embodiments, the DAISI system can be sized and shaped to fit within a volume of less than about 300 cubic inches, or in some embodiments, less than about 200 cubic inches. In still other embodiments, the DAISI system can be sized and shaped to fit within a volume less than about 100 cubic inches. For example, in some arrangements, the DAISI system can be sized and shaped to fit within a volume in a range of about 50 cubic inches to about 300 cubic inches. In other arrangements, the DAISI system can be sized and shaped to fit within a volume in a range of about 80 cubic inches to about 200 cubic inches.

[0040] Advantageously, such a portable and/or wearable DAISI system can enable the user to monitor installations in remote locations and to detect the presence of various gases (*e.g.*, poisonous gases) in real-time. Further, the portable DAISI system can enable the user to travel to different installations to monitor the presence of gases or chemicals in multiple locations. For example, the user may travel to an oil drilling installation in which oil is pumped from the ground. The user can carry or attach the portable DAISI system to his or her clothing or body (*e.g.*, by way of a clip, hat, etc.) and can activate the system while he or she is on-site. Optical components on board the portable DAISI system can capture one or more snapshot multispectral images of portions of the installation susceptible to gas or chemical leaks. Computing units on board the portable DAISI system can process the captured multispectral image data to detect and/or classify gases or chemicals present at the site. A communications module can notify the user of the detected gases. For example, in various embodiments, the communications module can send a notification to a user interface (such as a set of computing eyeglasses, a mobile computing device such as a mobile smartphone, a tablet computing device, a laptop computing device, or any other suitable interface), and the user interface can display information about the detected gases to the user in real-time, *e.g.*, at the oil drilling installation.

II. EXAMPLES OF DIVIDED APERTURE INTRARED SPECTRAL IMAGER SYSTEMS

[0041] Fig. 1 provides a diagram schematically illustrating spatial and spectral division of incoming light by an embodiment 100 of a divided aperture infrared spectral imager (DAISI) system that can image an object 110 possessing IR spectral signature(s).

The system 100 includes a front objective lens 124, an array of optical filters 130, an array of reimaging lenses 128 and a detector array 136. In various embodiments, the detector array 136 can include a single FPA or an array of FPAs. Each detector in the detector array 136 can be disposed at the focus of each of the lenses in the array of reimaging lenses 128. In various embodiments, the detector array 136 can include a plurality of photo-sensitive devices. In some embodiments, the plurality of photo-sensitive devices may comprise a two-dimensional imaging sensor array that is sensitive to radiation having wavelengths between 1 μm and 20 μm (for example, in near infra-red wavelength range, mid infra-red wavelength range, or long infra-red wavelength range,). In various embodiments, the plurality of photo-sensitive devices can include CCD or CMOS sensors, bolometers, microbolometers or other detectors that are sensitive to infra-red radiation.

[0042] An aperture of the system 100 associated with the front objective lens system 124 is spatially and spectrally divided by the combination of the array of optical filters 130 and the array of reimaging lenses 128. In various embodiments, the combination of the array of optical filters 130 and the array of reimaging lenses 128 can be considered to form a spectrally divided pupil that is disposed forward of the optical detector array 136. The spatial and spectral division of the aperture into distinct aperture portions forms a plurality of optical channels 120 along which light propagates. In various embodiments, the array 128 of re-imaging lenses 128a and the array of spectral filters 130 which respectively correspond to the distinct optical channels 120. The plurality of optical channels 120 can be spatially and/or spectrally distinct. The plurality of optical channels 120 can be formed in the object space and/or image space. In one implementation, the distinct channels 120 may include optical channels that are separated angularly in space. The array of spectral filters 130 may additionally include a filter-holding aperture mask (comprising, for example, IR light-blocking materials such as ceramic, metal, or plastic). Light from the object 110 (for example a cloud of gas), the optical properties of which in the IR are described by a unique absorption, reflection and/or emission spectrum, is received by the aperture of the system 100. This light propagates through each of the plurality of optical channels 120 and is further imaged

onto the optical detector array 136. In various implementations, the detector array 136 can include at least one FPA. In various embodiments, each of the re-imaging lenses 128a can be spatially aligned with a respectively-corresponding spectral region. In the illustrated implementation, each filter element from the array of spectral filters 130 corresponds to a different spectral region. Each re-imaging lens 128a and the corresponding filter element of the array of spectral filter 130 can coincide with (or form) a portion of the divided aperture and therefore with respectively-corresponding spatial channel 120. Accordingly, in various embodiment an imaging lens 128a and a corresponding spectral filter can be disposed in the optical path of one of the plurality of optical channels 120. Radiation from the object 110 propagating through each of the plurality of optical channels 120 travels along the optical path of each re-imaging lens 128a and the corresponding filter element of the array of spectral filter 130 and is incident on the detector array (e.g., FPA component) 136 to form a single image (e.g., sub-image) of the object 110. The image formed by the detector array 136 generally includes a plurality of sub-images formed by each of the optical channels 120. Each of the plurality of sub-images can provide different spatial and spectral information of the object 110. The different spatial information results from some parallax because of the different spatial locations of the smaller apertures of the divided aperture. In various embodiments, adjacent sub-images can be characterized by close or substantially equal spectral signatures. The detector array (e.g., FPA component) 136 is further operably connected with a processor 150 (not shown). The processor 150 can be programmed to aggregate the data acquired with the system 100 into a spectral data cube. The data cube represents, in spatial (x, y) and spectral (λ) coordinates, an overall spectral image of the object 110 within the spectral region defined by the combination of the filter elements in the array of spectral filters 130. Additionally, in various embodiments, the processor or processing electronics 150 may be programmed to determine the unique absorption characteristic of the object 110. Also, the processor/processing electronics 150 can, alternatively or in addition, map the overall image data cube into a cube of data representing, for example, spatial distribution of concentrations, c, of targeted chemical components within the field of view associated with the object 110.

[0043] Various implementations of the embodiment 100 can include an optional moveable temperature-controlled reference source 160 including, for example, a shutter system comprising one or more reference shutters maintained at different temperatures. The reference source 160 can include a heater, a cooler or a temperature-controlled element configured to maintain the reference source 160 at a desired temperature. For example, in various implementations, the embodiment 100 can include two reference shutters maintained at different temperatures. The reference source 160 is removably and, in one implementation, periodically inserted into an optical path of light traversing the system 100 from the object 110 to the detector array (e.g., FPA component) 136 along at least one of the channels 120. The removable reference source 160 thus can block such optical path. Moreover, this reference source 160 can provide a reference IR spectrum to recalibrate various components including the detector array 136 of the system 100 in real time. The configuration of the moveable reference source 160 is further discussed below.

[0044] In the embodiment 100, the front objective lens system 124 is shown to include a single front objective lens positioned to establish a common field-of-view (FOV) for the reimaging lenses 128a and to define an aperture stop for the whole system. In this specific case, the aperture stop substantially spatially coincides with and/or is about the same size as or slightly larger than the plurality of smaller limiting apertures corresponding to different optical channels 120. As a result, the positions for spectral filters of the different optical channels 120 coincide with the position of the aperture stop of the whole system, which in this example is shown as a surface between the lens system 124 and the array 128 of the reimaging lenses 128a. In various implementations, the lens system 124 can be an objective lens 124. However, the objective lens 124 is optional and various embodiments of the system 100 need not include the objective lens 124. In various embodiments, the objective lens 124 can slightly shift the images obtained by the different detectors in the array 136 spatially along a direction perpendicular to optical axis of the lens 124, thus the functionality of the system 100 is not necessarily compromised when the objective lens 124 is not included. Generally, however, the field apertures corresponding to different optical channels may be located in the same or different planes. These field apertures may be defined by the aperture of the reimaging

lens 128a and/or filters in the divided aperture 130 in certain implementations. In one implementation, the field apertures corresponding to different optical channels can be located in different planes and the different planes can be optical conjugates of one another. Similarly, while all of the filter elements in the array of spectral filters 130 of the embodiment 100 are shown to lie in one plane, generally different filter elements of the array of spectral filter 130 can be disposed in different planes. For example, different filter elements of the array of spectral filters 130 can be disposed in different planes that are optically conjugate to one another. However, in other embodiments, the different filter elements can be disposed in non-conjugate planes.

[0045] In contrast to the embodiment 100, the front objective lens 124 need not be a single optical element, but instead can include a plurality of lenses 224 as shown in an embodiment 200 of the DAISI imaging system in Fig. 2. These lenses 224 are configured to divide an incoming optical wavefront from the object 110. For example, the array of front objective lenses 224 can be disposed so as to receive an IR wavefront emitted by the object that is directed toward the DAISI system. The plurality of front objective lenses 224 divide the wavefront spatially into non-overlapping sections. Fig. 2 shows three objective lenses 224 in a front optical portion of the optical system contributing to the spatial division of the aperture of the system in this example. The plurality of objective lenses 224, however, can be configured as a two-dimensional (2D) array of lenses. Fig. 2 presents a general view of the imaging system 200 and the resultant field of view of the imaging system 200. An exploded view 202 of the imaging system 200 is also depicted in greater detail in a figure inset of Fig. 2. As illustrated in the detailed view 202, the embodiment of the imaging system 200 includes a field reference 204 at the front end of the system. The field reference 204 can be used to truncate the field of view. The configuration illustrated in Fig. 2 has an operational advantage over embodiment 100 of Fig. 1 in that the overall size and/or weight and/or cost of manufacture of the embodiment 200 can be greatly reduced because the objective lens is smaller. Each pair of the lenses in the array 224 and the array 128 is associated with a field of view (FOV). Each pair of lenses in the array 224 and the array 128 receives light from the object from a different angle. Accordingly, the FOV of the different pairs of lenses in the array 224 and the array 128 do not completely overlap as a

result of parallax. As the distance between the imaging system 200 (portion 202) and the object 110 increases, the overlapping region 230 between the FOVs of the individual lenses 224 increases while the amount of parallax 228 remains approximately the same, thereby reducing its effect on the system 200. When the ratio of the parallax-to-object-distance is substantially equal to the pixel-size-to-system-focal-length ratio then the parallax effect may be considered to be negligible and, for practical purposes, no longer distinguishable. While the lenses 224 are shown to be disposed substantially in the same plane, optionally different objective lenses in the array of front objective lenses 224 can be disposed in more than one plane. For example, some of the individual lenses 224 can be displaced with respect to some other individual lenses 224 along the axis 226 (not shown) and/or have different focal lengths as compared to some other lenses 224. As discussed below, the field reference 204 can be useful in calibrating the multiple detectors 236.

[0046] In one implementation, the front objective lens system such as the array of lenses 224 is configured as an array of lenses integrated or molded in association with a monolithic substrate. Such an arrangement can reduce the costs and complexity otherwise accompanying the optical adjustment of individual lenses within the system. An individual lens 224 can optionally include a lens with varying magnification. As one example, a pair of thin and large diameter Alvarez plates can be used in at least a portion of the front objective lens system. Without any loss of generality, the Alvarez plates can produce a change in focal length when translated orthogonally with respect to the optical beam.

[0047] In further reference to Fig. 1, the detector array 136 (e.g., FPA component) configured to receive the optical data representing spectral signature(s) of the imaged object 110 can be configured as a single imaging array (e.g., FPA) 136. This single array may be adapted to acquire more than one image (formed by more than one optical channel 120) simultaneously. Alternatively, the detector array 136 may include a FPA unit. In various implementations, the FPA unit can include a plurality of optical FPAs. At least one of these plurality of FPAs can be configured to acquire more than one spectrally distinct image of the imaged object. For example, as shown in the embodiment 200 of Fig. 2, in various embodiments, the number of FPAs included in the FPA unit may

correspond to the number of the front objective lenses 224. In the embodiment 200 of Fig. 2, for example, three FPAs 236 are provided corresponding to the three objective lenses 224. In one implementation of the system, the FPA unit can include an array of microbolometers. The use of multiple microbolometers advantageously allows for an inexpensive way to increase the total number of detection elements (i.e. pixels) for recording of the three-dimensional data cube in a single acquisition event (i.e. one snapshot). In various embodiments, an array of microbolometers more efficiently utilizes the detector pixels of the array of FPAs (e.g., each FPA) as the number of unused pixels is reduced, minimized and/or eliminated between the images that may exist when using a single microbolometer.

[0048] Fig. 3A illustrates schematically an embodiment 300 of the imaging system in which the number of the front objective lenses 324a in the lens array 324, the number of re-imaging lenses 128a in the lens array 128, and the number of FPAs 336 are the same. So configured, each combination of respectively corresponding front objective lens 324, re-imaging lens 128a, and FPAs 336 constitutes an individual imaging channel. Such a channel is associated with acquisition of the IR light transmitted from the object 110 through an individual filter element of the array of optical filters 130. A field reference 338 of the system 300 is configured to have a uniform temperature across its surface and be characterized by a predetermined spectral curve of radiation emanating therefrom. In various implementations, the field reference 338 can be used as a calibration target to assist in calibrating or maintaining calibration of the FPA. Accordingly, in various implementations, the field reference 338 is used for dynamically adjusting the data output from each FPA 336 after acquisition of light from the object 110. This dynamic calibration process helps provide that output of the different (e.g., most, or each of the) FPA 336 represents correct acquired data, with respect to the other FPAs 336 for analysis, as discussed below in more detail.

[0049] Fig. 3B illustrates the plan view perpendicular to the axis 226 of an embodiment 300 of the imaging system illustrated in Fig. 3A. For the embodiment shown in Fig. 3B, the optical components (e.g., objective lenses 324a, filter elements of the array of spectral filters 130, re-imaging lenses 128a and FPA units 336) are arranged as a 4x3 array. In one implementation, the 4 x 3 array 340 of optical components (lenses

324a, 128a; detector elements 336) is used behind the temperature controlled reference target 160. The field reference aperture 338 can be adapted to obscure and/or block a peripheral portion of the bundle of light propagating from the object 110 towards the FPA units 336. As a result, the field reference 338 obscures and/or blocks the border or peripheral portion(s) of the images of the object 110 formed on the FPA elements located along the perimeter 346 of the detector system. Generally, two elements of the FPA unit will produce substantially equal values of digital counts when they are used to observe the same portion of the scene in the same spectral region using the same optical train. If any of these input parameters (for example, scene to be observed, spectral content of light from the scene, or optical elements delivering light from the scene to the two detector elements) differ, the counts associated with the elements of the FPA unit will differ as well. Accordingly, and as an example, in a case when the two FPAs of the FPA unit 336 (such as those denoted as #6 and #7 in Fig. 3B) remain substantially un-obscured by the field reference 338, the outputs from these FPAs can be dynamically adjusted to the output from one of the FPAs located along perimeter 346 (such as, for example, the FPA element #2 or FPA element #11) that processes light having similar spectral characteristics.

[0050] Fig. 4 illustrates schematically a portion of another embodiment of an imaging system 400 that contains an array 424 of front objective lenses 424a. The array 424 of lenses 424a adapted to receive light from the object 110 and relay the received light to the array 128 of re-imaging lenses 128a through an array 438 of field references (or field stops) 438a, and through an array 440 of the relay lenses. The spectral characteristics of the field references/field stops 438a can be known. The field references 438a are disposed at corresponding intermediate image planes defined, with respect to the object 110, by respectively corresponding front objective lenses 424a. When refractive characteristics of all of the front objective lenses 424a are substantially the same, all of the field references 438a are disposed in the same plane. A field reference 438a of the array 438 obscures (or casts a shadow on) a peripheral region of a corresponding image (e.g., sub-image) formed at the detector plane 444 through a respectively corresponding spatial imaging channel 450 of the system 400 prior to such image being spectrally processed by the processor 150. The array 440 of relay lenses then transmits light along

each of the imaging channels 450 through different spectral filters 454a of the filter array 454, past the calibration apparatus that includes two temperature controlled shutters 460a, 460b, and then onto the detector module 456. In various embodiments, the detector module 456 can include a microbolometer array or some other IR FPA.

[0051] The embodiment 400 has several operational advantages. It is configured to provide a spectrally known object within every image (e.g., sub-image) and for every snapshot acquisition which can be calibrated against. Such spectral certainty can be advantageous when using an array of IR FPAs like microbolometers, the detection characteristics of which can change from one imaging frame to the next due to, in part, changes in the scene being imaged as well as the thermal effects caused by neighboring FPAs. In various embodiments, the field reference array 438 of the embodiment 400 – can be disposed within the Rayleigh range (approximately corresponding to the depth of focus) associated with the front objective lenses 424, thereby removing unusable blurred pixels due to having the field reference outside of this range. Additionally, the embodiment 400 of Fig. 4 can be more compact than, for example, the configuration 300 of Fig. 3A. In the system shown in Fig. 3A, for example, the field reference 338 may be separated from the lens array 324 by a distance greater than several (for example, five) focal lengths to minimize/reduce blur contributed by the field reference to an image formed at a detector plane.

[0052] In various embodiments, the multi-optical FPA unit of the IR imaging system can additionally include an FPA configured to operate in a visible portion of the spectrum. In reference to Fig. 1, for example, an image of the scene of interest formed by such visible-light FPA may be used as a background to form a composite image by overlapping an IR image with the visible-light image. The IR image may be overlapped virtually, with the use of a processor and specifically-designed computer program product enabling such data processing, or actually, by a viewer. The IR image may be created based on the image data acquired by the individual FPAs 136. The so-formed composite image facilitates the identification of the precise spatial location of the target species, the spectral signatures of which the system is able to detect/recognize.

Optical Filters.

[0053] The optical filters, used with an embodiment of the system, that define spectrally-distinct IR image (e.g., sub-image) of the object can employ absorption filters, interference filters, and Fabry-Perot etalon based filters, to name just a few. When interference filters are used, the image acquisition through an individual imaging channel defined by an individual re-imaging lens (such as a lens 128a of Figs. 1, 2, 3, and 4) may be carried out in a single spectral bandwidth or multiple spectral bandwidths. Referring again to the embodiments 100, 200, 300, 400 of Figs. 1 through 4, and in further reference to Fig. 3B, examples of a 4-by-3 array of spectral filters 130 is shown in Figs. 5A and 5B. Individual filters 1 through 12 are juxtaposed with a supporting opto-mechanical element (not shown) to define a filter-array plane that is oriented, in operation, substantially perpendicularly to the general optical axis 226 of the imaging system. In various implementations, the individual filters 1 through 12 need not be discrete optical components. Instead, the individual filters 1 through 12 can comprise one or more coatings that are applied to one or more surfaces of the reimaging lenses (such as a lens 128a of Figs. 1, 2, 3, and 4) or the surfaces of one or more detectors.

[0054] The optical filtering configuration of various embodiments disclosed herein may advantageously use a bandpass filter defining a specified spectral band. Any of the filters 0a through 3a, the transmission curves of which are shown in Fig. 6A may, for example, be used. The filters may be placed in front of the optical FPA (or generally, between the optical FPA and the object). In particular, and in further reference to Figs. 1, 2 3, and 4, when optical detector arrays 136, 236, 336, 456 include microbolometers, the predominant contribution to noise associated with image acquisition is due to detector noise. To compensate and/or reduce the noise, various embodiments disclosed herein utilize spectrally-multiplexed filters. In various implementations, the spectrally-multiplexed filters can comprise a plurality of long pass filters, a plurality long pass filters, a plurality of band pass filters and any combinations thereof. An example of the spectral transmission characteristics of spectrally-multiplexed filters 0b through 3d for use with various embodiments of imaging systems disclosed herein is depicted in Fig. 6B. Filters of Fig. 6C can be referred to as long-wavelength pass, LP filters. An LP filter generally attenuates shorter wavelengths and transmits (passes) longer wavelengths (e.g., over the active range of the target IR portion of the spectrum). In various embodiments,

short-wavelength-pass filters, SP, may also be used. An SP filter generally attenuates longer wavelengths and transmits (passes) shorter wavelengths (e.g., over the active range of the target IR portion of the spectrum). At least in part due to the snap-shot / non-scanning mode of operation, embodiments of the imaging system described herein can use less sensitive microbolometers without compromising the SNR. The use of microbolometers, as detector-noise-limited devices, in turn not only benefits from the use of spectrally multiplexed filters, but also does not require cooling of the imaging system during normal operation.

[0055] Referring again to FIGS. 6A, 6B, 6C, and 6D, each of the filters (0b...3d) transmits light in a substantially wider region of the electromagnetic spectrum as compared to those of the filters (0a...3a). Accordingly, when the spectrally-multiplexed set of filters (0b...0d) is used with an embodiment of the imaging system, the overall amount of light received by the FPAs (for example, 236, 336) is larger than would be received when using the bandpass filters (0a...4a). This "added" transmission of light defined by the use of the spectrally-multiplexed LP (or SP) filters facilitates an increase of the signal on the FPAs above the level of the detector noise. Additionally, by using, in an embodiment of the imaging system, filters having spectral bandwidths greater than those of band-pass filters, the uncooled FPAs of the embodiment of the imaging system experience less heating from radiation incident thereon from the imaged scene and from radiation emanating from the FPA in question itself. This reduced heating is due to a reduction in the back-reflected thermal emission(s) coming from the FPA and reflecting off of the filter from the non-band-pass regions. As the transmission region of the multiplexed LP (or SP) filters is wider, such parasitic effects are reduced thereby improving the overall performance of the FPA unit.

[0056] In one implementation, the LP and SP filters can be combined, in a spectrally-multiplexed fashion, in order to increase or maximize the spectral extent of the transmission region of the filter system of the embodiment.

[0057] The advantage of using spectrally multiplexed filters is appreciated based on the following derivation, in which a system of M filters is examined (although it is understood that in practice an embodiment of the invention can employ any number of filters). As an illustrative example, the case of $M = 7$ is considered. Analysis presented

below relates to one spatial location in each of the images (e.g., sub-images) formed by the differing imaging channels (e.g., different optical channels 120) in the system. A similar analysis can be performed for each point at an image (e.g., sub-image), and thus the analysis can be appropriately extended as required.

[0058] The unknown amount of light within each of the M spectral channels (corresponding to these M filters) is denoted with $f_1, f_2, f_3, \dots, f_M$, and readings from corresponding detector elements receiving light transmitted by each filter is denoted as $g_1, g_2, g_3, \dots, g_M$, while measurement errors are represented by $n_1, n_2, n_3, \dots, n_M$. Then, the readings at the seven FPA pixels each of which is optically filtered by a corresponding band-pass filter of Fig. 6A can be represented by:

$$\begin{aligned} g_1 &= f_1 + n_1, \\ g_2 &= f_2 + n_2, \\ g_3 &= f_3 + n_3, \\ g_4 &= f_4 + n_4, \\ g_5 &= f_5 + n_5, \\ g_6 &= f_6 + n_6, \\ g_7 &= f_7 + n_7, \end{aligned}$$

[0059] These readings (pixel measurements) g_i are estimates of the spectral intensities f_i . The estimates g_i are not equal to the corresponding f_i values because of the measurement errors n_i . However, if the measurement noise distribution has zero mean, then the ensemble mean of each individual measurement can be considered to be equal to the true value, i.e. $\langle g_i \rangle = f_i$. Here, the angle brackets indicate the operation of calculating the ensemble mean of a stochastic variable. The variance of the measurement can, therefore, be represented as:

$$\langle (g_i - f_i)^2 \rangle = \langle n_i^2 \rangle = \sigma^2$$

[0060] In embodiments utilizing spectrally-multiplexed filters, in comparison with the embodiments utilizing band-pass filters, the amount of radiant energy transmitted by each of the spectrally-multiplexed LP or SP filters towards a given detector element can exceed that transmitted through a spectral band of a band-pass filter. In this case, the intensities of light corresponding to the independent spectral bands can

be reconstructed by computational means. Such embodiments can be referred to as a “multiplex design”.

[0061] One matrix of such “multiplexed filter” measurements includes a Hadamard matrix requiring “negative” filters that may not be necessarily appropriate for the optical embodiments disclosed herein. An S-matrix approach (which is restricted to having a number of filters equal to an integer that is multiple of four minus one) or a row-doubled Hadamard matrix (requiring a number of filters to be equal to an integer multiple of eight) can be used in various embodiments. Here, possible numbers of filters using an S-matrix setup are 3, 7, 11, etc and, if a row-doubled Hadamard matrix setup is used, then the possible number of filters is 8, 16, 24, etc. For example, the goal of the measurement may be to measure seven spectral band f_i intensities using seven measurements g_i as follows:

$$g_1 = f_1 + 0 + f_3 + 0 + f_5 + 0 + f_7 + n_1,$$

$$g_2 = 0 + f_2 + f_3 + 0 + 0 + f_6 + f_7 + n_2$$

$$g_3 = f_1 + f_2 + 0 + 0 + f_5 + 0 + f_7 + n_3$$

$$g_4 = 0 + 0 + 0 + f_4 + f_5 + f_7 + f_8 + n_4$$

$$g_5 = f_1 + 0 + f_3 + f_4 + 0 + f_6 + 0 + n_5$$

$$g_6 = 0 + f_2 + f_3 + f_4 + f_5 + 0 + 0 + n_6$$

$$g_7 = f_1 + f_2 + 0 + f_4 + 0 + 0 + f_7 + n_7$$

[0062] Optical transmission characteristics of the filters described above are depicted in Fig. 6B. Here, a direct estimate of the f_i is no longer provided through a relationship similar to $\langle g_i \rangle = f_i$. Instead, if a “hat” notation is used to denote an estimate of a given value, then a linear combination of the measurements can be used such as, for example,

$$\hat{f}_1 = \frac{1}{4}(+g_1 - g_2 + g_3 - g_4 + g_5 - g_6 + g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_2 = \frac{1}{4}(-g_1 + g_2 + g_3 - g_4 - g_5 + g_6 + g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_3 = \frac{1}{4}(+g_1 + g_2 - g_3 - g_4 + g_5 + g_6 - g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_4 = \frac{1}{4}(-g_1 - g_2 - g_3 + g_4 + g_5 + g_6 + g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_5 = \frac{1}{4}(+g_1 - g_2 + g_3 + g_4 - g_5 + g_6 - g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_6 = \frac{1}{4}(-g_1 + g_2 + g_3 + g_4 + g_5 - g_6 - g_7),$$

$$\hat{f}_7 = \frac{1}{4}(+g_1 + g_2 - g_3 + g_4 - g_5 - g_6 + g_7),$$

[0063] These $\hat{f}_i$ are unbiased estimates when the n_i are zero mean stochastic variables, so that $\langle \hat{f}_i - f_i \rangle = 0$. The measurement variance corresponding to i^{th} measurement is given by the equation below:

$$\langle (\hat{f}_i - f_i)^2 \rangle = \frac{7}{16} \sigma^2$$

[0064] From the above equation, it is observed that by employing spectrally-multiplexed system the signal-to-noise ratio (SNR) of a measurement is improved by a factor of $\sqrt{16/7} = 1.51$ $\sqrt{7/16} = 0.66$.

[0065] For N channels, the SNR improvement achieved with a spectrally-multiplexed system can be expressed as $(N + 1)/(2\sqrt{N})$. For example, an embodiment employing 12 spectral channels (N=12) is characterized by a SNR improvement, over a non-spectrally-multiplexed system, comprising a factor of up to 1.88.

[0066] Two additional examples of related spectrally-multiplexed filter arrangements 0c through 3c and 0d through 3d that can be used in various embodiments of the imaging systems described herein are shown in Figs. 6C and 6D, respectively. The spectrally-multiplexed filters shown in FIGS. 6C and 6D can be used in embodiments of imaging systems employing uncooled FPAs (such as microbolometers). Fig. 6C illustrates a set of spectrally-multiplexed long-wavelength pass (LP) filters used in the system. An LP filter generally attenuates shorter wavelengths and transmits (passes) longer wavelengths (e.g., over the active range of the target IR portion of the spectrum). A single spectral channel having a transmission characteristic corresponding to the difference between the spectral transmission curves of at least two of these LP filters can be used to procure imaging data for the data cube using an embodiment of the system described herein. In various implementations, the spectral filters disposed with respect to the different FPAs can have different spectral characteristics. In various

implementations, the spectral filters may be disposed in front of only some of the FPAs while the remaining FPAs may be configured to receive unfiltered light. For example, in some implementations, only 9 of the 12 detectors in the 4x3 array of detectors described above may be associated with a spectral filter while the other 3 detectors may be configured to received unfiltered light. Such a system may be configured to acquire spectral data in 10 different spectral channels in a single data acquisition event.

[0067] The use of microbolometers, as detector-noise-limited devices, in turn not only can benefit from the use of spectrally multiplexed filters, but also does not require cooling of the imaging system during normal operation. In contrast to imaging systems that include highly sensitive FPA units with reduced noise characteristics, the embodiments of imaging systems described herein can employ less sensitive microbolometers without compromising the SNR. This result is at least in part due to the snap-shot / non-scanning mode of operation.

[0068] As discussed above, an embodiment may optionally, and in addition to a temperature-controlled reference unit (for example temperature controlled shutters such as shutters 160, 460a, 460b), employ a field reference component (e.g., field reference aperture 338 in Fig. 3A), or an array of field reference components (e.g., filed reference apertures 438 in Fig. 4), to enable dynamic calibration. Such dynamic calibration can be used for spectral acquisition of one or more or every data cube. Such dynamic calibration can also be used for a spectrally-neutral camera-to-camera combination to enable dynamic compensation of parallax artifacts. The use of the temperature-controlled reference unit (for example, temperature-controlled shutter system 160) and field-reference component(s) facilitates maintenance of proper calibration of each of the FPAs individually and the entire FPA unit as a whole.

[0069] In particular, and in further reference to FIGS. 1, 2, 3, and 4, the temperature-controlled unit generally employs a system having first and second temperature zones maintained at first and second different temperatures. For example, shutter system of each of the embodiments 100, 200, 300 and 400 can employ not one but at least two temperature-controlled shutters that are substantially parallel to one another and transverse to the general optical axis 226 of the embodiment(s) 100, 200, 300, 400. Two shutters at two different temperatures may be employed to provide more information

for calibration; for example, the absolute value of the difference between FPAs at one temperature as well as the change in that difference with temperature change can be recorded. Referring, for example, to Fig. 4, in which such multi-shutter structure is shown, the use of multiple shutters enables the user to create a known reference temperature difference perceived by the FPAs 456. This reference temperature difference is provided by the IR radiation emitted by the shutter(s) 460a, 460b when these shutters are positioned to block the radiation from the object 110. As a result, not only the offset values corresponding to each of the individual FPAs pixels can be adjusted but also the gain values of these FPAs. In an alternative embodiment, the system having first and second temperature zones may include a single or multi-portion piece. This single or multi-portion piece may comprise for example a plate. This piece may be mechanically-movable across the optical axis with the use of appropriate guides and having a first portion at a first temperature and a second portion at a second temperature.

[0070] Indeed, the process of calibration of an embodiment of the imaging system starts with estimating gain and offset by performing measurements of radiation emanating, independently, from at least two temperature-controlled shutters of known and different radiances. The gain and offset can vary from detector pixel to detector pixel. Specifically, first the response of the detector unit 456 to radiation emanating from one shutter is carried out. For example, the first shutter 460a blocks the FOV of the detectors 456 and the temperature T_1 is measured directly and independently with thermistors. Following such initial measurement, the first shutter 460a is removed from the optical path of light traversing the embodiment and another second shutter (for example, 460b) is inserted in its place across the optical axis 226 to prevent the propagation of light through the system. The temperature of the second shutter 460b can be different than the first shutter ($T_2 \neq T_1$). The temperature of the second shutter 460b is also independently measured with thermistors placed in contact with this shutter, and the detector response to radiation emanating from the shutter 460b is also recorded. Denoting operational response of FPA pixels (expressed in digital numbers, or “counts”) as g_i to a source of radiance L_i , the readings corresponding to the measurements of the two shutters can be expressed as:

$$g_1 = \gamma L_1(T_1) + g_{\text{offset}}$$

$$g_2 = \gamma L_2(T_2) + g_{\text{offset}}$$

[0071] Here, g_{offset} is the pixel offset value (in units of counts), and γ is the pixel gain value (in units of counts per radiance unit). The solutions of these two equations with respect to the two unknowns g_{offset} and γ can be obtained if the values of g_1 and g_2 and the radiance values L_1 and L_2 are available. These values can, for example, be either measured by a reference instrument or calculated from the known temperatures T_1 and T_2 together with the known spectral response of the optical system and FPA. For any subsequent measurement, one can then invert the equation(s) above in order to estimate the radiance value of the object from the detector measurement, and this can be done for each pixel in each FPA within the system.

[0072] As already discussed, and in reference to FIGS. 1 through 4, the field-reference apertures may be disposed in an object space or image space of the optical system, and dimensioned to block a particular portion of the IR radiation received from the object. In various implementations, the field-reference aperture, the opening of which can be substantially similar in shape to the boundary of the filter array (for example, and in reference to a filter array of Figs. 3B, 5B – e.g., rectangular). The field-reference aperture can be placed in front of the objective lens (124, 224, 324, 424) at a distance that is at least several times (in one implementation - at least five times) larger than the focal length of the lens such that the field-reference aperture is placed closer to the object. Placing the field-reference aperture closer to the object can reduce the blurriness of the image. In the embodiment 400 of Fig. 4, the field-reference aperture can be placed within the depth of focus of an image conjugate plane formed by the front objective lens 424. The field reference, generally, can facilitate, effectuates and/or enable dynamic compensation in the system by providing a spectrally known and temporally-stable object within every scene to reference and stabilize the output from the different FPAs in the array.

[0073] Because each FPA's offset value is generally adjusted from each frame to the next frame by the hardware, comparing the outputs of one FPA with another can have an error that is not compensated for by the static calibration parameters g_{offset} and γ

established, for example, by the movable shutters 160. In order to ensure that FPAs operate in radiometric agreement over time, it is advantageous for a portion of each detector array to view a reference source (such as the field reference 338 in Fig. 3A, for example) over a plurality of frames obtained over time. If the reference source spectrum is known a priori (such as a blackbody source at a known temperature), one can measure the response of each FPA to the reference source in order to estimate changes to the pixel offset value. However, the temperature of the reference source need not be known. In such implementations, dynamic calibration of the different detectors can be performed by monitoring the change in the gain and the offset for the various detectors from the time the movable shutters used for static calibration are removed. An example calculation of the dynamic offset proceeds as follows.

[0074] Among the FPA elements in an array of FPAs in an embodiment of the imaging system, one FPA can be selected to be the “reference FPA”. The field reference temperature measured by all the other FPAs can be adjusted to agree with the field reference temperature measured by the reference as discussed below. The image obtained by each FPA includes a set of pixels obscured by the field reference 338. Using the previously obtained calibration parameters g_{offset} and γ (the pixel offset and gain), the effective blackbody temperature T_i of the field reference as measured by each FPA is estimated using the equation below:

$$T_i = \text{mean}\{(g + \Delta g_i + g_{\text{offset}}) / \gamma\} = \text{mean}\{(g - g_{\text{offset}}) / \gamma\} + \Delta T_i$$

[0075] Using the equation above, the mean value over all pixels that are obscured by the field reference is obtained. In the above equation Δg_i is the difference in offset value of the current frame from Δg_{offset} obtained during the calibration step. For the reference FPA, Δg_i can be simply set to zero. Then, using the temperature differences measured by each FPA, one obtains

$$T_i - T_{\text{ref}} = \text{mean}\{(g + \Delta g_i + g_{\text{offset}}) / \gamma\} + \Delta T_i - \text{mean}\{(g - g_{\text{offset}}) / \gamma\} = \Delta T_i$$

[0076] Once ΔT_i for each FPA is measured, its value can be subtracted from each image in order to force operational agreement between such FPA and the reference FPA. While the calibration procedure has been discussed above in reference to

calibration of temperature, a procedurally similar methodology of calibration with respect to radiance value can also be implemented.

Examples of Methodology of Measurements.

[0077] Prior to optical data acquisition using an embodiment of the IR imaging system as described herein, one or more, most, or potentially all the FPAs of the system can be calibrated. For example, greater than 50%, 60%, 70%, 80% or 90% of the FPAs 336 can be initially calibrated. As shown in Fig. 3A, these FPAs 336 may form separate images of the object using light delivered in a corresponding optical channel that may include the combination of the corresponding front objective and re-imaging lenses 324, 128. The calibration procedure can allow formation of individual images in equivalent units (so that, for example, the reading from the FPA pixels can be recalculated in units of temperature or radiance units, etc.). Moreover, the calibration process can also allow the FPAs (e.g., each of the FPAs) to be spatially co-registered with one another so that a given pixel of a particular FPA can be optically re-mapped through the optical system to the same location at the object as the corresponding pixel of another FPA.

[0078] To achieve at least some of these goals, a spectral differencing method may be employed. The method involves forming a difference image from various combinations of the images from different channels. In particular, the images used to form difference images can be registered by two or more different FPAs in spectrally distinct channels having different spectral filters with different spectral characteristics. Images from different channels having different spectral characteristics will provide different spectral information. Comparing (e.g., subtracting) these images, can therefore yield valuable spectral based information. For example, if the filter element of the array of spectral filters 130 corresponding to a particular FPA 336 transmits light from the object 110 including a cloud of gas, for example, with a certain spectrum that contains the gas absorption peak or a gas emission peak while another filter element of the array of spectral filters 130 corresponding to another FPA 336 does not transmit such spectrum, then the difference between the images formed by the two FPAs at issue will highlight the presence of gas in the difference image.

[0079] A shortcoming of the spectral differencing method is that contributions of some auxiliary features associated with imaging (not just the target species such as gas itself) can also be highlighted in and contribute to the difference image. Such contributing effects include, to name just a few, parallax-induced imaging of edges of the object, influence of magnification differences between the two or more optical channels, and differences in rotational positioning and orientation between the FPAs. While magnification-related errors and FPA-rotation-caused errors can be compensated for by increasing the accuracy of the instrument construction as well as by post-processing of the acquired imaging, parallax is scene-induced and is not so easily correctable. In addition, the spectral differencing method is vulnerable to radiance calibration errors. Specifically, if one FPA registers radiance of light from a given feature of the object as having a temperature of 40°C, for example, while the data from another FPA represents the temperature of the same object feature as being 39°C, then such feature of the object will be enhanced or highlighted in the difference image (formed at least in part based on the images provided by these two FPAs) due to such radiance-calibration error.

[0080] One solution to some of such problems is to compare (e.g., subtract) images from the same FPA obtained at different instances in time. For example, images can be compared to or subtracted from a reference image obtained at another time. Such reference image, which is subtracted from other later obtained images, may be referred to as a temporal reference image. This solution can be applied to spectral difference images as well. For example, the image data resulting from spectral difference images can be normalized by the data corresponding to a temporal reference image. For instance, the temporal reference images can be subtracted from the spectral difference image to obtain the temporal difference image. This process is referred to, for the purposes of this disclosure, as a temporal differencing algorithm or method and the resultant image from subtracting the temporal reference image from another image (such as the spectral difference image) is referred to as the temporal difference image. In some embodiments where spectral differencing is employed, a temporal reference image may be formed, for example, by creating a spectral difference image from the two or more images registered by the two or more FPAs at a single instance in time. This spectral difference image is then used as a temporal reference image. The temporal reference image can then be

subtracted from other later obtained images to provide normalization that can be useful in subtracting out or removing various errors or deleterious effects. For example, the result of the algorithm is not affected by a prior knowledge of whether the object or scene contains a target species (such as gas of interest), because the algorithm can highlight changes in the scene characteristics. Thus, a spectral difference image can be calculated from multiple spectral channels as discussed above based on a snap-shot image acquisition at any later time and can be subtracted from the temporal reference image to form a temporal difference image. This temporal difference image is thus a normalized difference image. The difference between the two images (the temporal difference image) can highlight the target species (gas) within the normalized difference image, since this species was not present in the temporal reference frame. In various embodiments, more than two FPAs can be used both for registering the temporal reference image and a later-acquired difference image to obtain a better SNR figure of merit. For example, if two FPAs are associated with spectral filters having the same spectral characteristic, then the images obtained by the two FPAs can be combined after they have been registered to get a better SNR figure.

[0081] While the temporal differencing method can be used to reduce or eliminate some of the shortcomings of the spectral differencing, it can introduce unwanted problems of its own. For example, temporal differencing of imaging data is less sensitive to calibration and parallax induced errors than the spectral differencing of imaging data. However, any change in the imaged scene that is not related to the target species of interest (such as particular gas, for example) is highlighted in a temporally-differenced image. Thus such change in the imaged scene may be erroneously perceived as a location of the target species triggering, therefore, an error in detection of target species. For example, if the temperature of the background against which the gas is being detected changes (due to natural cooling down as the day progresses, or increases due to a person or animal or another object passing through the FOV of the IR imaging system), then such temperature change produces a signal difference as compared to the measurement taken earlier in time. Accordingly, the cause of the scenic temperature change (the cooling object, the person walking, etc.) may appear as the detected target species (such as gas). It follows, therefore, that an attempt to compensate for operational

differences among the individual FPAs of a multi-FPA IR imaging system with the use of methods that turn on spectral or temporal differencing can cause additional problems leading to false detection of target species. Among these problems are scene-motion-induced detection errors and parallax-caused errors that are not readily correctable and/or compensatable. Accordingly, there is a need to compensate for image data acquisition and processing errors caused by motion of elements within the scene being imaged. Various embodiments of data processing algorithms described herein address and fulfill the need to compensate for such motion-induced and parallax-induced image detection errors.

[0082] In particular, to reduce or minimize parallax-induced differences between the images produced with two or more predetermined FPAs, another difference image can be used that is formed from the images of at least two different FPAs to estimate parallax effects. Parallax error can be determined by comparing the images from two different FPAs where the position between the FPAs is known. The parallax can be calculated from the known relative position difference. Differences between the images from these two FPAs can be attributed to parallax, especially, if the FPA have the same spectral characteristics, for example have the same spectral filter or both have no spectral filters. Parallax error correction, however, can still be obtained from two FPAs that have different spectral characteristics or spectral filters, especially if the different spectral characteristics, e.g., the transmission spectra of the respective filters are known and/or negligible. Use of more than two FPAs or FPAs of different locations such as FPAs spaced farther apart can be useful. For example, when the spectral differencing of the image data is performed with the use of the difference between the images collected by the outermost two cameras in the array (such as, for example, the FPAs corresponding to filters 2 and 3 of the array of filters of Fig. 5A), a difference image referred to as a “difference image 2-3” is formed. In this case, the alternative “difference image 1-4” is additionally formed from the image data acquired by, for example, the alternative FPAs corresponding to filters 1 and 4 of Fig. 5A. Assuming or ensuring that both of these two alternative FPAs have approximately the same spectral sensitivity to the target species, the alternative “difference image 1-4” will highlight pixels corresponding to parallax-induced features in the image. Accordingly, based on positive determination that the

same pixels are highlighted in the spectral “difference image 2-3” used for target species detection, a conclusion can be made that the image features corresponding to these pixels are likely to be induced by parallax and not the presence of target species in the imaged scene. It should be noted that compensation of parallax can also be performed using images created by individual re-imaging lenses, 128a, when using a single FPA or multiple FPA’s as discussed above. FPAs spaced apart from each other in different directions can also be useful. Greater than 2, for example, 3 or 4, or more FPAs can be used to establish parallax for parallax correction. In certain embodiments two central FPAs and one corner FPA are used for parallax correction. These FPA may, in certain embodiments, have substantially similar or the same spectral characteristics, for example, have filters having similar or the same transmission spectrum or have no filter at all.

[0083] Another capability of the embodiments described herein is the ability to perform the volumetric estimation of a gas cloud. This can be accomplished by using (instead of compensating or negating) the parallax induced effects described above. In this case, the measured parallax between two or more similar spectral response images (e.g., two or more channels or FPAs) can be used to estimate a distance between the imaging system and the gas cloud or between the imaging system and an object in the field of view of the system. The parallax induced transverse image shift, d , between two images is related to the distance, z , between the cloud or object 110 and the imaging system according to the equation $z = -sz'/d$. Here, s , is the separation between two similar spectral response images, and z' is the distance to the image plane from the back lens. The value for z' is typically approximately equal to the focal length f of the lens of the imaging system. Once the distance z between the cloud and the imaging system is calculated, the size of the gas cloud can be determined based on the magnification, $m = f/z$, where each image pixel on the gas cloud, $\Delta x'$, corresponds to a physical size in object space $\Delta x = \Delta x'/m$. To estimate the volume of the gas cloud, a particular symmetry in the thickness of the cloud based on the physical size of the cloud can be assumed. For example, the cloud image can be rotated about a central axis running through the cloud image to create a three dimensional volume estimate of the gas cloud size. It is worth noting that in the embodiments described herein only a single imaging system is required for such volume estimation. Indeed, due to the fact that the information about the angle

at which the gas cloud is seen by the system is decoded in the parallax effect, the image data includes the information about the imaged scene viewed by the system in association with at least two angles.

[0084] When the temporal differencing algorithm is used for processing the acquired imaging data, a change in the scene that is not caused by the target species can inadvertently be highlighted in the resulting image. In various embodiments, compensation for this error makes use of the temporal differencing between two FPAs that are substantially equally spectrally sensitive to the target species. In this case, the temporal difference image will highlight those pixels the intensity of which have changed in time (and not in wavelength). Therefore, subtracting the data corresponding to these pixels on both FPAs, which are substantially equally spectrally sensitive to the target species, to form the resulting image, excludes the contribution of the target species to the resulting image. The differentiation between (i) changes in the scene due to the presence of target species and (ii) changes in the scene caused by changes in the background not associated with the target species is, therefore, possible. In some embodiments, these two channels having the same or substantially similar spectral response so as to be substantially equally spectrally sensitive to the target species may comprise FPAs that operate using visible light. It should also be noted that, the data acquired with a visible light FPA (when present as part of the otherwise IR imaging system) can also be used to facilitate such differentiation and compensation of the motion-caused imaging errors. Visible cameras generally have much lower noise figure than IR cameras (at least during daytime). Consequently, the temporal difference image obtained with the use of image data from the visible light FPA can be quite accurate. The visible FPA can be used to compensate for motion in the system as well as many potential false-alarms in the scene due to motion caused by people, vehicles, birds, and steam, for example, as long as the moving object can be observed in the visible region of the spectra. This has the added benefit of providing an additional level of false alarm suppression without reducing the sensitivity of the system since many targets such as gas clouds cannot be observed in the visible spectral region. In various implementations, an IR camera can be used to compensate for motion artifacts.

[0085] Another method for detection of the gases is to use a spectral unmixing approach. A spectral unmixing approach assumes that the spectrum measured at a detector pixel is composed of a sum of component spectra (e.g., methane and other gases). This approach attempts to estimate the relative weights of these components needed to derive the measurement spectrum. The component spectra are generally taken from a predetermined spectral library (for example, from data collection that has been empirically assembled), though sometimes one can use the scene to estimate these as well (often called "endmember determination"). In various embodiments, the image obtained by the detector pixel is a radiance spectrum and provides information about the brightness of the object. To identify the contents of a gas cloud in the scene and/or to estimate the concentration of the various gases in the gas cloud, an absorption/emission spectrum of the various gases of interest can be obtained by comparing the measured brightness with an estimate of the expected brightness. The spectral unmixing methodology can also benefit from temporal, parallax, and motion compensation techniques.

[0086] In various embodiments, a method of identifying the presence of a target species in the object includes obtaining the radiance spectrum (or the absorption spectrum) from the object in a spectral region indicative of the presence of the target species and calculating a correlation (e.g., a correlation coefficient) by correlating the obtained radiance spectrum (or the absorption spectrum) with a reference spectrum for the target species. The presence or absence of the target species can be determined based on an amount of correlation (e.g., a value of correlation coefficient). For example, the presence of the target species in the object can be confirmed if the amount of correlation or the value of correlation coefficient is greater than a threshold. In various implementations, the radiance spectrum (or the absorption spectrum) can be obtained by obtaining a spectral difference image between a filtered optical channel and/or another filtered optical channel/unfiltered optical channel or any combinations thereof.

[0087] For example, an embodiment of the system configured to detect the presence of methane in a gas cloud comprises optical components such that one or more of the plurality of optical channels is configured to collect IR radiation to provide spectral data corresponding to a discrete spectral band located in the wavelength range between

about 7.9 μm and about 8.4 μm corresponding to an absorption peak of methane. The multispectral data obtained in the one or more optical channels can be correlated with a predetermined absorption spectrum of methane in the wavelength range between about 7.9 μm and 8.4 μm . In various implementations, the predetermined absorption spectrum of methane can be saved in a database or a reference library accessible by the system. Based on an amount of correlation (e.g., a value of correlation coefficient), the presence or absence of methane in the gas cloud can be detected.

Examples of Practical Embodiments and Operation

[0088] The embodiment 300 of Fig. 3 is configured to employ 12 optical channels and 12 corresponding microbolometer FPAs 336 to capture a video sequence substantially immediately after performing calibration measurements. The video sequence corresponds to images of a standard laboratory scene and the calibration measurements are performed with the use of a reference source including two shutters, as discussed above, one at room temperature and one 5°C above room temperature. The use of 12 FPAs allows increased chance of simultaneous detection and estimation of the concentrations of about 8 or 9 gases present at the scene. In various embodiments, the number of FPAs 336 can vary, depending on the balance between the operational requirements and consideration of cost.

[0089] Due to the specifics of operation in the IR range of the spectrum, the use of the so-called noise-equivalent temperature difference (or NETD) is preferred and is analogous to the SNR commonly used in visible spectrum instruments. The array of microbolometer FPAs 336 is characterized to perform at $\text{NETD} \leq 72 \text{ mK}$ at an f-number of 1.2. Each measurement was carried out by summing four consecutive frames, and the reduction in the NETD value expected due to such summation would be described by corresponding factor of $\sqrt{4} = 2$. Under ideal measurement conditions, therefore, the FPA NETD should be about 36 mK.

[0090] It is worth noting that the use of optically-filtered FPAs in various embodiments of the system described herein can provide a system with higher number of pixels. For example, embodiments including a single large format microbolometer FPA array can provide a system with large number of pixels. Various embodiments of the

systems described herein can also offer a high optical throughput for a substantially low number of optical channels. For example, the systems described herein can provide a high optical throughput for a number of optical channels between 4 and 50. By having a lower number of optical channels (e.g., between 4 and 50 optical channels), the systems described herein have wider spectral bins which allows the signals acquired within each spectral bin to have a greater integrated intensity.

[0091] An advantage of the embodiments described herein over various scanning based hyperspectral systems that are configured for target species detection (for example, gas cloud detection) is that, the entire spectrum can be resolved in a snapshot mode (for example, during one image frame acquisition by the FPA array). This feature enables the embodiments of the imaging systems described herein to take advantage of the compensation algorithms such as the parallax and motion compensation algorithms mentioned above. Indeed, as the imaging data required to implement these algorithms are collected simultaneously with the target-species related data, the compensation algorithms are carried out with respect to target-species related data and not with respect to data acquired at another time interval. This rapid data collection thus improves the accuracy of the data compensation process. In addition, the frame rate of data acquisition is much higher. For example, embodiments of the imaging system described herein can operate at video rates from about 5 Hz and higher. For example, various embodiments described herein can operate at frame rates from about 5Hz to about 60 Hz or 200 Hz. Thus, the user is able to recognize in the images the wisps and swirls typical of gas mixing without blurring out of these dynamic image features and other artifacts caused by the change of scene (whether spatial or spectral) during the lengthy measurements. In contradistinction, scanning based imaging systems involve image data acquisition over a period of time exceeding a single-snap-shot time and can, therefore, blur the target gas features in the image and inevitably reduce the otherwise achievable sensitivity of the detection. This result is in contrast to embodiments of the imaging system described herein that are capable of detecting the localized concentrations of gas without it being smeared out with the areas of thinner gas concentrations. In addition, the higher frame rate also enables a much faster response rate to a leak of gas (when detecting such leak is

the goal). For example, an alarm can trigger within fractions of a second rather than several seconds.

[0092] To demonstrate the operation and gas detection capability of the imaging systems described herein, a prototype was constructed in accordance with the embodiment 300 of Fig. 3A and used to detect a hydrocarbon gas cloud of propylene at a distance of approximately 10 feet. Fig. 7 illustrates video frames 1 through 12 representing gas-cloud-detection output 710 (seen as a streak of light) in a sequence from $t=1$ to $t=12$. The images 1 through 12 are selected frames taken from a video-data sequence captured at a video-rate of 15 frames/sec. The detected propylene gas is shown as a streak of light 710 (highlighted in red) near the center of each image. The first image is taken just prior to the gas emerging from the nozzle of a gas-contained, while the last image represents the system output shortly after the nozzle has been turned off.

[0093] The same prototype of the system can also demonstrate the dynamic calibration improvement described above by imaging the scene surrounding the system (the laboratory) with known temperature differences. The result of implementing the dynamic correction procedure is shown in FIGS. 8A, 8B, where the curves labeled "obj" (or "A") represent temperature estimates of an identified region in the scene. The abscissa in each of the plots of FIGS. 8A, 8B indicates the number of a FPA, while the ordinate corresponds to temperature (in degrees C). Accordingly, it is expected that when all detector elements receive radiant data that, when interpreted as the object's temperature, indicates that the object's temperature perceived by all detector elements is the same, any given curve would be a substantially flat line. Data corresponding to each of the multiple "obj" curves are taken from a stream of video frames separated from one another by about 0.5 seconds (for a total of 50 frames). The recorded "obj" curves shown in Fig. 8A indicate that the detector elements disagree about the object's temperature, and that difference in object's temperature perceived by different detector elements is as high as about 2.5°C. In addition, all of the temperature estimates are steadily drifting in time, from frame to frame. The curves labeled "ref" (or "C") correspond to the detectors' estimates of the temperature of the aperture 338 of the embodiment 300 of Fig. 3A. The results of detection of radiation carried out after each detector pixel has been subjected to the dynamic calibration procedure described above are expressed with the curved labeled

“obj corr” (or “B”). Now, the difference in estimated temperature of the object among the detector elements is reduced to about 0.5°C (thereby improving the original reading at least by a factor of 5).

[0094] Fig. 8B represents the results of similar measurements corresponding to a different location in the scene (a location which is at a temperature about 9°C above the estimated temperature of the aperture 338 of Fig. 3A). As shown, the correction algorithm discussed above is operable and effective and applicable to objects kept at different temperature. Accordingly, the algorithm is substantially temperature independent.

Dynamic Calibration Elements and References

[0095] Figs. 9A and 9B illustrates schematically different implementations 900 and 905 respectively of the imaging system that include a variety of temperature calibration elements to facilitate dynamic calibration of the FPAs. The temperature calibration elements can include mirrors 975a, 975b (represented as M_{1A} , M_{9A} , etc.) as well as reference sources 972a and 972b. The implementation 900 can be similarly configured as the embodiment 300 and include one or more front objective lens, a divided aperture, one or more spectral filters, an array of imaging lenses 928a and an imaging element 936. In various implementations, the imaging element 936 (e.g., camera block) can include an array of cameras. In various implementations, the array of cameras can comprise an optical FPA unit. The optical FPA unit can comprise a single FPA, an array of FPAs. In various implementations, the array of cameras can include one or more detector arrays represented as detector array 1, detector array 5, detector array 9 in Figs. 9A and 9B. In various embodiments, the FOV of each of the detector arrays 1, 5, 9 can be divided into a central region and a peripheral region. Without any loss of generality, the central region of the FOV of each of the detector arrays 1, 5, 9 can include the region where the FOV of all the detector arrays 1, 5, 9 overlap. In the embodiment illustrated in Fig. 9A, the reference sources 972a and 972b are placed at a distance from the detector arrays 1, 5, 9, for example, and mirrors 975a and 975b that can image them onto the detector arrays are then placed at the location of the scene reference aperture (e.g., 338 of Fig. 3A).

[0096] In Fig. 9A, the mirrors 975a and 975b are configured to reflect radiation from the reference sources 972a and 972b (represented as ref A and ref B). The mirrors 975a and 975b can be disposed away from the central FOV of the detector arrays 1, 5, 9 such that the central FOV is not blocked or obscured by the image of the reference source 972a and 972b. In various implementations, the FOV of the detector array 5 could be greater than the FOV of the detector arrays 1 and 9. In such implementations, the mirrors 975a and 975b can be disposed away from the central FOV of the detector array 5 at a location such that the reference source 972a and 972b is imaged by the detector array 5. The mirrors 975a and 975b may comprise imaging optical elements having optical power that image the reference sources 972a and 972b onto the detector arrays 1 and 9. In this example, the reference sources 972a and 972b can be disposed in the same plane as the re-imaging lenses 928a, however, the reference sources 972a and 972b can be disposed in a different plane or in different locations. For example, the reference sources 972a and 972b can be disposed in a plane that is conjugate to the plane in which the detector array 1, detector array 5, and detector array 9 are disposed such that a focused image of the reference sources 972a and 972b is formed by the detector arrays. In some implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b can be disposed in a plane that is spaced apart from the conjugate plane such that a defocused image of the reference sources 972a and 972b is formed by the detector arrays. In various implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b need not be disposed in the same plane.

[0097] As discussed above, in some embodiments, the reference sources 972a and 972b are imaged onto the detector array 1 and detector array 9, without much blur such that the reference sources 972a and 972b are focused. In contrast, in other embodiments, the image of reference sources 972a and 972b formed on the detector array 1, and detector array 9 are blurred such that the reference sources 972a and 972b are defocused, and thereby provide some averaging, smoothing, and/or low pass filtering. The reference sources 972a and 972b may comprise a surface of known temperature and may or may not include a heater or cooler attached thereto or in thermal communication therewith. For example, the reference source 972a and 972b may comprises heaters and coolers respectively or may comprise a surface with a temperature sensor and a heater and sensor respectively in direct thermal communication therewith to control the

temperature of the reference surface. In various implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b can include a temperature controller configured to maintain the reference sources 972a and 972b at a known temperature. In some implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b can be associated with one or more sensors that measure the temperature of the reference sources 972a and 972b and communicate the measured temperature to the temperature controller. In some implementations, the one or more sensors can communicate the measured temperature to the data-processing unit. In various implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b may comprise a surface of unknown temperature. For example, the reference sources may comprise a wall of a housing comprising the imaging system. In some implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b can comprise a surface that need not be associated with sensors, temperature controllers. However, in other implementations, the reference sources 972a and 972b can comprise a surface that can be associated with sensors, temperature controllers.

[0098] In Fig. 9B, the temperature-calibration elements comprise temperature-controlled elements 972a and 972b (e.g., a thermally controlled emitter, a heating strip, a heater or a cooler) disposed a distance from the detector arrays 1, 5, 9. In various embodiments, the temperature-controlled elements 972a and 972b can be disposed away from the central FOV of the detector arrays 1, 5, 9 such that the central FOV is not blocked or obscured by the image of the reference source 972a and 972b. The radiation emitted from the reference sources 972a and 972b is also imaged by the detector array 936 along with the radiation incident from the object. Depending on the position of the reference sources 972a and 972b the image obtained by the detector array of the reference sources can be blurred (or defocused) or sharp (or focused). The images 980a, 980b, 980c, 980d, 980e and 980f of the temperature-controlled elements 972a and 972b can be used as a reference to dynamically calibrate the one or more cameras in the array of cameras.

[0099] In the implementations depicted in Figures 9A and 9B, the detector arrays 1, 5 and 9 are configured to view (or image) both the reference sources 972a and 972b. Accordingly, multiple frames (e.g., every or substantially every frame) within a sequence of images contains one or more regions in the image in which the object image

has known thermal and spectral properties. This allows multiple (e.g., most or each) cameras within the array of cameras to be calibrated to agree with other (e.g., most or every other) camera imaging the same reference source(s) or surface(s). For example, detector arrays 1 and 9 can be calibrated to agree with each other. As another example, detector arrays 1, 5 and 9 can be calibrated to agree with each other. In various embodiments, the lenses 928a provide blurred (or defocused) images of the reference sources 972a, 972b on the detector arrays 1 and 9 because the location of the reference sources are not exactly in a conjugate planes of the detector arrays 1 and 9. Although the lenses 928a are described as providing blurred or defocused images, in various embodiments, reference sources or surfaces are imaged on the detectors arrays 1, 5, 9 without such blur and defocus and instead are focused images. Additionally optical elements may be used, such as for example, the mirrors shown in Fig. 9A to provide such focused images.

[0100] The temperature of the reference sources 972b, 972a can be different. For example, the reference source 972a can be at a temperature T_A , and the reference source 972b can be at a temperature T_B lower than the temperature T_A . A heater can be provided under the temperature-controlled element 972a to maintain it at a temperature T_A , and a cooler can be provided underneath the temperature-controlled element 972b to maintain it at a temperature T_B . In various implementations, the embodiments illustrated in Figs. 9A and 9B can be configured to image a single reference source 972 instead of two references sources 972a and 972b maintained at different temperatures. It is understood that the single reference source need not be thermally controlled. For example, in various implementations, a plurality of detectors in the detector array can be configured to image a same surface of at least one calibration element whose thermal and spectral properties are unknown. In such implementations, one of the plurality of detectors can be configured as a reference detector and the temperature of the surface of the at least one calibration element imaged by the plurality of detectors can be estimated using the radiance spectrum obtained by the reference detector. The remaining plurality of detectors can be calibrated such that their temperature and/or spectral measurements agree with the reference detector. For example, detector arrays 1 and 9 can be calibrated

to agree with each other. As another example, detector arrays 1, 5 and 9 can be calibrated to agree with each other.

[0101] The reference sources 972a and 972b can be coated with a material to make it behave substantially as a blackbody (for which the emission spectrum is known for any given temperature). If a temperature sensor is used at the location of each reference source, then the temperature can be tracked at these locations. As a result, the regions in the image of each camera (e.g., on the detector arrays 1 and 9) in which the object has such known temperature (and, therefore, spectrum) can be defined. A calibration procedure can thus be used so that most of the cameras (if not every camera) so operated agrees, operationally, with most or every other camera, for objects at the temperatures represented by those two sources. Calibrating infrared cameras using sources at two different temperatures is known as a "two-point" calibration, and assumes that the measured signal at a given pixel is linearly related to the incident irradiance. Since this calibration can be performed during multiple, more, or even every frame of a sequence, it is referred to as a "dynamic calibration".

[0102] An example of the dynamic calibration procedure is as follows. If there is a temperature sensor on the reference sources or reference surface, then the temperature measurements obtained by these temperature sensors can be used to determine their expected emission spectra. These temperature measurements are labeled as $T_A[R]$, $T_B[R]$, and $T_C[R]$ for the "reference temperatures" of sources/surfaces A, B, and C. These temperature measurements can be used as scalar correction factors to apply to the entire image of a given camera, forcing it to agree with the reference temperatures. Correcting the temperature estimate of a given pixel from T to T' can use formulae analogous to those discussed below in reference to Figs. 10A, 10B, 10C. If no direct temperature sensor is used, then one of the cameras can be used instead. This camera can be referred to as the "reference camera". In this case, the same formulae as those provided in paragraph below can be used, but with $T_A[R]$ and $T_B[R]$ representing the temperatures of the reference sources/surfaces A and B as estimated by the reference camera. By applying the dynamic calibration correction formulae, all of the other cameras are forced to match the temperature estimates of the reference camera.

[0103] In the configuration illustrated in Fig. 9B, the reference sources 972a and 972b are placed such that the images of the sources on the detector arrays are blurred. The configuration illustrated in Fig. 9A is similar to the system 400 illustrated in Fig. 4 where the reference sources are placed at an intermediate image plane (e.g., a conjugate image plane). In this configuration, the array of reference apertures, similar to reference apertures 438a in Fig. 4, will have an accompanying array of reference sources or reference surfaces such that the reference sources or surfaces (e.g., each reference source or surface) are imaged onto a camera or a detector array such as FPAs 1, 5, 9. With this approach, the reference source or surface images are at a conjugate image plane and thus are not appreciably blurred, so that their images can be made to block a smaller portion of each camera's field of view.

[0104] A "static" calibration (a procedure in which the scene is largely blocked with a reference source such as the moving shutters 960 in Figs. 9A and 9B, so that imaging of an unknown scene cannot be performed in parallel with calibration) allows a plurality of the cameras (for example, most or each camera) to accurately estimate the temperature of a plurality of elements (for example, most or each element in the scene) immediately after the calibration is complete. It cannot, however, prevent the cameras' estimates from drifting away from one another during the process of imaging an unknown scene. The dynamic calibration can be used to reduce or prevent this drift, so that all cameras imaging a scene can be forced to agree on the temperature estimate of the reference sources/surfaces, and adjust this correction during every frame.

[0105] Fig. 10A illustrates schematically a related embodiment 1000 of the imaging system, in which one or more mirrors M_{0A} , ... M_{11A} and M_{0B} , .. M_{11B} are placed within the fields of view of one or more cameras 0, ..., 11, partially blocking the field of view. The cameras 0, ..., 11 are arranged to form an outer ring of cameras including cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4 surrounding the central cameras 5 and 6. In various implementations, the FOV of the central cameras 5 and 6 can be less than or equal to the FOV of the outer ring of cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. In such implementations, the one or more mirrors M_{0A} , ... M_{11A} and M_{0B} , .. M_{11B} can be placed outside the central FOV of the cameras 5 and 6 and is placed in a peripheral FOV of the cameras outer ring of cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4 which does not overlap with

the central FOV of the cameras 5 and 6 such that the reference sources A and B are not imaged by the cameras 5 and 6. In various implementations, the FOV of the central cameras 5 and 6 can be greater than the FOV of the outer ring of cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. In such implementations, the one or more mirrors M_{0A} , ... M_{11A} and M_{0B} , .. M_{11B} can be placed in a peripheral FOV of the cameras 5 and 6 which does overlap with the central FOV of the outer ring of cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4 such that the reference sources A and B are imaged by the cameras 5 and 6.

[0106] This design is an enhancement to the systems 300 and 400 shown in Figs. 3A and 4A. In the system 1000 shown in Fig. 10A, an array of two or more imaging elements (curved mirrors, for example) is installed at a distance from the FPAs, for example, in the plane of the reference aperture 160 shown in Fig. 3A. These elements (mirror or imaging elements) are used to image one or more temperature-controlled reference sources A and B onto the detector elements of two or more of the cameras. The primary difference between embodiment 1000 and embodiment 300 or 400 is that now a plurality or most or all of the outer ring of cameras in the array can image both the reference sources A and B instead of imaging one of the two reference source A and B. Accordingly, most or all of the outer ring of cameras image an identical reference source or an identical set of reference sources (e.g., both the reference sources A and B) rather than using different reference sources for different cameras or imaging different portions of the reference sources as shown in Figs. 3A and 4A. Thus, this approach improves the robustness of the calibration, as it eliminates potential failures and errors due to the having additional thermal sensors estimating each reference source.

[0107] The imaging elements in the system 1000 (shown as mirrors in Figs. 10A and 10B) image one or more controlled-temperature reference sources or a surface of a calibration element (shown as A and B in Figs. 10A and 10B) into the blocked region of the cameras' fields of view. Fig. 10B shows an example in which mirror M_{0A} images reference source/surface A onto camera 0, and mirror M_{0B} images reference source/surface B onto camera 0, and likewise for cameras 1, 2, and 3. This way, each of the mirrors is used to image a reference source/surface onto a detector array of a camera, so that many, most, or every frame within a sequence of images contains one or more regions in the image in which the object image has known thermal and spectral

properties. This approach allows most of the camera, if not each camera, within the array of cameras to be calibrated to agree with most or every other camera imaging the same reference source or sources. For example, cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4 can be calibrated to agree with each other. As another example, cameras 0, 1, 2 and 3 can be calibrated to agree with each other. As yet another example, cameras 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8, 4, 5 and 6 can be calibrated to agree with each other. Accordingly, in various implementations, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven or twelve cameras can be calibrated to agree with each other. In certain embodiments, however, not all the cameras are calibrated to agree with each other. For example, one, two, or more cameras may not be calibrated to agree with each other while others may be calibrated to agree with each other. In various embodiments, these mirrors may be configured to image the reference sources/surfaces A and B onto different respective pixels a given FPA. Without any loss of generality, Figs. 10A and 10B represent a top view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 9A.

[0108] Fig. 10C illustrates schematically a related embodiment 1050 of the imaging system, in which one or more reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ and $R_{0B}, \dots, R_{11B}$ are disposed around the array of detectors 0, ..., 11. In various implementations, the one or more reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ and $R_{0B}, \dots, R_{11B}$ can be a single reference source that is imaged by the detectors 0, ..., 11. In various implementations, central detector arrays 5 and 6 can have a FOV that is equal to or lesser than the FOV of the outer ring of the detectors 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. In such implementations, the reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ can be disposed away from the central FOV of the detector arrays 5 and 6 such that the radiation from the reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ is imaged only by the outer ring of detectors 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. In various implementations, central detector arrays 5 and 6 can have a FOV that is greater than the FOV of the outer ring of the detectors 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. In such implementations, the reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ can be disposed in the peripheral FOV of the detector arrays 5 and 6 such that the radiation from the reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ is imaged only by the outer ring of detectors 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4. The radiation from the reference sources $R_{0A}, \dots, R_{11A}$ is therefore imaged by the outer ring of

detectors 0, 1, 2, 3, 7, 11, 10, 9, 8 and 4 as well as central cameras 5 and 6. Without any loss of generality, Fig. 10C represents a top view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 9B.

[0109] In various implementations, a heater can be provided underneath, adjacent to, or in thermal communication with reference source/surface A to give it a higher temperature T_A , and a cooler can be provided underneath, adjacent to, or in thermal communication with reference source B to give it a lower temperature T_B . In various implementations, the embodiments illustrated in Figs. 10A, 10B and 10C can be configured to image a single reference source A instead of two reference sources A and B maintained at different temperatures. As discussed above, the embodiments illustrated in Figs. 10A, 10B and 10C can be configured to image a same surface of a calibration element. In such implementations, the temperature of the surface of the calibration element need not be known. Many, most or each reference source/surface can be coated with a material to make it behave approximately as a blackbody, for which the emission spectrum is known for any given temperature. If many, most, or each camera in the array of cameras images both of references A and B, so that there are known regions in the image of these cameras in which the object has a known temperature (and therefore spectrum), then one can perform a calibration procedure. This procedure can provide that many, most or every camera so operated agrees with various, most, or every other camera, for objects at the temperatures represented by those two sources. For example, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven or twelve cameras can be calibrated to agree with each other. In certain embodiments, however, not all the cameras are calibrated to agree with each other. For example, one, two, or more cameras may not be calibrated to agree with each other while others may be calibrated to agree with each other. As discussed above, calibration of infrared cameras using sources at two different temperatures is known as a "two-point" calibration, and assumes that the measured signal at a given pixel is linearly related to the incident irradiance.

[0110] The dynamic calibration is used to obtain a corrected temperature T' from the initial temperature T estimated at each pixel in a camera using the following formulae:

$$T'[x, y, c] = (T[x, y, c] - T_A[R])G[c] + T_A[R]$$

[0111] where $T_A[R]$ is a dynamic offset correction factor, and, $G[c] = \frac{T_B[R] - T_A[R]}{T_B[c] - T_A[c]}$, is a dynamic gain correction factor. The term c discussed above is a camera index that identifies the camera whose data is being corrected.

III. EXAMPLES OF A MOBILE DAISI SYSTEM

[0112] The DAISI systems disclosed herein can be configured to be installed at a suitable location on a long-term basis, according to some embodiments. For example, the DAISI systems disclosed in Section II above can be affixed to a fixture mounted to the ground at a location to continuously or periodically monitor the presence of gases or chemicals at the location. In some embodiments, for example, the DAISI systems can be attached to a pole, post, or any suitable fixture at the location to be monitored. In such arrangements, the DAISI system can continuously or periodically capture multispectral, multiplexed image data of the scene, and an on-board or remote computing unit can process the captured image data to identify or characterize gases or chemicals at the location. A communications module can communicate data relating to the identified gases or chemicals to any suitable external system, such as a central computing server, etc. For such long-term installations of the DAISI system, the installation site may include a power source (*e.g.*, electrical transmission lines connected to a junction box at the site) and network communications equipment (*e.g.*, network wiring, routers, etc.) to provide network communication between the DAISI system and the external systems.

[0113] It can be advantageous to provide a mobile DAISI system configured to be worn or carried by a user. For example, it may be unsuitable or undesirable to install a DAISI system at some locations on a long-term basis. As an example, some oil well sites may not have sufficient infrastructure, such as power sources or network communication equipment, to support the DAISI system. In addition, it can be challenging to move the DAISI system from site to site to monitor different locations. For example, installing and removing the DAISI system from a site for transport may involve substantial effort and time for the user when the system is connected to infrastructure at the site to be monitored. Accordingly, it can be desirable to provide a DAISI system that can be used independently of the facilities or infrastructure at the site

to be monitored. Furthermore, it can be advantageous to implement the DAISI system in a form factor and with a weight that can be carried or worn by a user. For example, a mobile DAISI system can enable the user to easily transport the system from site-to-site, while monitoring the presence of gases or chemicals in real-time.

[0114] It should be appreciated that each of the systems disclosed herein can be used to monitor potential gas leaks in any suitable installation site, including, without limitation, drilling rigs, refineries, pipelines, transportations systems, ships or other vessels (such as off-shore oil rigs, trains, tanker trucks, petro-chemical plants, chemical plants, etc. In addition, each of the embodiments and aspects disclosed and illustrated herein such as above, e.g., with respect to Figures 1-10C, can be used in combination with each of the embodiments disclosed and illustrated herein with respect to Figures 11A-14C.

[0115] Figure 11A is a schematic diagram illustrating a mobile infrared imaging system 1000 (e.g., a mobile or portable DAISI system) configured to be carried or worn by a human user 1275. The user 1275 may wear a hat or helmet 1200 when he travels to a site to be monitored, such as an oil well site, a refinery, etc. The system 1000 shown in Figure 11A is attached to the helmet 1200 by way of a support 1204 that securely mounts the system 1000 to the helmet 1200. For example, the support 1204 can comprise a fastener, a strap, or any other suitable structure. Advantageously, mounting the system 1000 to the helmet 1200 can enable the user 1275 to capture images within the system's field of view (FOV) by turning his head to face a particular location to be monitored. For example, the user 1275 can walk through the site and can capture video images of each portion of the site, e.g., various structures that may be susceptible to gas or chemical leaks, such as valves, fittings, etc. Thus, in the embodiment shown in Figure 11A, the user 1275 can image each portion of the site by facing the area to be imaged and ensuring that the system 1000 is activated. In addition, by mounting the system 1000 to the user's helmet 1200, the user 1275 may use his hands for other tasks while the system 1000 images the site. Although the system 1000 of Figure 11A is shown as being mounted to the user's helmet 1200, it should be appreciated that the system 1000 can instead be worn on other parts of the user's clothing or can be carried by the user, e.g., in a bag, case, or other suitable container. Furthermore, in some embodiments, a wind

sensor can be provided to the user, *e.g.*, on the user's clothing and/or on or near the system 1000. The wind sensor can be used to estimate wind conditions at the installation site, which can be used to improve the detection of gas leaks. In other embodiments, the system 1000 can be coupled to or formed with a housing that defines a "gun"-like structure which can be aimed or pointed by the user in a particular direction.

[0116] As explained herein, a gas cloud 1202 emitted from a structure at the site can be imaged by pointing the system 1000 towards the gas cloud 1202 and capturing an image of the gas cloud 1202 when the cloud 1202 is within the FOV of the system 1000. Unlike other systems, the system 1000 can capture multispectral image data of a single scene over a range of IR wavelengths with a single snapshot, as explained in further detail herein. The single snapshot can be captured in a short timeframe, *e.g.*, less than about 3 seconds, less than about 2 seconds, or less than about 1.5 seconds (for example, in about 1 second, in some embodiments). The single snapshot can be captured in greater than about 5 milliseconds, greater than about 0.2 seconds, or greater than about 0.5 seconds. The captured image data can be processed on board the system 1000 by a processing unit, as explained in further detail herein. For example, the processing unit can process the image data from the different optical channels and can compare the captured spectral information with a database of known chemicals to identify and/or characterize the gases that are included in the gas cloud 1202.

[0117] A communications module on board the system 1000 can transmit information relating to the identified gases or chemicals to any suitable external device. For example, the communications module can wirelessly communicate (*e.g.*, by Bluetooth, WiFi, etc.) the information to a suitable mobile computing device, such as an electronic eyewear apparatus 1201, a tablet computing device 1212, a mobile smartphone, a laptop or notebook computer 1203, or any other suitable mobile computing device. In some embodiments, if a gas cloud is detected, the system 1000 can warn the user by way of sending a signal to the mobile device (*e.g.*, tablet computing device 1212 or a mobile smartphone). The mobile device can emit an audible ring and/or can vibrate to notify the user of a potential gas leak. In the embodiment of Figure 11A, the electronic eyewear apparatus 1201 can include a user interface comprising a display that the user 1275 can view in real-time as he visits the site. In some embodiments, the electronic

eyewear apparatus 1201 comprises eyewear that includes a display. The electronics eyewear apparatus 1201 can be further configured to present images from this display to the wearer. The electronics eyewear apparatus 1201 may for example include projection optics that projects the image into the eye. The electronic eyewear apparatus 1201 may comprise heads up display optics the presents the image on the lens portion(s) of the eyewear so that the wearer can view the image and also see through the eyewear and peer at objects in the distance. Other configurations are possible. In some arrangements, the eyewear apparatus 1201 can comprise a Google Glass device, sold by Google, Inc., of Mountain View, California.

[0118] The processing unit can configure the processed image data such that the types of identified gases are displayed to the user 1275 on the display of the eyewear apparatus 1201. For example, in some embodiments, color-coded data may represent different types of gases or concentrations of a particular gas, and may be overlaid on a visible light image of the scene. For example, the color-coded data and image of the gas cloud can be seen by the user on the electronic eyewear apparatus 1201. In various embodiments, text data and statistics about the composition of the gas cloud 1202 may also be displayed to the user 1275. Thus, the user 1275 can walk the site and can view the different types of gases in the gas cloud 1202 substantially in real-time. Advantageously, such real-time display of the composition of the gas cloud 1202 can enable the user 1275 to quickly report urgent events, such as the leakage of a toxic gas or chemical. In some embodiments, detection of a toxic leak can trigger an alarm, which may cause emergency personnel to help evacuate the site and/or fix the leak.

[0119] In some embodiments, the processed image data can be transmitted from the system 1000 to the tablet computing device 1212, laptop computer 1203, and/or smartphone. The user 1275 can interact with the table computing device 1212 or laptop computer 1203 to conduct additional analysis of the imaged and processed gas cloud 1202. Furthermore, information about the gas cloud (including the processed data and/or the raw image data) may also be transmitted to a central server for centralized collection, processing, and analysis. In various arrangements, a global positioning system (GPS) module can also be installed on board the system 1000 and/or on the mobile computing device (such as a tablet computing device, smartphone, etc.). The GPS module can

identify the coordinates of the user 1275 when a particular image is captured. The location data for the captured image data can be stored on the central server for further analysis.

[0120] Thus, the system 1000 shown in Figure 11A can enable the user 1275 to image multiple locations of a particular site to be monitored, such as an oil well site. Advantageously, the optical components, the processing components, and the communications components of the system 1000 can be integrated within a relatively small housing that can be carried or worn by the user 1275. For example, in various embodiments, the system 1000 does not include complex mechanical components for movement, such as gimbals, actuators, motors, etc. Without such components, the size of the system 1000 can be reduced relative to other systems.

[0121] Unlike other systems, in which the system components are bulky or are assembled over a large form factor, the mobile system 1000 can be sized and shaped in such a manner so as to be easily moved and manipulated when the user 1275 moves about the site. Indeed, it can be very challenging to integrate the various system components in a small form-factor. Advantageously, the systems 1000 can be worn or carried by a human user. For example, the components of the system 1000 can be contained together in a data acquisition and processing module 1020, which may include a housing to support the system components. The components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume less than about 300 cubic inches, less than about 200 cubic inches, or less than about 100 cubic inches. In various embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume greater than about 2 cubic inches, or greater than about 16 cubic inches.

[0122] The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (with the system components mounted therein or thereon) may be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$. For example, the data acquisition and

processing module 1020, including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics, may be included in a package that is sized and shaped to fit within the box-shaped boundary having dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$. This package may also contain a power supply, such as a battery and/or solar module. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 8 inches $\times$ 6 inches $\times$ 6 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 7 inches $\times$ 5 inches $\times$ 5 inches, *e.g.*, a box-shaped boundary small than 7 inches $\times$ 3 inches $\times$ 3 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 6 inches $\times$ 4 inches $\times$ 4 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 2 inches $\times$ 2 inches $\times$ 6 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 4 inches $\times$ 2 inches $\times$ 2 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 3 inches $\times$ 3 inches $\times$ 7 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 2 inches $\times$ 1 inches $\times$ 1 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions less than 2 inches $\times$ 2 inches $\times$ 6 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions greater than 1

inches x 1 inches x 3 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions greater than 2 inches x 2 inches x 4 inches. said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 6 inches x 3 inches x 3 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions less than 4 inches x 3 inches x 3 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions less than 3 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions greater than 2 inches x 1 inches x 1 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions greater than 1 inches x 0.5 inch x 0.5 inch. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 30 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 20 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 15 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 10 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more than 1 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more than 4 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more 5 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more 10 cubic inches. This package may also

contain a power supply, including a battery and/or solar module, a communications module, or both and fit into the above-referenced dimensions. It should be appreciated that the dimensions disclosed herein may not correspond to the directions shown in Figure 11A with respect to X, Y, and Z.

[0123] Moreover, the system 1000 can have a mass and weight sufficiently small so as to enable the user 1275 to easily carry or wear the data acquisition and processing module 1020 at the site. Thus, the embodiment shown in Figure 11A can be sized and shaped and configured to have a mass that enables a human user to easily and effectively manipulate the system 1000.

[0124] Figure 11B is a schematic diagram illustrating an installation site (*e.g.*, an oil well site, etc.) that can be monitored by multiple infrared imaging systems 1000 (*e.g.*, a DAISI system). For example, as shown in Figure 11B, an imaging system 1000A can be mounted to a pole 1309 or other stationary structure at the site. An imaging system 1000B can be worn or carried by multiple users 1275, an imaging system 1000C can be mounted on a truck 1500, and/or an imaging system 1000D can be mounted on an aerial platform 1501, such as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) or a piloted airplane. In some arrangements, the UAV can comprise an airplane, a helicopter (such as a quad helicopter), etc. The embodiments disclosed herein can utilize the image data captured by any combination of the systems 1000A-1000D at the installation site to image the entire installation site in an efficient manner. Indeed, each installation site can include any suitable number and type of system 1000A-1000D. For example, each installation site can include greater than two systems 1000A-1000D, greater than five systems 1000A-1000D, greater than ten systems 1000A-1000D, greater than twenty systems 1000A-1000D. Each installation site may include less than about 100 systems 1000A-1000D.

[0125] For example, the central server can track the real-time locations of each imaging system 1000A-1000D based on the GPS coordinates of the particular system or on pre-determined knowledge about the system's stationary location. The distributed nature of the imaging systems 1000A-1000D can provide rich information to the central server about the types and locations of gas leaks or other problems throughout multiple installation sites. Although Figure 11B illustrates a stationary system 1000A

mounted to a fixture, a portable system 1000B to be worn or carried by a human, a truck-based system 1000C, and an aerial-based system 1000D, it should be appreciated that other types of systems may be suitable. For example, in some embodiments, a robotic vehicle or a walking robot can be used as a platform for the systems 1000 disclosed herein. In various embodiments, a floating platform (such as a boat) can be used as a platform for the systems 1000 disclosed herein. It should also be appreciated that the systems disclosed herein can utilize any combination of the platforms (*e.g.*, stationary fixtures such as a pole, human user(s), truck(s) or other vehicle, aerial platform(s), floating platform(s), robotic platform(s), etc.) to support the systems 1000.

[0126] The systems 1000 shown in Figure 11B can comprise a mobile DAISI system, similar to that illustrated in Figure 11A. In other embodiments, the systems 1000 can comprise a larger DAISI system configured for use on a relatively long-term basis. For example, the stationary imaging system 1000A shown in Figure 11B can be installed on a pole 1309 or other suitable structure for monitoring a storage tank 1301. A solar panel 1300 can be provided at or near the system 1000 to help provide power to the system 1000. An antenna 1303 can electrically couple to the system and can provide wireless communication between the system 1000 and any other external entity, such as a central server, for storing and/or processing the data captured by the system 1000.

[0127] The stationary infrared imaging system 1000A can be programmed to continuously or periodically monitor the site. If a gas cloud 1302 escapes from the storage tank 1301, such as by leaking from a broken valve, then the system 1000A can capture a multispectral, snapshot image or series of images (*e.g.*, a video stream) of the gas cloud 1302. As with the embodiment of Figure 11A, the imaging system 1000A can include imaging, processing, and communications components on board the system 1000A to identify and characterize the types of gases in the cloud 1302 and to transmit the processed data to the central server, *e.g.*, by way of the antenna 1303.

[0128] The imaging systems 1000B worn or carried by the multiple users 1275 can advantageously capture and process multispectral image data of the portions of the installation site that each user 1275 visits. It should be appreciated that the different users 1275 may work in or travel through different portions of the installation site (and also to a number of installation sites) over a period of time. When activated, the imaging

systems 1000B worn or carried by the users 1275 can continuously or periodically capture multispectral image data of the different locations at the installation site(s) to which the user 1275 travels. As explained herein, the system 1000B can transmit the image data and the location at which the image was captured to the central server. If the system 1000B or the central server detects a problem (such as a gas leak), then the central server can associate that leak with a particular location and time.

[0129] Furthermore, because the central server can receive image data and location data from multiple users at different locations and viewing from different perspectives, the central server can create an organization-wide mapping of gas leaks that include, *e.g.*, the locations of gas leaks in any of multiple installation sites, the type and concentrations and expanse or extent of each gas leaked, the particular user 1275 that captured the image data, and the time at which the image was taken. Thus, each user 1275 that carries or wears a portable imaging system 1000B can contribute information to the central server that, when aggregated by the central server, provides rich details on the status of any gas leaks at any installation sites across the organization.

[0130] The truck-mounted imaging system 1000C can be mounted to a truck or other type of vehicle (such as a car, van, all-terrain vehicle, etc.). As shown in Figure 11B, the imaging system 1000C can be connected to an end of an extendable pole or extension member mounted to the truck 1500. The system 1000C can be raised and lowered by a control system to enable the system 1000C to image a wide area of the installation site. In some embodiments, actuators can be provided to change the angular orientation of the system 1000C, *e.g.*, its pitch and yaw. A vibration isolation or reduction mechanism can also be provided to reduce vibrations, which may disturb the imaging process. The system 1000C can be battery powered and/or can be powered by the truck; in some embodiments, a generator can be used to supply power to the system 1000C. A user can drive the truck 1500 throughout the installation site to image various portions of the site to detect leaks. In addition, the user can drive the truck 1500 to other installation sites to detect gas leaks. As explained herein, the location of the truck 1500 can be communicated to the central server and the location of the truck 1500 can be associated with each captured image. The truck 1500 may include GPS electronics to assist in tracking the location of the truck 1500 and/or system 1000C over time as the

user drives from place to place. Similarly, the aerial platform 1501 (such as an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV) can support the imaging system 1000D. The aerial platform 1501 can be piloted (either remotely or non-remotely) to numerous installation sites to capture multispectral image data to detect gas clouds.

[0131] Thus, the systems 1000A-1000D can provide extensive data regarding the existence of leaks at numerous installations across an organization. Monitoring numerous cameras simultaneously or concurrently across an organization, site, region, or the entire country can be enabled at least in part by providing wireless (or wired) communication between the systems 1000A-1000D and one or more central servers. Advantageously, the collection of image data from multiple sources and multiple platforms can enable the organization to create a real-time mapping of potential gas leaks, the types and amounts of gases being leaks, the locations of the leaks, and the time the image data of the leak was captured. In some arrangements, the aggregation of data about a site can improve the safety of installation sites. For example, if a gas leak is detected at a particular installation, the embodiments disclosed herein can alert the appropriate personnel, who can begin safety and/or evacuation procedures. Moreover, the aggregation of data across an organization (such as an oil service company) can provide site-wide, region-wide, and/or company-wide metrics for performance. For example, a given facility can monitor its total emissions over time and use the resulting data to help determine the facility's overall performance. A given region (such as a metropolitan area, a state, etc.) can monitor trends in emissions over time, providing a value on which to base decisions. Likewise, a company can look at the emissions performance at all of its facilities and can make decisions about whether some facilities should make new investments to improve performance, and/or whether the entire company should make various improvements. The mobile systems 1000 disclosed herein can thus provide a ubiquitous monitoring system for decision making. In addition, the systems 1000 disclosed herein can be used in a feedback control process to improve various manufacturing procedures based on the gases detected by the system(s) 1000. Accordingly, a control module may be provided to adjust the manufacturing procedure and/or parameters according to the gases measured by the system 1000.

[0132] The embodiments of the mobile infrared imaging system 1000 disclosed herein provide various advantages over other systems. As explained above, aggregation of data about a site and its potential gas leaks can provide an organization- or system-wide mapping of potential problems. Furthermore, automatic detection of gas leaks (and identification of the gases in the gas cloud) can simplify operation of the system 1000 and can reduce the risk of user errors in attempting to detect or identify gas clouds manually. Moreover, the small size of the systems 1000 disclosed herein are more easily carried or worn by the user than other systems. In addition, the systems 1000 disclosed herein can overlay the identified gas clouds on a visible image of the scene and can color code the gas cloud according to, *e.g.*, type of gas, concentration, etc.

[0133] Figure 12 is a schematic system block diagram showing a mobile infrared imaging system 1000 (*e.g.*, a mobile DAISI system), according to one embodiment. The imaging system 1000 can include a data acquisition and processing module 1020 configured to be worn or carried by a person. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 can include, contain, or house an optical system 1015, a processing unit 1021, a power supply 1026, a communication module 1025, and GPS module 1025. In other embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 can be configured to be mounted to a structure at the site to be monitored, such as a post. The power unit 1026 can be provided on board the system 1000. The power unit 1026 can be configured to provide power to the various system components, such as the optical system 1015, the processing unit 1021, the communication module 1024, and/or the GPS module 1025. In some embodiments, the power unit 1026 can comprise one or more batteries (which may be rechargeable) to power the system components. In some embodiments, the power unit 1026 can include a solar power system including one or more solar panels for powering the system by sunlight. In some embodiments, the power unit 1026 can include various power electronics circuits for converting AC power supplied by standard power transmission lines to DC power for powering the system components. Other types of power supply may be suitable for the power unit 1026.

[0134] The system 1000 can include an optical system 1015 configured to capture multispectral image data in a single snapshot, as explained herein. The optical system 1015 can correspond to any suitable type of DAISI system, such as, but not

limited to, the optical systems and apparatus illustrated in Figures 1-10C above and/or in the optical systems 1015 illustrated in Figures 13A-13B below. For example, the optical system 1015 can include an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit and components that define at least two optical channels that are spatially and spectrally different from one another. The two optical channels can be positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA. The multiple channels can be used to multiplex different spectral images of the same scene and to image the different spectral images on the FPA unit.

[0135] The processing unit 1021 can also be provided on board the data acquisition and processing module 1020. The processing unit 1021 can include a processor 1023 and a memory 1022. The processor 1023 can be in operable cooperation with the memory 1022, which can contain a computer-readable code that, when loaded onto the processor 1023, enables the processor 1023 to acquire multispectral optical data representing a target species of gas or chemical from IR radiation received at the optical FPA unit of the optical system 1015. The memory 1022 can be any suitable type of memory (such as a non-transitory computer-readable medium) that stores data captured by the optical system 1015 and/or processed by the processing unit 1021. The memory 1022 can also store the software that is executed on the processor 1023. The processor 1023 can be configured to execute software instructions that process the multispectral image data captured by the optical system 1015. For example, the processor 1023 can analyze the different images detected by the FPA and can compare the captured data with known signatures of various types of gases or chemicals. Based on the analysis of the captured image data, the processor can be programmed to determine the types and concentrations of gases in a gas cloud. Further, as explained herein, the processor 1023 can analyze calibration data provided by the optical system 1015 to improve the accuracy of the measurements.

[0136] Advantageously, the processor 1023 can comprise one or more field-programmable gate arrays (FPGA) configured to execute methods used in the analysis of the images captured by the optical system 1015. For example, the FPGA can include logic gates and read access memory (RAM) blocks that are designed to quickly implement the computations used to detect the types of gases in a gas cloud. The small

size/weight, and high performance characteristics of the FPGA can enable on board computation and analysis within the data acquisition and detection unit 1020 worn or carried by the user. The use of FPGA (or similar electronics) on board the system 1000 can reduce costs associated with using an off-site central server or larger computing device to conduct the image analysis computations. In addition, enabling computation with one or more FPGA devices on board the wearable system can also prevent or reduce communication bottlenecks associated with wirelessly transmitting large amounts of raw data from the system 1000 to a remote server or computer, which can be used in some embodiments.

[0137] The communication module 1024 can be configured to communicate with at least one device physically separate from the data acquisition and processing module 1020. For example, the communication module 1024 can include a wireless communication module configured to wirelessly communicate with the at least one separate device. The wireless communication module can be configured to provide wireless communication over wireless networks (*e.g.*, WiFi internet networks, Bluetooth networks, etc.) and/or over telecommunications networks (*e.g.*, 3G networks, 4G networks, etc.).

[0138] In some embodiments, for example, the wireless communication module can provide data communication between the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and a mobile device such as an electronic eyewear apparatus, a tablet computing device, a mobile smartphone, a laptop or notebook computer, or any other suitable mobile computing device. As explained herein, the mobile device can include a display on which the processed image data can be displayed to the user. For example, the types (and/or concentrations) of gases in a gas cloud can be illustrated on the display, *e.g.*, by color coding or other suitable illustration scheme. The processed data can overlaid on a visible image of the scene in some arrangements. In some embodiments, the wireless communication module can provide data communication between the system 1000 and an external device remote from the system 1000, such as a central server. For example, the processed image data and/or the raw image data may be transmitted over a telecommunications network to the central server for storage and/or further analysis. In some embodiments, the processed or raw image data can be uploaded to the mobile

device (e.g., notebook computer, smartphone, tablet computing device, etc.), which can in turn communicate the image data to the central server.

[0139] The GPS module 1025 can be configured to determine the location of the data acquisition and processing module 1020 at a particular time. The processing unit 1021 can store the location data and can associate the location data with a particular image captured by the optical system 1015 in some arrangements. The location data associated with the captured images can be transmitted by the communication module 1024 (or by an external device) to a central server in some arrangements.

[0140] The optical system 1015, the processing unit 1021, the power supply 1026, the communication module 1024, and/or the GPS module 1025 may be contained or housed in the data acquisition and processing module 1020, which can be carried or worn by the user. The components of the system 1000 (including the optical components, the processing components, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume less than about 300 cubic inches, less than about 200 cubic inches, or less than about 100 cubic inches. In various embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical components, the processing components, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume greater than about 2 cubic inches, or greater than about 16 cubic inches. A power supply, including a battery and/or solar module may also be included among the components packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and fit into the above-referenced volumetric dimensions.

[0141] The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (with the system components mounted therein or thereon, including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) may be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$. For example, in some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 8 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit

within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 7 inches x 5 inches x 5 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 6 inches x 4 inches x 4 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 4 inches by 2 inches x 2 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 2 inches by 1 inches x 1 inches. A power supply, including a battery and/or solar module, a communications module, or both may be included in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and fit into the above-referenced dimensions. It should be appreciated that the dimensions disclosed herein may not correspond to the directions shown in Figure 11A with respect to X, Y, and Z. Moreover, the system 1000 can have a mass and weight sufficiently small so as to enable the user 1275 to easily carry or wear the data acquisition and processing module 1020 at the site.

[0142] Figure 13A is a schematic system diagram of an optical system 1015 configured to be used in the mobile infrared imaging systems 1000 disclosed herein, according to various embodiments. As explained herein, the optical system 1015 shown in Figure 13A can be provided in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 to be worn or carried by the user. The optical system 1015 can be configured to capture multispectral image data of an object 1007, such as a gas cloud, chemical spill, etc. The components of the optical system 1015 shown in Figure 13A may be similar to or the same as the components of the optical systems and devices explained herein with respect to Figures 1-10C. The optical system 1015 can include a focal plane array (FPA) unit 1008 configured to record infrared image data captured by the system 1000. As shown in Figure 13A, the FPA unit 1008 may advantageously be uncooled, *e.g.*, devoid of a cooling system.

[0143] The optical system 1015 can include a front window 1006 through which light from the object 1007 passes. A first moveable blackbody source 1003 and a

second moveable blackbody source 1004 can be provided to enable calibration of the optical system 1015. The moveable sources 1003, 1004 can be moved in front of the field of view such that the optics image these sources for calibration. For example, the first and second blackbody sources 1003, 1004 can be maintained at different known temperatures in a stable manner. For example, a heater and a temperature sensor can be attached to each blackbody source 1003, 1004 to provide feedback to create a stable and known temperature difference (*e.g.*, at least 50 mK in some arrangements) between different spatial regions of the sources.

[0144] In addition, the optical system 1000 can include a dynamic calibration apparatus to dynamically calibrate the system 1000. As shown in Figure 13A, one or more calibration sources 1009, 1010 can be provided. The calibration sources 1009, 1010 can comprise a thermal electrically controlled (TEC) material with a temperature sensor attached thereto. The calibration sources 1009, 1010 can be coated with a spectrally measured coating or paint. Light from the calibration sources 1009, 1010 can be reflected from one or more mirrors 1005 and directed through the lens array 1002 (described below) to be imaged on a portion of the FPA unit 1008 to assist in dynamically calibrating the system 1000 (*e.g.*, while imaging of the target gas cloud is simultaneously being imaged).

[0145] The optical system 1000 can include a lens array 1002 to focus the incoming light onto the FPA unit 1008. As shown in Figure 13A, each lens of the lens array 1002 can at least partially define or be included in an optical channel to be imaged by the FPA unit 1008. To improve the mobility and portability of the mobile imaging system 1000, the lens array 1002 can comprise an integrated unit formed from or assembled into a single unitary body. Such an integrated lens array 1002 can reduce the size of the imaging system 1015, and therefore, the size of the system 1000, to at least partially enable the system 1000 to be worn or carried by the user. The lens array 1002 can be monolithically formed in any suitable manner. For example, in various embodiments, the lens array 1002 can be formed by a diamond milling tool. In some embodiments, the lens array 1002 can comprise a monolithic piece of transparent material which has separate regions shaped into curved refractive surfaces for creating

separate lenses. In some embodiments, the lenses can be inserted into an array of openings formed in a plate or substrate to create the lens array 1002.

[0146] The optical system 1000 can also include an array of infrared (IR) filters 1001 configured to filter wavelengths of infrared light in an appropriate manner. Examples of IR filters and filtering techniques are disclosed herein, for example, with respect to Figures 5A-6D. As shown in Figure 13A, the IR filters 1001 can be disposed between the lens array 1002 and the FPA unit 1008. The IR filters 1001 can at least partially define the multiple optical channels to be imaged by the FPA unit 1008. In some embodiments, the IR filters 1001 can be positioned between the lens array 1002 and the first and second moveable blackbody sources 1009, 1010.

[0147] Figure 13B is a schematic system diagram of an optical system 1015 configured to be used in the mobile infrared imaging systems 1000 disclosed herein, according to various embodiments. As explained herein, the optical system 1015 shown in Figure 13B can be provided in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 to be worn or carried by the user. The components of the optical system 1015 shown in Figure 13B may be similar to or the same as the components of the optical systems and devices explained herein with respect to Figures 1-10C and 13A.

[0148] The optical system 1015 of Figure 13B can include an FPA unit 1408 configured to image an object 1409, such as a gas cloud or chemical leak. As with the embodiment illustrated in Figure 13A, the system 1015 of Figure 13B can include a front window 1406 through which light from the object 1409 passes, first and second moveable blackbody sources 1403, 1404, an IR filter array 1401, and a lens array 1402. As with the embodiment of Figure 13A, the lens array 1402 can comprise a unitary or monolithic body. In the embodiment of Figure 13B, the lens array 1402 may be disposed between the filter array 1401 and the FPA unit 1408. In other arrangements, the filter array 1401 may be disposed between the lens array 1402 and the FPA unit 1408.

[0149] The optical system 1015 of Figure 13B can include a cooling unit 1430 configured to cool the FPA unit 1408. The cooling unit 1430 can comprise a cooling finger configured to cryogenically cool the FPA array 1408 in various arrangements. As shown in Figure 13B, the filter array 1401, the lens array 1402, and the FPA unit 1408 can be disposed in a cooled region 1440. The blackbody sources 1403, 1404 and front

window 1406 can be disposed in an uncooled region 1450. Disposing the blackbody sources 1403, 1404 at uncooled temperatures and the filter array 1401, lens array 1402, and FPA unit 1408 at cooled temperatures can assist in the periodic calibration of the system 1000.

[0150] Figure 14A is a schematic perspective view of a mobile infrared imaging system 1000 (*e.g.*, mobile DAISI system) mounted to a helmet 1200, according to various embodiments. Figure 14B is an enlarged schematic perspective view of the mobile infrared imaging system 1000 shown in Figure 14A. The helmet 1200 can comprise a portion of a user's personal protective equipment and can also advantageously be used as a platform for the imaging system 1000. As explained above, the helmet 1200 can be worn by a user as the user visits a particular installation site to be monitored, such as an oil well site, a refinery, etc. The system 1000 can be activated to continuously monitor and analyze the sites that the user visits. The system 1000 can thereby continuously and actively search for gas leaks wherever the user visits and can initiate an alarm or other notification if a leak is detected.

[0151] In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 14B, the imaging system 1000 can comprise a housing 1590, within or to which a data acquisition and processing module 1020 (*see, e.g.*, Figure 12 and associated description) is mounted or coupled. A support 1592 can be coupled to or formed with the housing 1590 and can be configured to attach to the helmet 1200 or to any other suitable platform. For example, in some embodiments, the support 1592 can include one or more mounting holes for attaching to the helmet 1200 by way of, *e.g.*, screws, bolts, or other fasteners. In addition, as shown in Figure 14B, a front window 1506 can be provided at a front end of the housing 1590. The front window 1506 can be transparent to IR radiation and can at least partially define the aperture of the system 1000. In some embodiments, the window 1506 comprises germanium. A diamond like coating (DLC) or other coating or layer can be disposed over the window 1506 to provide a durable surface.

[0152] As explained herein, the system 1000 can be configured to be worn or carried by a human user. Accordingly, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 can be suitably dimensioned such that a user can easily wear or carry the system 1000.

For example, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 can be defined at least in part by dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$, as shown in Figures 14A and 14B.

[0153] Unlike other systems, in which the system components are bulky or are assembled over a large form factor, the mobile system 1000 can be sized and shaped in such a manner so as to be easily moved and manipulated when the user moves about the site. Indeed, it can be very challenging to integrate the various system components in a small form-factor. Advantageously, the systems 1000 disclosed herein can be worn or carried by a human user. For example, the components of the system 1000 can be contained together in the data acquisition and processing module 1020, which may include the housing 1590 to support the system components. The components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume less than about 300 cubic inches, less than about 200 cubic inches, or less than about 100 cubic inches. In various embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume greater than about 2 cubic inches, or greater than about 16 cubic inches. In some embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume in a range of about 4 cubic inches to about 15 cubic inches. In some embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume in a range of about 5 cubic inches to about 12 cubic inches. In some embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume

in a range of about 4 cubic inches to about 6.5 cubic inches, *e.g.*, about 5.63 cubic inches in one embodiment. In some embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume in a range of about 9 cubic inches to about 13 cubic inches, *e.g.*, about 11.25 cubic inches in one embodiment. In some embodiments, the components of the system 1000 (including the optical or imaging components, the focal plane array, the on-board processing electronics, and the communications components) may be packaged or assembled in the data acquisition and processing module 1020 and may occupy a volume in a range of about 6 cubic inches to about 10 cubic inches.

[0154] The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (with the system components mounted therein or thereon) may be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$. For example, the data acquisition and processing module 1020, including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may be included in a package that is sized and shaped to fit within the box-shaped boundary having dimensions $X \times Y \times Z$. This package may also contain a power supply, such as a battery and/or solar module. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 8 inches $\times$ 6 inches $\times$ 6 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 7 inches $\times$ 5 inches $\times$ 5 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 6 inches $\times$ 4 inches $\times$ 4 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary smaller than 6 inches $\times$ 2 inches $\times$ 2 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the

imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 4 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches. In some embodiments, the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be sized and shaped to fit within a box-shaped boundary having dimensions larger than 2 inches x 1 inches x 1 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions less than 3 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have dimensions greater than 1 inches x 0.5 inch x 0.5 inch. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 30 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 20 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 15 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume less than 10 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more than 1 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more than 4 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more 5 cubic inches. The data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can have a volume more 10 cubic inches. This package may also contain a power supply, including a battery and/or solar module, a communications module, or both and fit into the above-referenced dimensions. It should be appreciated that the dimensions disclosed herein may not correspond to the directions shown in Figure 11A with respect

to X, Y, and Z. This package may also contain a power supply, including a battery and/or solar module, a communications module, or both and fit into the above-referenced dimensions. It should be appreciated that the dimensions disclosed herein may not correspond to the directions shown in Figure 11A with respect to X, Y, and Z.

[0155] In some embodiments, the dimension X shown in Figure 14B can be in a range of about 2 inches to about 7 inches, or more particularly, in a range of about 2 inches to about 4 inches, *e.g.*, about 2.5 inches in one embodiment. In some embodiments, the dimension X shown in Figure 14B can be in a range of about 4 inches to about 6 inches, *e.g.*, about 5 inches in one embodiment. In some embodiments, the dimension Y shown in Figure 14B can be in a range of about 1 inch to about 5 inches, or more particularly, in a range of about 1 inch to about 3 inches, *e.g.*, about 1.5 inches in one embodiment. In some embodiments, the dimension Z shown in Figure 14B can be in a range of about 1 inch to about 5 inches, or more particularly, in a range of about 1 inch to about 3 inches, *e.g.*, about 1.5 inches in one embodiment.

[0156] Moreover, the system 1000 can have a mass and weight sufficiently small so as to enable the user 1275 to easily carry or wear the data acquisition and processing module 1020 at the site. For example, the system 1000 can have a weight in a range of about 0.5 pounds to 5 pounds, or more particularly, in a range of about 0.5 pounds to 2 pounds, or more particularly in a range of about 0.25 pounds to about 2 pounds, or more particularly, in a range of about 0.25 pounds to about 1.5 pounds. In one embodiment, for example, the system 1000 can weight about 1 pound. In another embodiment, for example, the system 1000 can weigh about 0.5 pounds. Thus, the embodiment shown in Figure 11A can be sized and shaped and configured to have a mass that enables a human user to easily and effectively manipulate the system 1000.

[0157] Figure 14C is a perspective cross-sectional view of the mobile infrared imaging system 1000 shown in Figures 14A-14B. The mobile infrared imaging system 1000 can include one or more movable shutters 1503 (*e.g.*, two shutters) rear of the window 1506 and a lens assembly 1502 rear of the shutter(s) 1503. A filter array 1501 can be disposed rear (or forward) of the second lens array 1502B, and an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit 1508 can be disposed rear of the filter array 1501. The optical FPA unit 1508 can be mechanically and electrically coupled with one or more substrates

1586, which may comprise printed circuit board or PCB substrates. In various embodiments, the FPA unit 1508 comprises a single FPA or detector array. Additionally, as explained herein, the lens assembly 1502, filter array 1501, and optical FPA unit can at least partially define one or more optical channels that are spatially and spectrally different. A number of the optical channels can be at least 4, at least 5, at least 8, at least 9, at least 12, at least 13, or at least 20. In some embodiments, a number of the optical channels is between 4 and 50.

[0158] One or more batteries 1588 can supply power to the system 1000 by way of the substrate(s) 1586. In addition, a visible light imaging sensor 1580 can be disposed in the housing 1590 and can be configured to provide a visible light image of the scene being captured by the system 1000. The processed IR image data can be overlaid upon the visible light image. In various embodiments the visible light imaging sensor 1580 can be used for reduction of scene-motion-induced detection errors, for example, to detect a moving object that enters the field of view (such as an animal or person) and would interfere with the data being collected.

[0159] As explained herein, the movable shutter(s) 1503 can be configured to provide spectral-radiometric calibration for the system 1000. The shutter(s) 1503 can be configured to move in and out of the field of view of the lens assembly 1502 periodically, *e.g.*, in a time period in a range of about 1 minute to about 15 minutes, or more particularly, in a range of about 3 minutes to about 7 minutes, *e.g.*, about 5 minutes. Although one shutter 1503 is illustrated in Figure 14C, it should be appreciated that two or more shutters may be provided. The shutter(s) 1503 can be used in static calibration procedures to provide the system with absolute temperature values. In some embodiments, only static calibration is performed, *e.g.*, no dynamic calibration is performed. In some embodiments, both static and dynamic calibration procedures are performed.

[0160] The lens assembly 1502 can include a first lens array 1502A and a second lens array 1502B. In some embodiments, the lens assembly 1502 can comprise an array of two-part lenses denoted by the first and second arrays 1502A, 1502B. In some embodiments, the lens assembly 1502 can comprise an array of two separate lenses denoted by the first and second arrays 1502A, 1502B. Each of the lens arrays 1502A,

1502B can comprise a 4 x 3 array of lenses, each of which may correspond to a particular detector region in the FPA unit 1508 and can define an optical channel of the system 1000. The lenses used in the first lens array 1502A may be different from the lenses used in the second lens array 1502B. The lenses can be any suitable type of lens, including, *e.g.*, spherical lenses, aspheric lenses, rod lenses, etc. or any combination thereof. For example, the lenses used in the first lens array 1502A can comprise aspheric lenses, and the lenses used in the second lens array 1502B can comprise rod lenses. Although the lens assembly 1502 shown in Figure 15C includes two lens arrays, it should be appreciated that additional lens arrays may be used, *e.g.*, three lens arrays, four lens arrays, five lens arrays, etc. In addition, to assist in enabling a small system size, the diameter of each lens in the assembly 1502 can be less than about 0.5", *e.g.*, in a range of about 0.1" to about 0.5". The f-number of each lens can be less than about 2, *e.g.*, in a range of about 0.2 to 2, or more particularly, in a range of about 0.5 to 2, or 1.0 to 2 or 1.1 to 2.

[0161] The first lens array 1502A and the second lens array 1502B can be coupled to one another by way of a mounting plate 1584 sized and shaped to support or receive each lens array 1502A, 1502B. For example, the first lens array 1502A can be mounted on one side of the mounting plate 1584, and the second lens array 1502B can be mounted on an opposite side of the mounting plate 1584. The mounting plate 1584 can be machined to have diameter tolerances of about +/- 25 microns. The lenses of the arrays 1502A, 1502B can be secured to the mounting plate 1584 with a curable epoxy. For example, the lenses may fit into opposite sides of holes formed in the mounting plate 1584.

[0162] The optical FPA unit 1508 can comprise any suitable type of detector array that is configured to detect infrared radiation, for example, greater than 1 micron, or greater than 2 microns, or greater than 3 microns or greater than 5 microns, or greater than 6 microns and possibly lower than 20 microns, or 15 microns, or 13 microns, or 12 microns or 10 microns, in wavelength, and may be cooled or uncooled. In some embodiments the optical FPA unit 1508 comprises one or more microbolometer arrays, which may be uncooled. For example, an array of about 1000 x 1000 microbolometer arrays may be used in the embodiments disclosed herein. Microbolometer arrays such as

those manufactured by DRS Technologies of Arlington, Virginia, and Sofradir EC, Inc., of Fairfield, New Jersey, may be suitable for the embodiments disclosed herein. For example, the DRS U8000 FPA manufactured by DRS Technologies may be used in some embodiments. In some arrangements, the microbolometer array may have a resolution of 1024 x 768 with a pixel pitch of 12 microns. The array of lenses can form separate channels having image detection regions that form part of the array. For example, 12 channels can be included in the 1024 x 768 pixel array with on the detector array (microbolometer array) that are for example 250 x 250 pixels for each of the 12 channels. Detector arrays having more or less pixels may be employed. Similarly the number of channels be larger or smaller than 12 and the detection are on the detector array for a single channel may be larger or smaller than 250 x 250 pixels. For example, the detection region may comprise from between 100-200 pixels x 100-200 pixels per detection region, For example, the detection region may comprise from between 100-200 pixels x 100-200 pixels per detection region, from between 200-300 pixels x 200-300 pixels per detection region, or from between 300-400 pixels x 300-400 pixels or from between 400-500 pixels x 400-500 pixels. Likewise the detection region for a channel may measure 100-200 pixels on a side, 200-300 pixels on a side, 300-400 pixels on a side, 400-500 pixels on side or larger or smaller. In some arrangements, the spectral band of the microbolometer can be about 7.5 microns to 14 microns. The microbolometer array can operate at a frame rate of about 30 Hz and can operate at operating temperatures of about -40 °C to +70 °C. In various embodiments, the microbolometer array is an uncooled microbolometer that does not include a cooler. The sensitivity of the microbolometer at F/I can be < about 40 mK. The systems 1000 disclosed herein can be used to detect wavelengths in a range of about 1 micron to about 20 microns. For example, the systems 1000 disclosed herein can be used to detect wavelengths above about 6 microns, *e.g.*, in a range of about 6 microns to about 18 microns, or more particularly, in a range of about 7 microns to about 14 microns. In various embodiments, the individual detector elements of the microbolometer array can be spaced relatively close together to at least partially enable a small, compact system. For example, adjacent detector elements of the array can be spaced apart by a distance in a range of about 7 microns to about 15 microns, or more particularly in a range of about 9 microns to about

13 microns, *e.g.*, about 11 microns. The individual lenses can be spaced apart by a distance in a range of about 20 mm to about 35 mm, *e.g.* in a range of about 24 mm to about 30 mm, *e.g.*, about 27.5 mm. Likewise the spatially and spectrally spaced channels may be physically spaced apart by 20 to 35 mm, 24 mm to 30 mm, etc. Although various embodiments of the system are described as including an FPA comprising for example a microbolometer array, certain embodiments comprise a plurality of FPAs. In some embodiments, a single optical FPA is used. In some embodiments, detectors of the optical FPA are configured to detect radiation in the same band of IR wavelengths.

[0163] The on-board processing electronics of the data acquisition and processing module 1020 can process the IR optical data to detect and/or identify a target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA. For example, the module 1020 can be configured to acquire multispectral image data and analyze the acquired image data to identify the target species. For example, the mobile imaging systems 1000 disclosed herein can be configured to image a 10 m x 10 m object area at a distance of about 17 m at a resolution of about 0.04 m. In this example, any gas leaks that generate a gas cloud of at least about 1.5 inches in size can be detected and/or identified by the system 1000. The detection and identification methods can be performed substantially in real-time such that the user can be alerted if any leaks are identified.

[0164] As explained above, the infrared image data captured by the system 1000 can be processed on board the data acquisition and processing module 1020 of the imaging system 1000. One way to provide a smaller system 1000 is to process the image data using one or more field-programmable gate arrays (FPGA) configured to execute methods used in the analysis of the images captured by the optical system 1015. In some embodiments, one or more Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs) may be used instead of, or in addition to, the FPGAs. For example, an ASICs chip may include an FPGA. The FPGA(s) (and/or ASIC(s)) can be mounted to and electrically coupled with the substrate(s) 1586 shown in Figure 14C and can be physically located proximate the optical system. For example, the FPGA can include logic gates and read access memory (RAM) blocks that are designed to quickly implement the computations used to detect the types of gases in a gas cloud. The small size/weight, and high performance characteristics of the FPGA can enable on board computation and analysis within the data

acquisition and detection unit 1020 worn or carried by the user. The use of FPGA (or similar electronics) on board the system 1000 can reduce costs associated with using an off-site central server or larger computing device to conduct the image analysis computations. Advantageously, the embodiments disclosed herein can enable on-board computation even though it can be challenging to implement complex methods on the limited computing platform that FPGAs provide.

[0165] In addition, enabling computation with one or more FPGA devices on board the wearable system can also prevent or reduce communication bottlenecks associated with wirelessly transmitting large amounts of raw data from the system 1000 to a remote server or computer. For example, the infrared optical system 1015 disclosed herein may generate up to about 380Mbps of raw image data at 30 frames per second, and the visible sensor 1580 may generate about 425 Mbps of raw image data at 30 frames per second. The resulting data rate of about 800 Mbps is faster than most conventional wireless technologies. While data compression and/or pre-processing may reduce the raw data rates for the visible and IR images, in some embodiments, the IR image data may only be compressed by a ratio of about 2:1. The resulting overall data rate of about 192 Mbps may not be transmitted effectively by conventional wireless communications devices. Accordingly, performing the image processing calculations on board the system 1000 (*e.g.*, on the data acquisition and processing module 1020) can reduce the occurrence of or avoid bottlenecks generated by wirelessly communicating the raw image data to an off-site central server.

[0166] One challenge to implementing a mobile imaging system is the power requirements of each component of the system, including, *e.g.*, the IR optical system 1015, the visible sensor 1580, the processing electronics, the wireless communications modules, etc. Advantageously, the mobile infrared imaging systems 1000 disclosed herein can be configured to operate by battery power for long periods of time without recharging or replacing the batteries 1588. In some arrangements the one or more batteries 1588 can comprise lithium ion batteries, which have relatively high energy densities. In addition, to help reduce power consumption within the system 1000, the FPGAs of the data acquisition and processing module 1020 can be advantageously

programmed such that power consumption is lower than that used for other types of processing electronics.

[0164] The systems 1000 disclosed herein can advantageously operate for between 8 hours and 36 hours without recharging or replacing the batteries, or more particularly between about 10 hours and 24 hours without recharging or replacing the batteries. In some embodiments, the system 1000 can operate for at least about 12 hours without recharging or replacing the batteries. The components of the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can be configured to operate at relatively low electrical power levels, *e.g.*, at power levels in a range of about 3 W to about 10 W, or more particularly in a range of about 4 W to about 7 W, or in a range of about 4 W to about 6 W, *e.g.*, about 5 W in some embodiments. The components of the data acquisition and processing module 1020 (including the imaging optics, focal plane array, and on board processing electronics may) can also be configured to operate at relatively low overall energy levels for a single charge of the batteries 1588, *e.g.*, at energy levels in a range of about 60 Watt-hours (Wh) to about 100 Wh, or more particularly in a range of about 80 Wh to about 95 Wh, or in a range of about 85 Wh to about 90 Wh.

[0167] In addition, for each of the embodiments disclosed herein, various motion detection and/or compensation techniques can be implemented to account for relatively large-scale motions that are induced by the user moving his or her head during use. For example, when a user is visiting a well site or other installation, the user may be continuously walking and looking in different directions (*e.g.*, by rotating his or her head). Additionally, vibration can be introduced by the user's natural unsteadiness. Such movement can continuously change the system's field of view at a relatively rapid rate, which can affect the accuracy of the methods used to determine the identity of species in a gas cloud or other object. Accordingly, it can be desirable to provide improved motion detection and/or compensation techniques to reduce errors associated with the movements of the user.

[0168] Each of the embodiments disclosed herein can be used to estimate various characteristics of gases present in a gas leak imaged by the infrared imaging systems disclosed herein.

[0171] References throughout this specification to "one embodiment," "an embodiment," "a related embodiment," or similar language mean that a particular feature, structure, or characteristic described in connection with the referred to "embodiment" is included in at least one embodiment of the present invention. Thus, appearances of the phrases "in one embodiment," "in an embodiment," and similar language throughout this specification may, but do not necessarily, all refer to the same embodiment. It is to be understood that no portion of disclosure, taken on its own and in possible connection with a figure, is intended to provide a complete description of all features of the invention.

[0172] In the drawings like numbers are used to represent the same or similar elements wherever possible. The depicted structural elements are generally not to scale, and certain components are enlarged relative to the other components for purposes of emphasis and understanding. It is to be understood that no single drawing is intended to support a complete description of all features of the invention. In other words, a given drawing is generally descriptive of only some, and generally not all, features of the invention. A given drawing and an associated portion of the disclosure containing a description referencing such drawing do not, generally, contain all elements of a particular view or all features that can be presented in this view, for purposes of simplifying the given drawing and discussion, and to direct the discussion to particular elements that are featured in this drawing. A skilled artisan will recognize that the invention may possibly be practiced without one or more of the specific features, elements, components, structures, details, or characteristics, or with the use of other methods, components, materials, and so forth. Therefore, although a particular detail of an embodiment of the invention may not be necessarily shown in each and every drawing describing such embodiment, the presence of this detail in the drawing may be implied unless the context of the description requires otherwise. In other instances, well known structures, details, materials, or operations may be not shown in a given drawing or described in detail to avoid obscuring aspects of an embodiment of the invention that are being discussed. Furthermore, the described single features, structures, or characteristics of the invention may be combined in any suitable manner in one or more further embodiments.

[0173] Moreover, if the schematic flow chart diagram is included, it is generally set forth as a logical flow-chart diagram. As such, the depicted order and labeled steps of the logical flow are indicative of one embodiment of the presented method. Other steps and methods may be conceived that are equivalent in function, logic, or effect to one or more steps, or portions thereof, of the illustrated method. Additionally, the format and symbols employed are provided to explain the logical steps of the method and are understood not to limit the scope of the method. Although various arrow types and line types may be employed in the flow-chart diagrams, they are understood not to limit the scope of the corresponding method. Indeed, some arrows or other connectors may be used to indicate only the logical flow of the method. For instance, an arrow may indicate a waiting or monitoring period of unspecified duration between enumerated steps of the depicted method. Without loss of generality, the order in which processing steps or particular methods occur may or may not strictly adhere to the order of the corresponding steps shown.

[0174] The features recited in claims appended to this disclosure are intended to be assessed in light of the disclosure as a whole.

[0175] At least some elements of a device of the invention can be controlled - and at least some steps of a method of the invention can be effectuated, in operation - with a programmable processor governed by instructions stored in a memory. The memory may be random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), flash memory or any other memory, or combination thereof, suitable for storing control software or other instructions and data. Those skilled in the art should also readily appreciate that instructions or programs defining the functions of the present invention may be delivered to a processor in many forms, including, but not limited to, information permanently stored on non-writable storage media (e.g. read-only memory devices within a computer, such as ROM, or devices readable by a computer I/O attachment, such as CD-ROM or DVD disks), information alterably stored on writable storage media (e.g. floppy disks, removable flash memory and hard drives) or information conveyed to a computer through communication media, including wired or wireless computer networks. In addition, while the invention may be embodied in software, the functions necessary to implement the invention may optionally or alternatively be embodied in part or in whole

using firmware and/or hardware components, such as combinatorial logic, Application Specific Integrated Circuits (ASICs), Field-Programmable Gate Arrays (FPGAs) or other hardware or some combination of hardware, software and/or firmware components.

[0176] While examples of embodiments of the system and method of the invention have been discussed in reference to the gas-cloud detection, monitoring, and quantification (including but not limited to greenhouse gases such as Carbon Dioxide, Carbon Monoxide, Nitrogen Oxide as well as hydrocarbon gases such as Methane, Ethane, Propane, n-Butane, iso-Butane, n-Pentane, iso-Pentane, neo-Pentane, Hydrogen Sulfide, Sulfur Hexafluoride, Ammonia, Benzene, p- and m-Xylene, Vinyl chloride, Toluene, Propylene oxide, Propylene, Methanol, Hydrazine, Ethanol, 1,2-dichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethane, Dichlorobenzene, Chlorobenzene, to name just a few), embodiments of the invention can be readily adapted for other chemical detection applications. For example, detection of liquid and solid chemical spills, biological weapons, tracking targets based on their chemical composition, identification of satellites and space debris, ophthalmological imaging, microscopy and cellular imaging, endoscopy, mold detection, fire and flame detection, and pesticide detection are within the scope of the invention.

[0177] As used herein, a phrase referring to “at least one of” a list of items refers to any combination of those items, including single members. As an example, “at least one of: a, b, or c” is intended to cover: a, b, c, a-b, a-c, b-c, and a-b-c.

[0178] If implemented in software, the functions may be stored on or transmitted over as one or more instructions or code on a computer-readable medium. The steps of a method or algorithm disclosed herein may be implemented in a processor-executable software module which may reside on a computer-readable medium. Computer-readable media includes both computer storage media and communication media including any medium that can be enabled to transfer a computer program from one place to another. A storage media may be any available media that may be accessed by a computer. By way of example, and not limitation, such computer-readable media may include RAM, ROM, EEPROM, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium that may be used to store desired program code in the form of instructions or data structures and that may be accessed by a computer. Also, any connection can be properly termed a computer-

readable medium. Disk and disc, as used herein, includes compact disc (CD), laser disc, optical disc, digital versatile disc (DVD), floppy disk, and blu-ray disc where disks usually reproduce data magnetically, while discs reproduce data optically with lasers. Combinations of the above also may be included within the scope of computer-readable media. Additionally, the operations of a method or algorithm may reside as one or any combination or set of codes and instructions on a machine readable medium and computer-readable medium, which may be incorporated into a computer program product.

[0179] Various modifications to the implementations described in this disclosure may be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the generic principles defined herein may be applied to other implementations without departing from the spirit or scope of this disclosure. Thus, the claims are not intended to be limited to the implementations shown herein, but are to be accorded the widest scope consistent with this disclosure, the principles and the novel features disclosed herein.

[0180] Certain features that are described in this specification in the context of separate implementations also can be implemented in combination in a single implementation. Conversely, various features that are described in the context of a single implementation also can be implemented in multiple implementations separately or in any suitable subcombination. Moreover, although features may be described above as acting in certain combinations and even initially claimed as such, one or more features from a claimed combination can in some cases be excised from the combination, and the claimed combination may be directed to a subcombination or variation of a subcombination.

CLAIMS:

1. An infrared (IR) imaging system for imaging a target species in an object, the imaging system comprising:

an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA), the optical system having components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another, each of the at least two optical channels positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towardsthe optical FPA; and

a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA,

wherein said optical system and said processing unit are contained together in a data acquisition and processing module configured to be worn or carried by a person.

2. The system according to claim 1, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprise a communication module configured to communicate with at least one device physically separate from said data acquisition and processing module.

3. The system according to claim 2, wherein said at least one device is worn or carried by the person.

4. The system according to claim 2 or 3, wherein said at least one devicecomprises eyewear comprising a display.

5. The system according to any one of claims 2-4, wherein said communication module comprises a wireless communication module configured to wirelessly communicate with at least one device physically separate from said optical system and said processing unit.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein said at least one device is worn or carried by the person.

7. The system according to claim 5 or claim 6, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with eyewear comprising a display.

8. The system according to any one of claims 5-7, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with a tablet, smart phone, or notebook computer.
9. The system according to any one of claims 5-8, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with a device at a remote location a distance from the person of at least about 1/4 mile.
10. The system according to any one of claims 1-9, further comprising a power supply configured to be worn or carried by the person.
11. The system according to claim 10, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises said power supply.
12. The system according to any one of claims 1-11, further comprising a global positioning system (GPS) module to provide the position of said optical system, said GPS module configured to be worn or carried by the person.
13. The system according to claim 12, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises said GPS module.
14. The system according to any one of claims 1-13, wherein said processing unit comprises memory for data storage and/or program storage.
15. The system according to any one of claims 1-14, wherein said processor is in operable cooperation with a tangible, non-transitory computer-readable storage medium that contains a computer-readable program code that, when loaded onto the processor, enables the processor to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA.
16. The system according to any one of claims 1-15, wherein said processing unit comprises one or more on board FPGAs for data processing.
17. The system according to any one of claims 1-16, further comprising a display.
18. The system according to claim 17, wherein said display is further configured to be worn or carried by the person.

19. The system according to any one of claims 1-18, wherein said infrared imaging system is configured to be attached to a hat or helmet.
20. The system according to any one of claims 1-19, wherein said infrared imaging system is configured to be attached to a clothes garment.
21. The system according to any one of claims 1-20, further comprising a support for supporting the optical system and processing unit on a person.
22. The system according to claim 21, wherein said support comprises a strap.
23. The system according to claim 21, wherein said support comprises a fastener.
24. The system according to any one of claims 1-23, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises a cooling unit for cooling the optical system.
25. The system according to any one of claims 1-23, wherein said system is devoid of a cooling system.
26. The system according to any one of claims 1-25, wherein the optical system comprises a plurality of IR spectral filters for the different channels.
27. The system according to any one of claims 1-26, wherein the optical system comprises a plurality of imaging lenses for the different channels.
28. The system according to any one of claims 1-27, wherein said the processor is configured to acquire in a single occurrence of data acquisition multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA.
29. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 8 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches.
30. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 7 inches x 5 inches x 5 inches.
31. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 6 inches x 4 inches x 4 inches.
32. The system according to any one of claims 29-31, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 4 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches.

33. The system according to any one of claims 29-31, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 2 inches x 1 inch x 1 inch.
34. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 300 cubic inches.
35. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 200 cubic inches.
36. The system according to any of claims 1-28, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 100 cubic inches.
37. The system according to any one of claims 34-36, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 2 cubic inches.
38. The system according to any one of claims 34-36, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 16 cubic inches.
39. The system according to any one of claims 1-38, wherein said data acquisition and processing module is configured to be worn by a person when said data is acquired.
40. The system according to any one of claims 1-39, wherein said data acquisition and processing module is configured to be carried by a person when said data is acquired.
41. An infrared (IR) imaging system for imaging a target species in an object, the imaging system comprising:
an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit, the optical system having components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another, each of the at least two optical channels positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA unit; and
a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA unit,

wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 8 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches.

42. The system according to claim 41, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 7 inches x 5 inches x 5 inches.

43. The system according to claim 41, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 6 inches x 4 inches x 4 inches.

44. The system according to any one of claims 41-43, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 4 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches.

45. The system according to any one of claims 41-43, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 2 inches x 1 inch x 1 inch.

46. An infrared (IR) imaging system for imaging a target species in an object, the imaging system comprising:

an optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA), the optical system having components defining at least two optical channels thereof, said at least two optical channels being spatially and spectrally different from one another, each of the at least two optical channels positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system towards the optical FPA; and

a processing unit containing a processor that can be configured to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA,

wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 300 cubic inches.

47. The system according to claim 46, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 200 cubic inches.

48. The system according to claim 46, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 100 cubic inches.

49. The system according to any one of claims 46-48, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 2 cubic inches.

50. The system according to any one of claims 46-48, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 16 cubic inches.

51. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprise a communication module configured to communicate with at least one device physically separate from said data acquisition and processing module.

52. The system according to claim 51, wherein said at least one device is worn or carried by a person.

53. The system according to claim 52, wherein said at least one device comprises eyewear comprising a display.

54. The system according to claim 51, wherein said communication module comprises a wireless communication module configured to wirelessly communicate with at least one device physically separate from said optical system and said processing unit.

55. The system according to claim 54, wherein said at least one device is worn or carried by a person.

56. The system according to claim 54, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with eyewear comprising a display.

57. The system according to claim 54, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with a tablet, smart phone, or notebook computer.

58. The system according to claim 54, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with a device at a remote location a distance from the data acquisition and processing module of at least about 1/4 mile.

59. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, further comprising a power supply.

60. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises said power supply.

61. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, further comprising a GPS module to provide the position of said optical system.
62. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises said GPS module.
63. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said processing unit comprises memory for data storage and/or program storage.
64. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said processor is in operable cooperation with a tangible, non-transitory computer-readable storage medium that contains a computer-readable program code that, when loaded onto the processor, enables the processor to acquire multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA.
65. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said processing unit comprises a plurality of on board FPGAs for data processing.
66. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, further comprising a display.
67. The system according to claim 66, wherein said display is further configured to be worn or carried by a person.
68. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said infrared imaging system is configured to be attached to a hat or helmet.
69. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said infrared imaging system is configured to be attached to a clothes garment.
70. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, further comprising a support for supporting the optical system and processing unit on a person.
71. The system according to claim 70, wherein said support comprises a strap.
72. The system according to claim 70, wherein said support comprises a fastener.
73. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises a cooling unit for cooling the optical system.

74. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said system is devoid of a cooling system.

75. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein the optical system comprises a plurality of IR spectral filters for the different channels.

76. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein the optical system comprises a plurality of imaging lenses for the different channels.

77. The system according to any one of claims 41-50, wherein said the processor is configured to acquire in a single occurrence of data acquisition multispectral optical data representing said target species from the IR radiation received at the optical FPA.

78. A method of identifying a target species or quantifying or characterizing a parameter of the target species in an object, the method comprising:

wearing or carrying a data acquisition and processing module, the data acquisition and processing module comprising an optical system and a processing unit in communication with the optical system, the optical system including an optical focal plane array (FPA) unit;

capturing multispectral infrared (IR) image data at the FPA unit from at least two optical channels that are spatially and spectrally different from one another; and

acquiring multispectral optical data representing the target species from the IR radiation received at the FPA.

79. The method of claim 78, further comprising analyzing the acquired multispectral optical data to identify the target species.

80. The method of claim 79, further comprising communicating the identified target species to at least one device physically separate from said data acquisition and processing module.

81. The method of claim 80, further comprising displaying information related to the identified target species to a user.

82. The method of any one of claims 78-81, further comprising moving about a site to be monitored while wearing or carrying the data acquisition and processing module.

83. The system of Claim 9, wherein said wireless communication module is configured to communicate wirelessly with a device at a remote location a distance from the person of at least about 1/4 mile and less than about 1 mile.
84. The system of Claim 11, wherein the power supply comprises a battery or a solar power system.
85. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-84 wherein each imaging system is configured to capture multispectral image data for a scene in a single snapshot.
86. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-85, wherein each imaging system is configured to transmit video data associated with the one or more target gases to the central server.
87. The system of Claim 86, wherein each imaging system is configured to transmit image data corresponding an estimated concentration of the one or more target gases and visible image data of the installation site.
88. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-87, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 3 inches x 3 inches x 7 inches.
89. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-88, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 2 inches x 2 inches x 6 inches.
90. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, , and 83-89 wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 1 inches x 1 inches x 3 inches.
91. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-90 wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 2 inches x 2 inches x 4 inches.
92. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-91, further comprising a spectral shutter for calibration.
93. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-92, wherein the data acquisition and processing module comprises a housing and an IR-transparent window at a first end portion of the housing.
94. The system of Claim 93, further comprising a lens holder offset from and generally parallel to the IR-transparent window, the lens holder comprising a plurality of apertures.
95. The system of Claim 94, further comprising a plurality of lenses disposed in corresponding apertures of the lens holder.

96. The system of Claim 95, further comprising a second plurality of lenses disposed rear of the plurality of lenses, such that the plurality of lenses is disposed between the IR-transparent window and the second plurality of lenses.
97. The system of any one of Claims 93-96, further comprising one or more IR filters.
98. The system of any one of Claims 1-77, and 83-97, further comprising a visible light camera.
99. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-97, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 6 inches x 3 inches x 3 inches.
100. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-99, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 4 inches x 3 inches x 3 inches.
101. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-100, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions less than 3 inches x 2 inches x 2 inches.
102. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-101, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 2 inches x 1 inches x 1 inches.
103. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-102, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has dimensions greater than 1 inches x 0.5 inch x 0.5 inch.
104. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-103, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 30 cubic inches.
105. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-104, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 20 cubic inches.
106. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-105, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 15 cubic inches.

107. The system according to any one of claims 1-77 and 83-106, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of less than 10 cubic inches.
108. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-107, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 1 cubic inches.
109. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-108, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 4 cubic inches.
110. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-109, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 5 cubic inches.
111. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-110, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 10 cubic inches.
112. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-111, wherein said data acquisition and processing module has a volume of more than 10 cubic inches.
113. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-112, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises a movable shutter for radiometric calibration.
114. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-113, wherein said data acquisition and processing module further comprises a plurality of movable shutters for radiometric calibration.
115. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-114, wherein said data acquisition and processing module weighs between 0.5 and 5 lbs.
116. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-115, wherein said data acquisition and processing module weighs between 0.5 and 2 lbs.
117. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-116, wherein said data acquisition and processing module is further configured to be mounted to a vehicle.
118. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-117, wherein said data acquisition and processing module is further configured to be mounted to an aerial device.
119. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-118, wherein the detectors

of the optical FPA are configured to detect radiation in the same band of IR wavelengths.

120. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-119, wherein detectors of the optical FPA are the same type of detector.

121. The system according to any one of claims 4 and 7, wherein said eyewear comprises protective eyewear.

122. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-121, wherein said two optical channels each comprises imaging optics comprising one or more lenses.

123. The system according to claim 122, wherein said one or more lenses comprises an aspheric lens.

124. The system according to claim 122 or 123, wherein said one or more lenses comprises a rod lens.

125. The system according to any one of claims 122-124, wherein said one or more lenses comprises a rod lens and another lens.

126. The system according to any one of claims 122-125, wherein said one or more lenses comprises a rod lens and aspheric lens.

127. The system according to any one of claims 122-126, wherein said two optical channels further comprise two respective wavelength filters.

128. The system according to any one of claims 122-127, wherein said one or more lenses are imbedded in a panel.

129. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-128, wherein the data acquisition and processing module is configured to operate at power levels in a range of about 3 W to about 10 W.

130. The system according to Claim 129, wherein the data acquisition and processing module is configured to operate at power levels in a range of about 4 W to about 7 W.

131. The system according to Claim 130, wherein the data acquisition and processing module is configured to operate at power levels in a range of about 4 W to about 6 W.

132. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-131, further comprising one or more batteries to supply power to the system.

133. The system according to Claim 132, wherein the data acquisition and processing

module is configured to operate for a single charge of the batteries at energy levels in a range of about 60 Watt-hours (Wh) to about 100 Wh.

134. The system according to Claim 133, wherein the data acquisition and processing module is configured to operate for a single charge of the batteries at energy levels in a range of about 80 Wh to about 95 Wh.

135. The system according to Claim 134, wherein the data acquisition and processing module is configured to operate for a single charge of the batteries at energy levels in a range of about 85 Wh to about 90 Wh.

136. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-135, wherein the optical system comprises a lens assembly comprising two lenses per optical channel.

137. The system according to Claim 136, wherein the two lenses are spaced from one another along the optical channel.

138. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-137, wherein the optical channels are spaced apart by a distance in a range of about 20 mm to about 35 mm.

139. The system of Claim 138, wherein the optical channels are spaced apart by a distance in a range of about 24 mm to about 30 mm.

140. The system of Claim 41, wherein the optical focal plane array (FPA) unit comprises a single focal plane array (FPA).

141. The system of Claim 140, wherein said at least two optical channels are positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system toward the single FPA.

142. The system of Claim 41, wherein the optical focal plane array (FPA) unit comprises a plurality of focal plane arrays (FPAs).

143. The system of Claim 142, wherein said at least two optical channels are positioned to transfer IR radiation incident on the optical system toward one of said FPAs.

144. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-143, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 4.

145. The system of Claim 144, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 5.

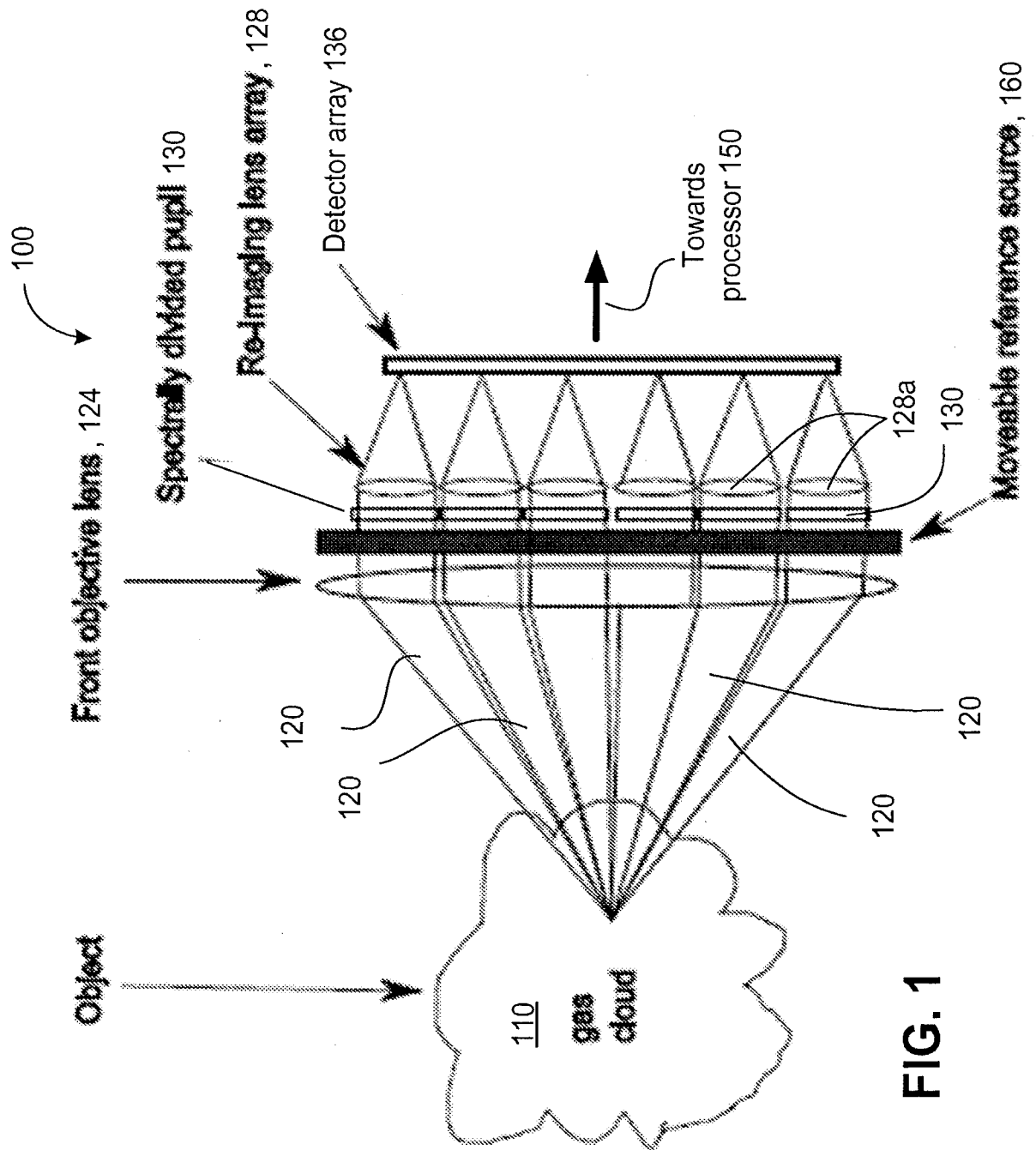
146. The system of Claim 145, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 8.

147. The system of Claim 146, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 9.

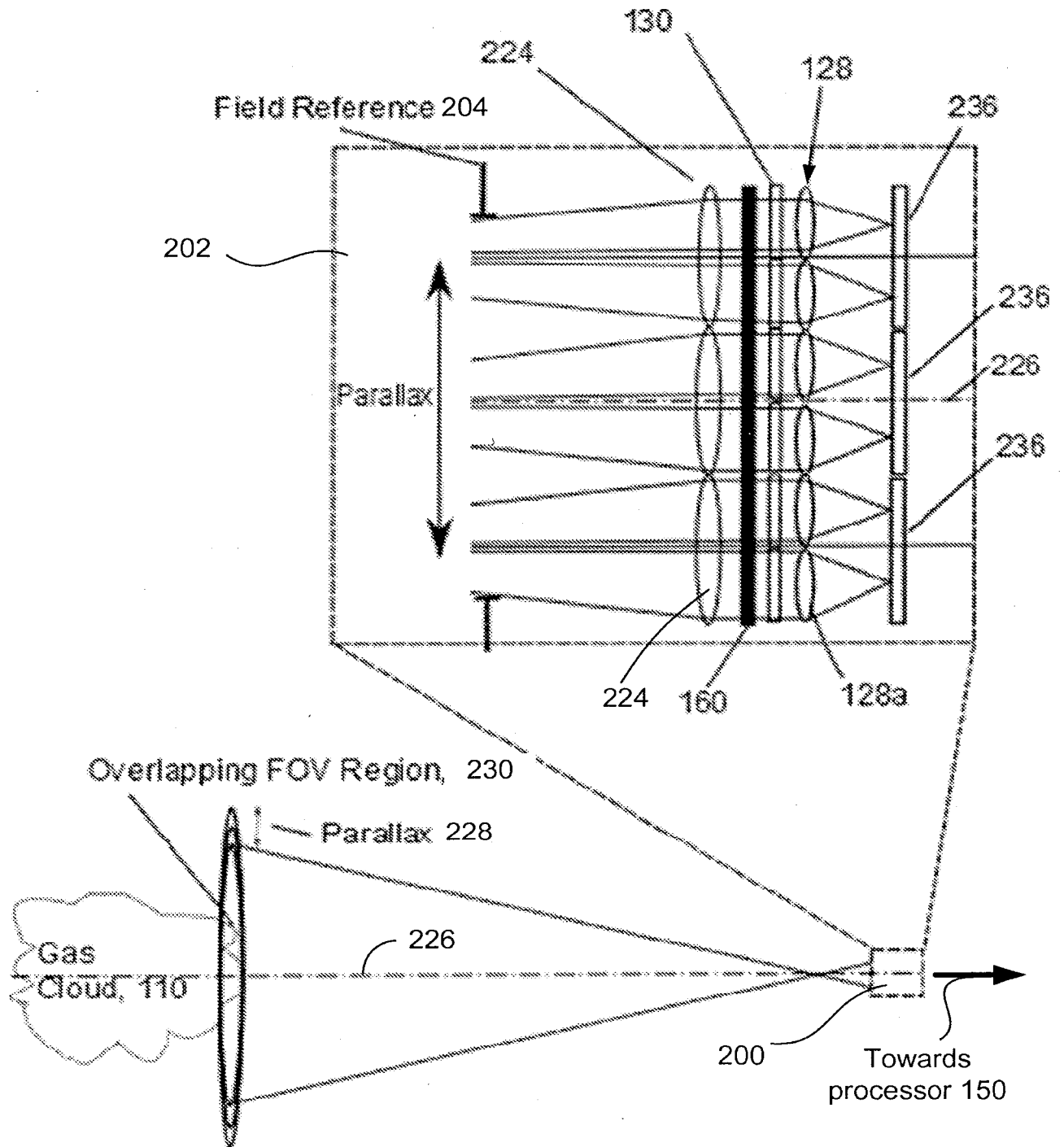
148. The system of Claim 147, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 12.

149. The system of Claim 148, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 13.
150. The system of Claim 149, wherein a number of the optical channels is at least 20.
151. The system of any one of claims 1-77, and 83-143, wherein a number of the optical channels is between 4 and 50.
152. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-151, wherein the optical FPA is a single optical FPA.
153. The system according to any one of claims 1-77, and 83-152, wherein the processor is configured to analyze the acquired multispectral optical data to identify said target species.

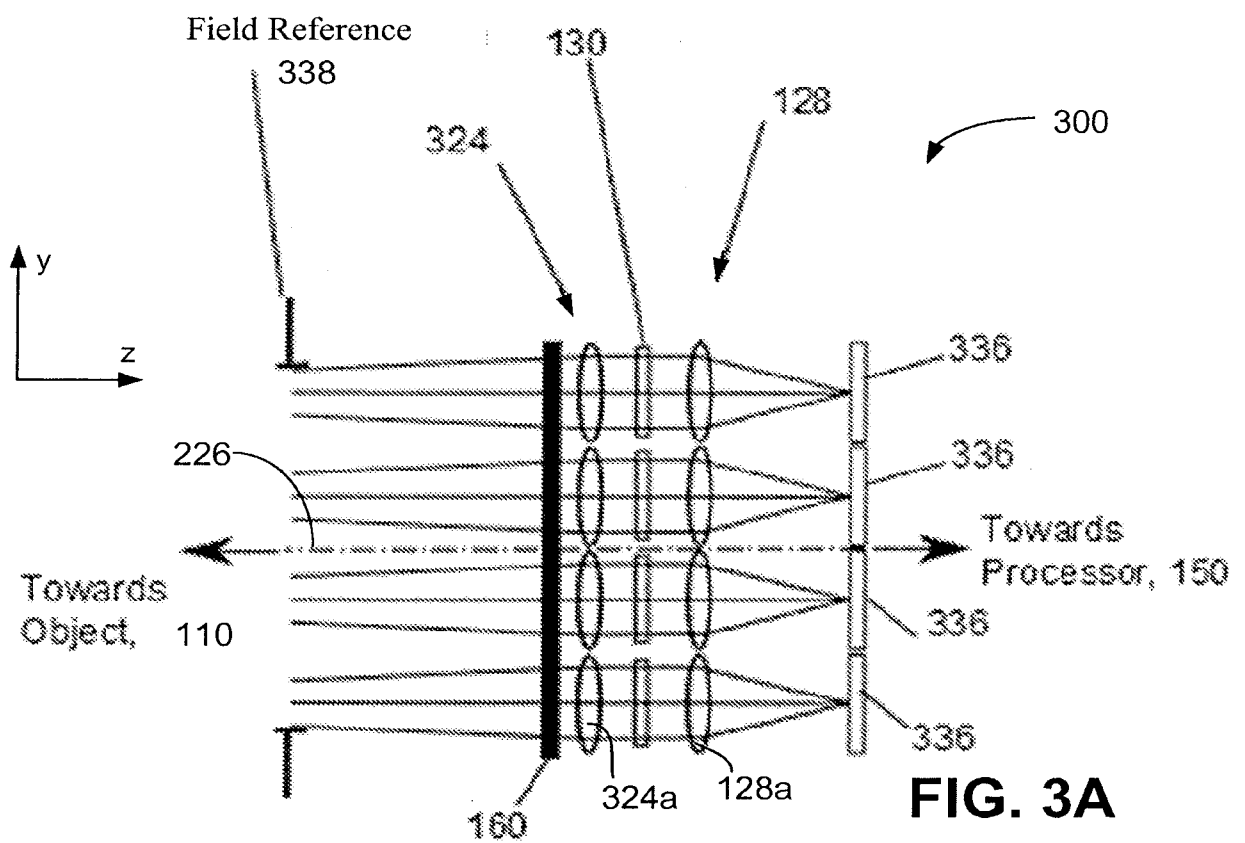
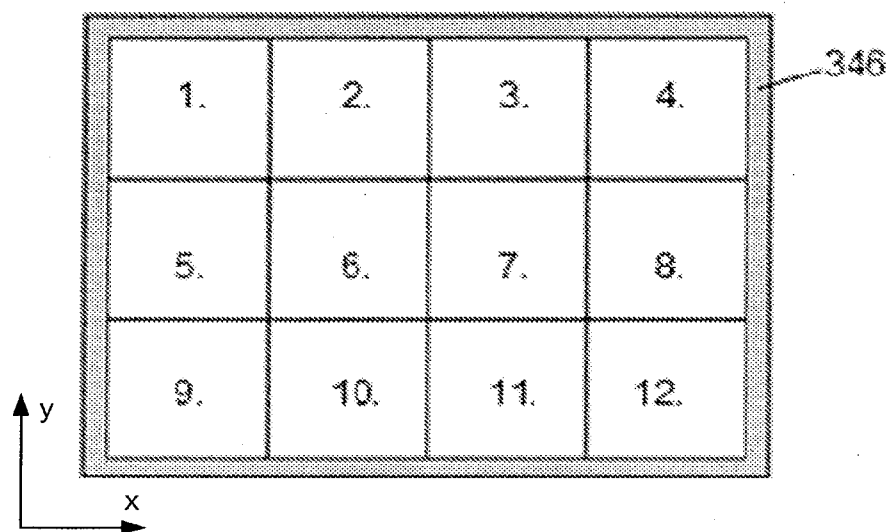
1/23

**FIG. 1**

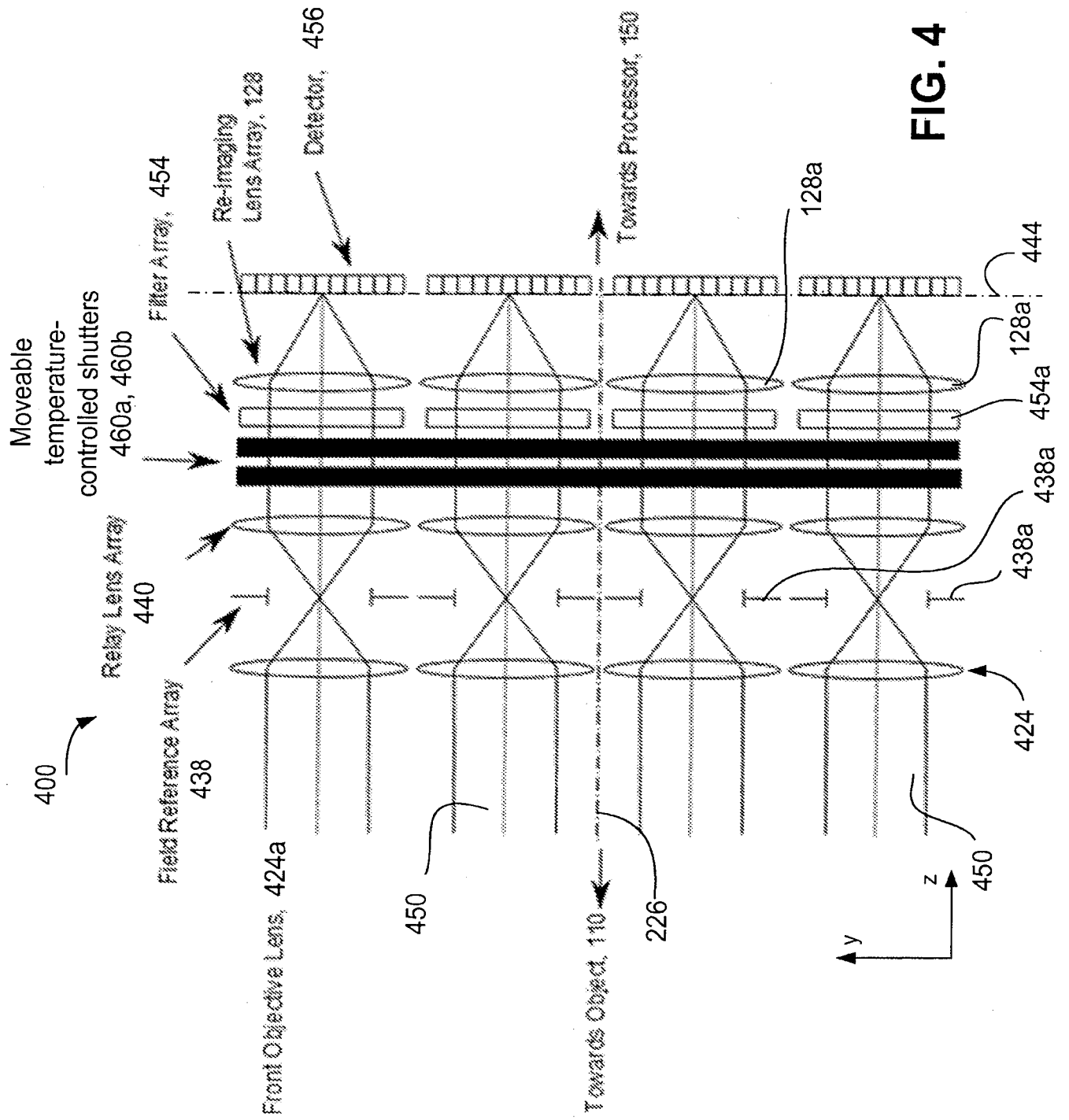
2/23

**FIG. 2**

3/23

**FIG. 3A****FIG. 3B**

4/23

**FIG. 4**

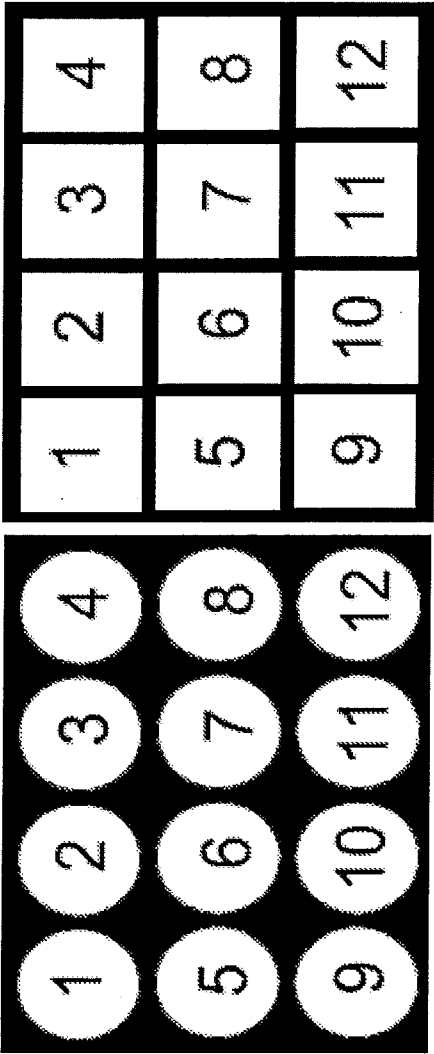


FIG. 5A

FIG. 5B

6/23

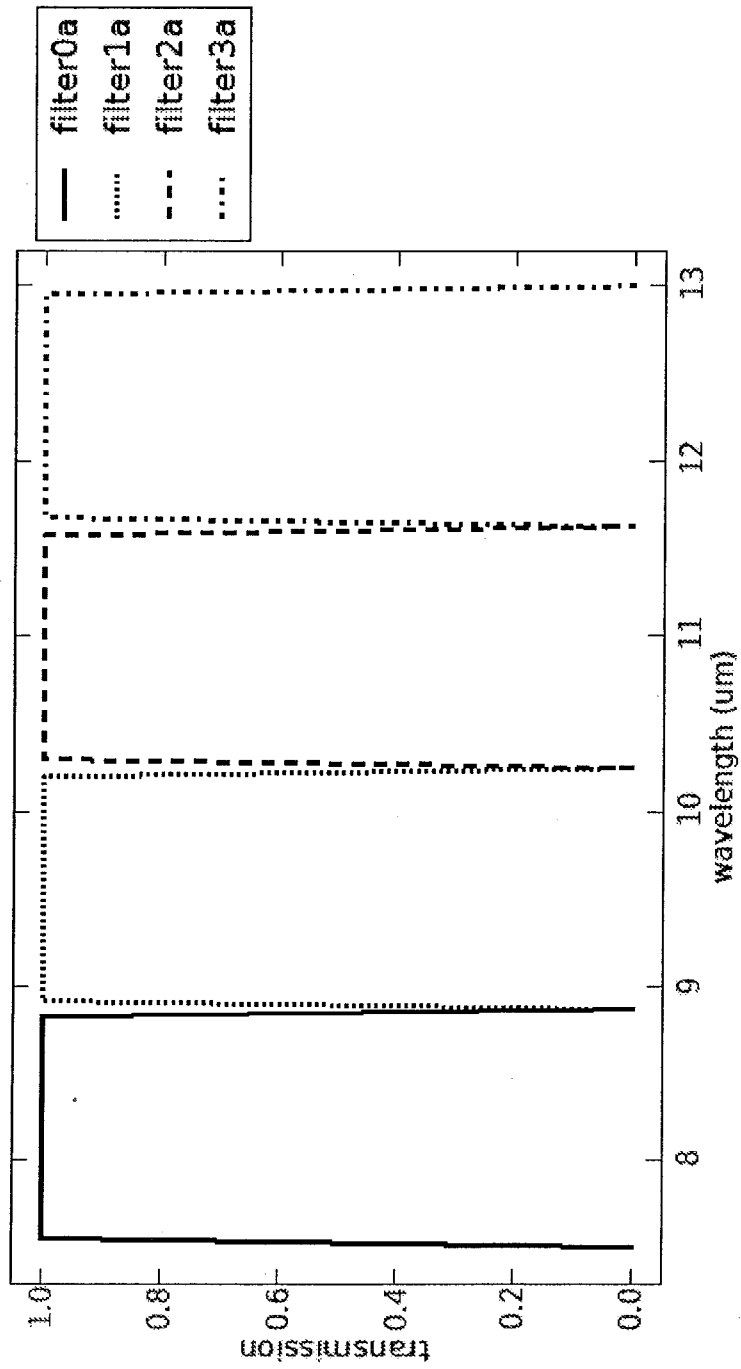


FIG. 6A

7/23

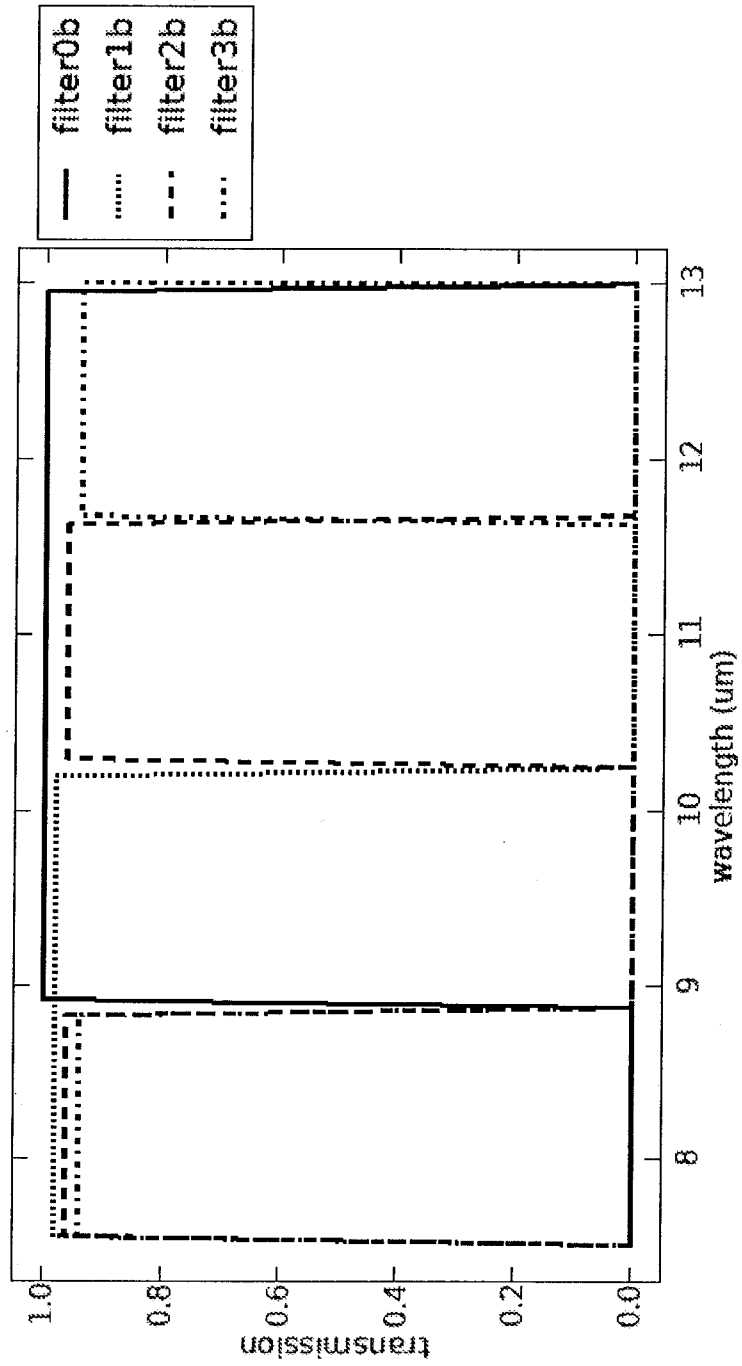


FIG. 6B

8/23

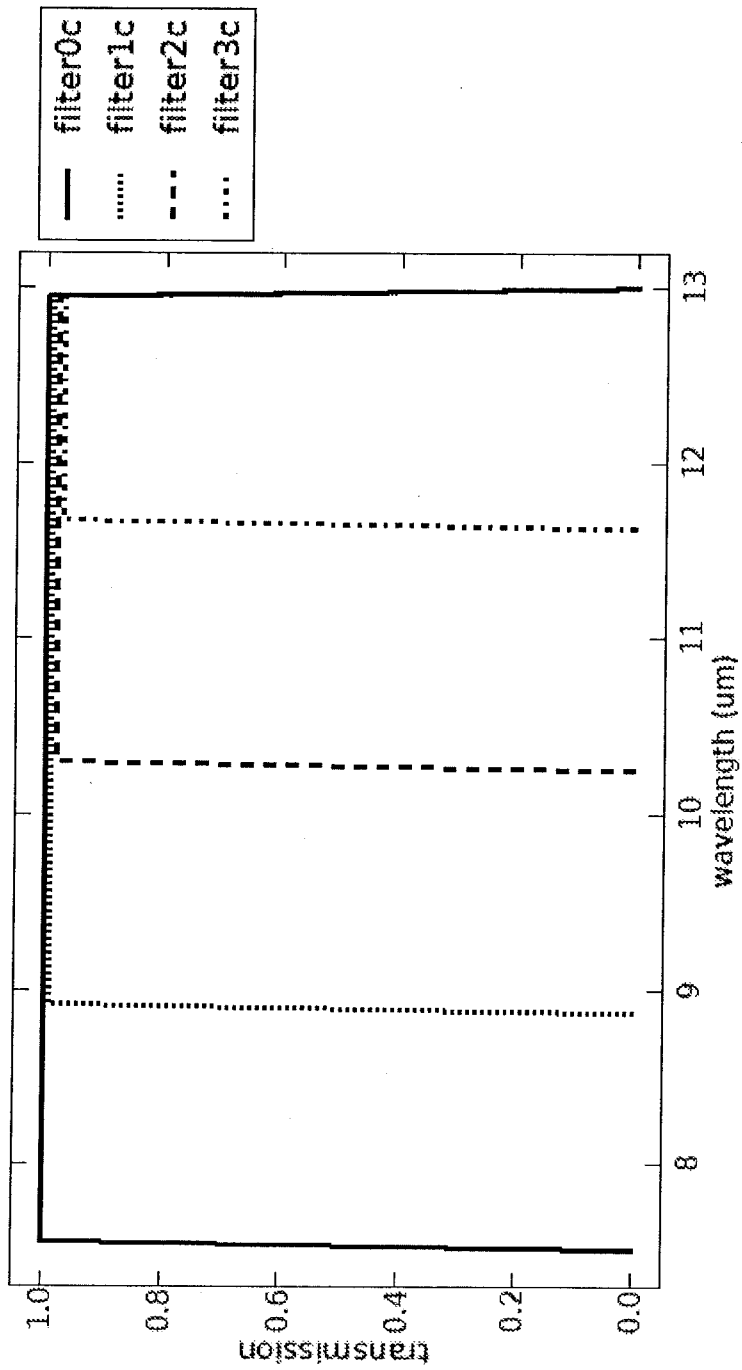


FIG. 6C

9/23

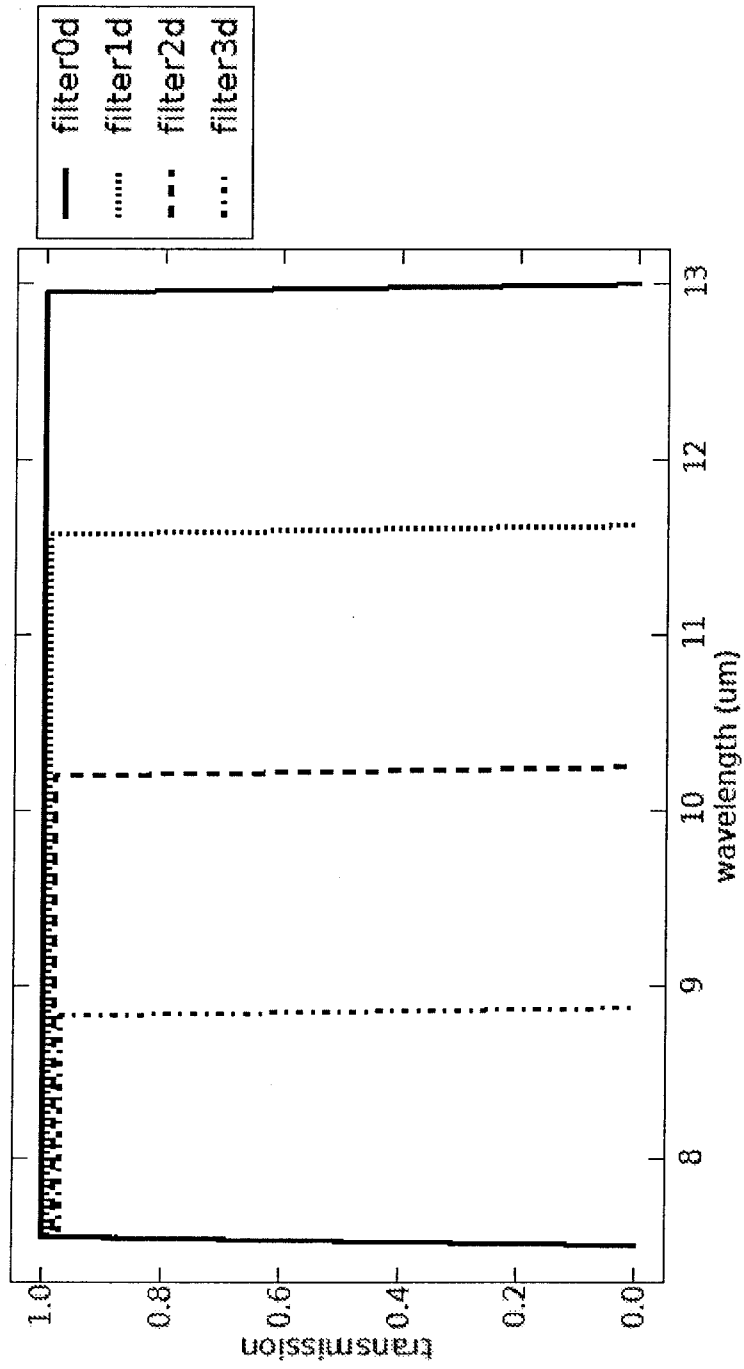


FIG. 6D

10/23

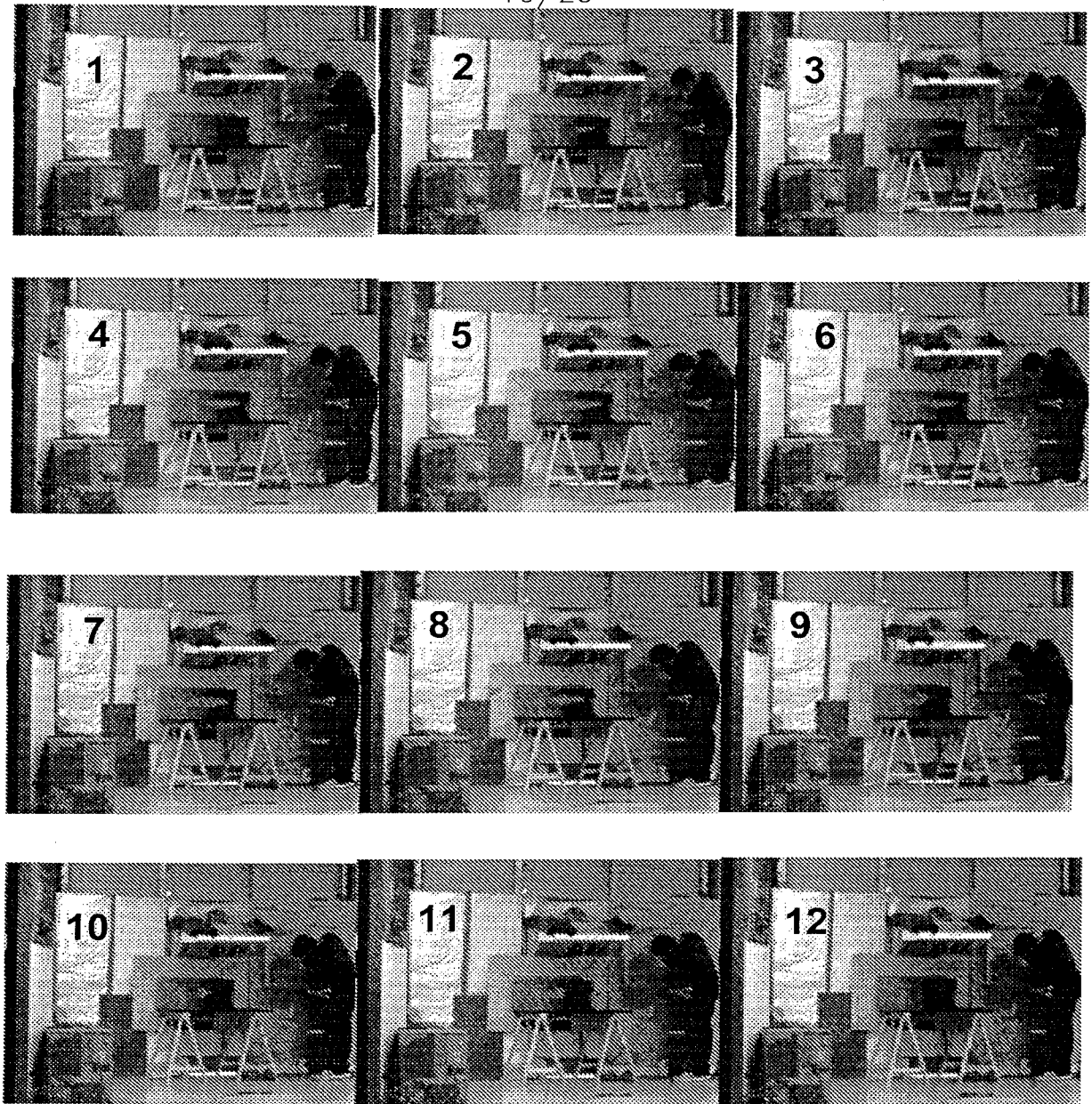
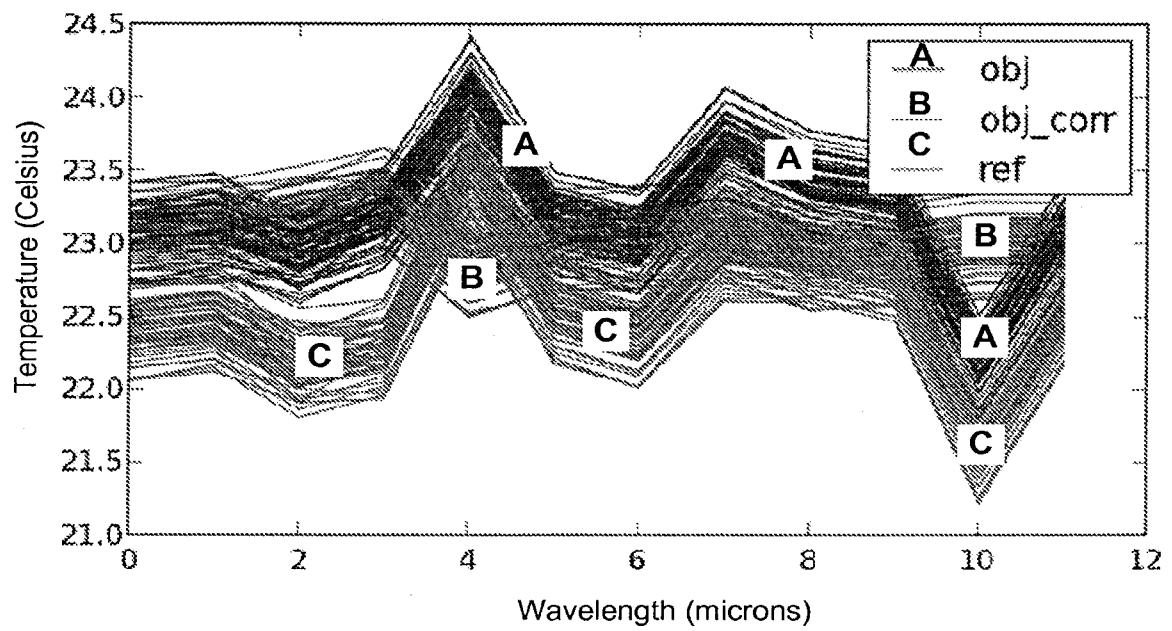
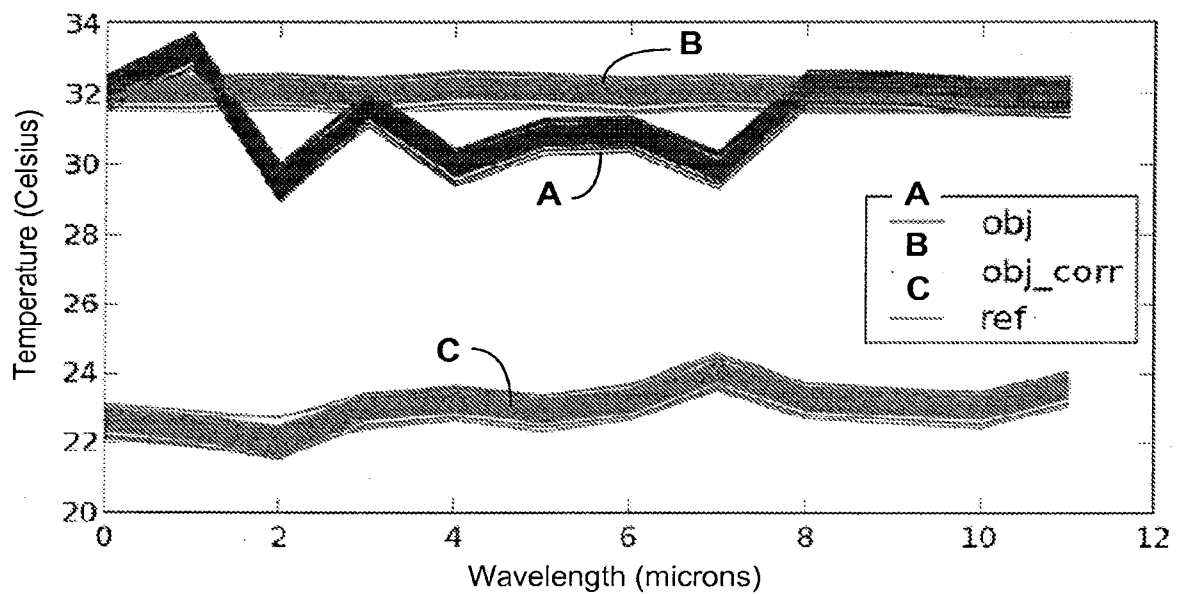
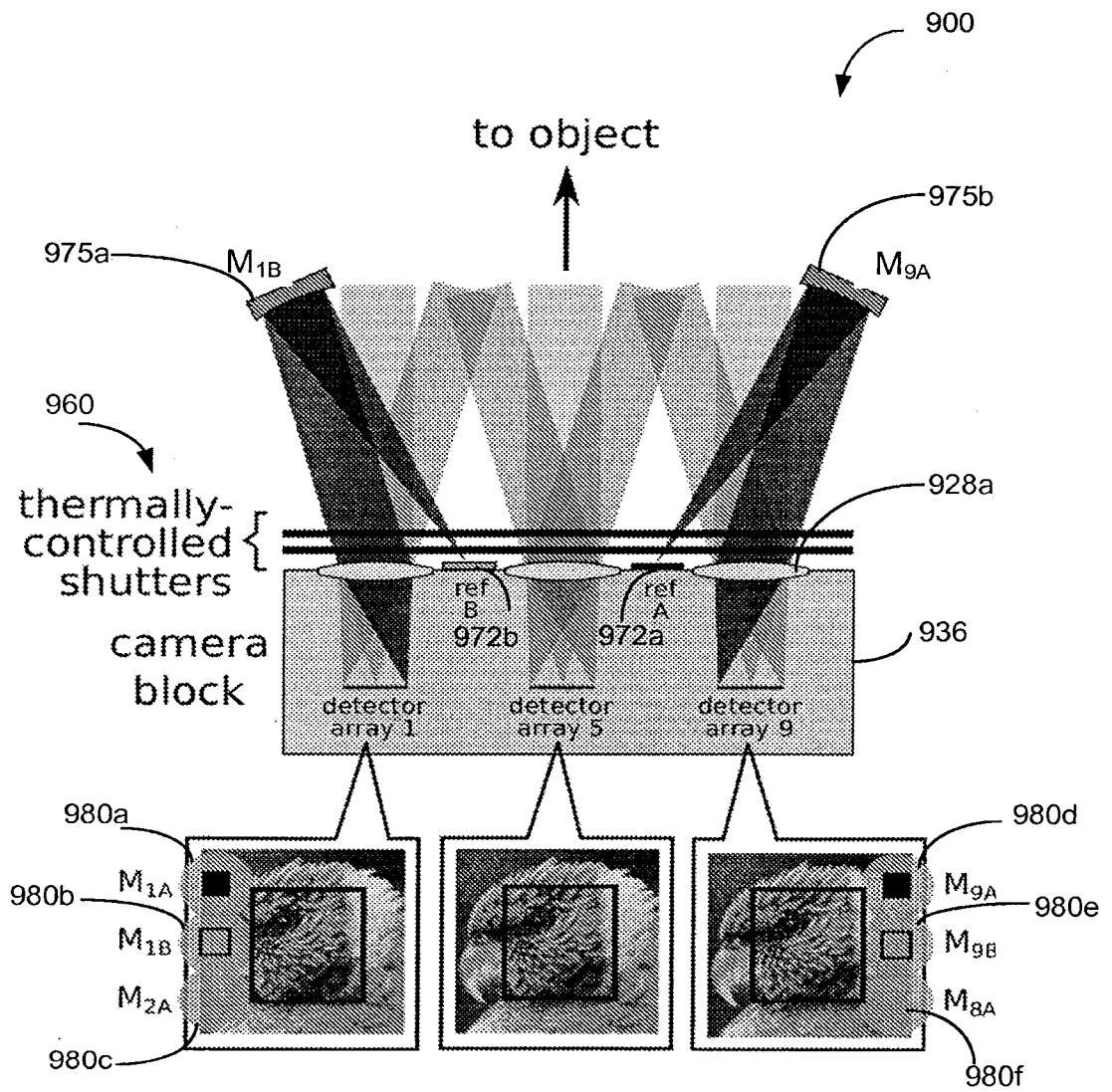


FIG. 7

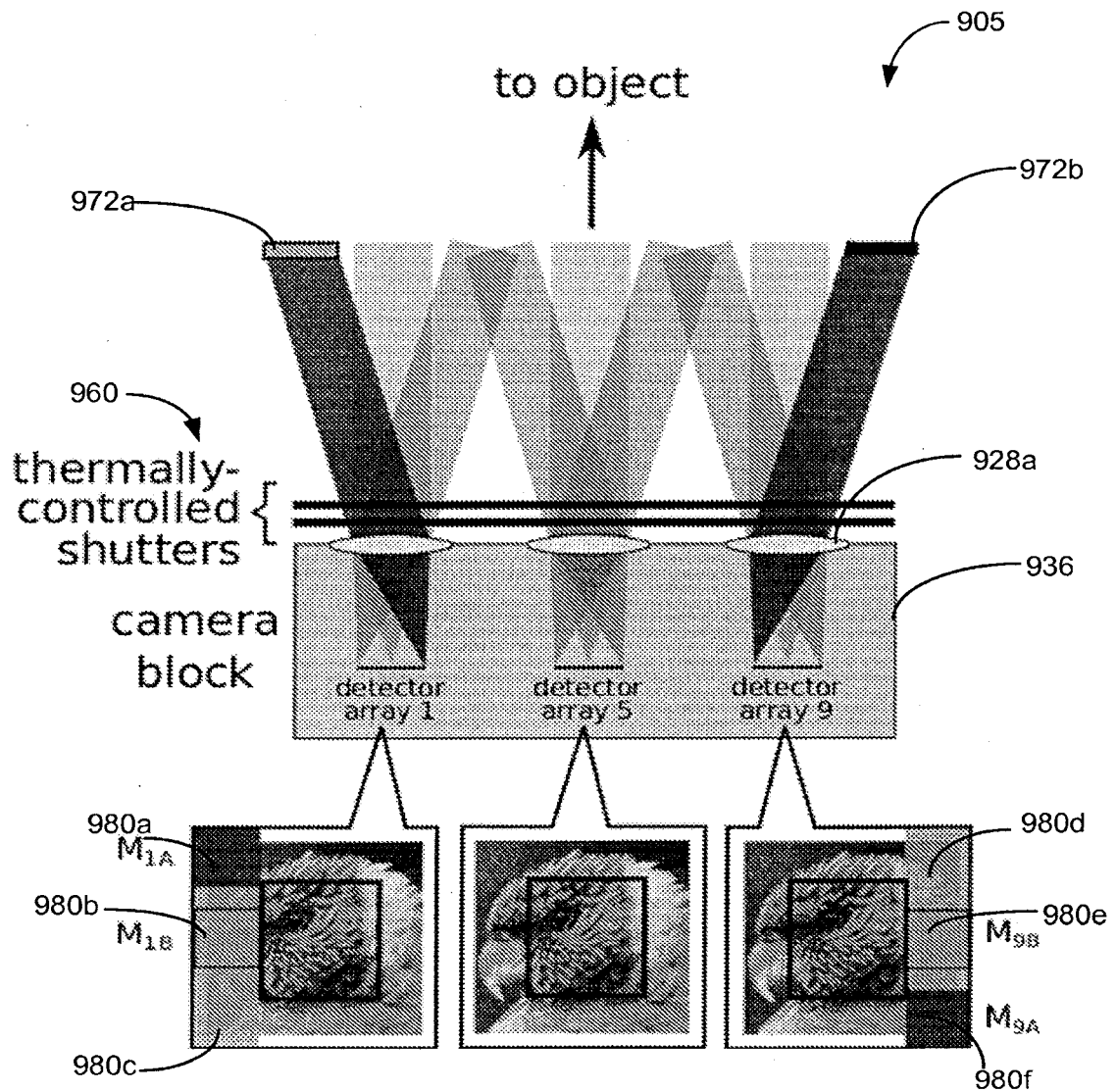
11/23

**FIG. 8A****FIG. 8B**

12/23

**FIG. 9A**

13/23

**FIG. 9B**

14/23

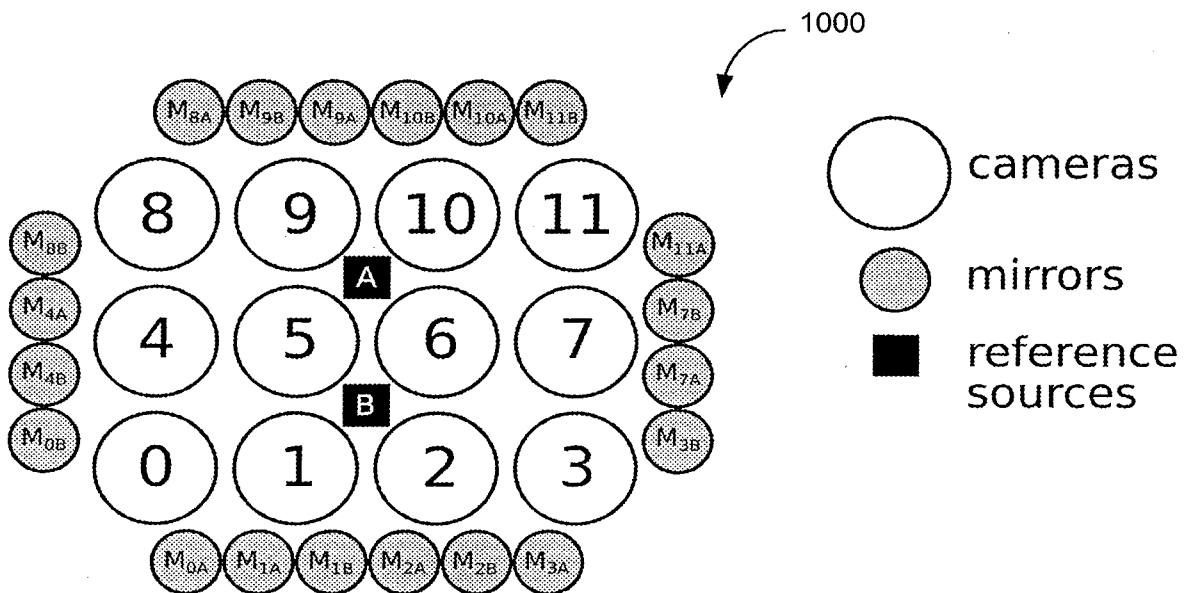


FIG. 10A

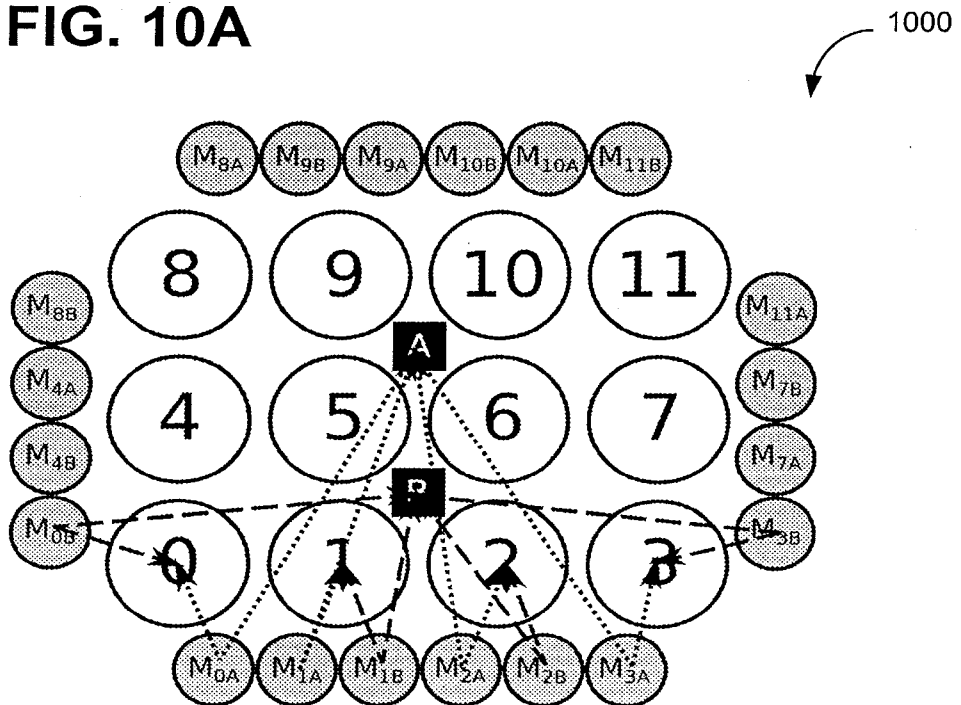


FIG. 10B

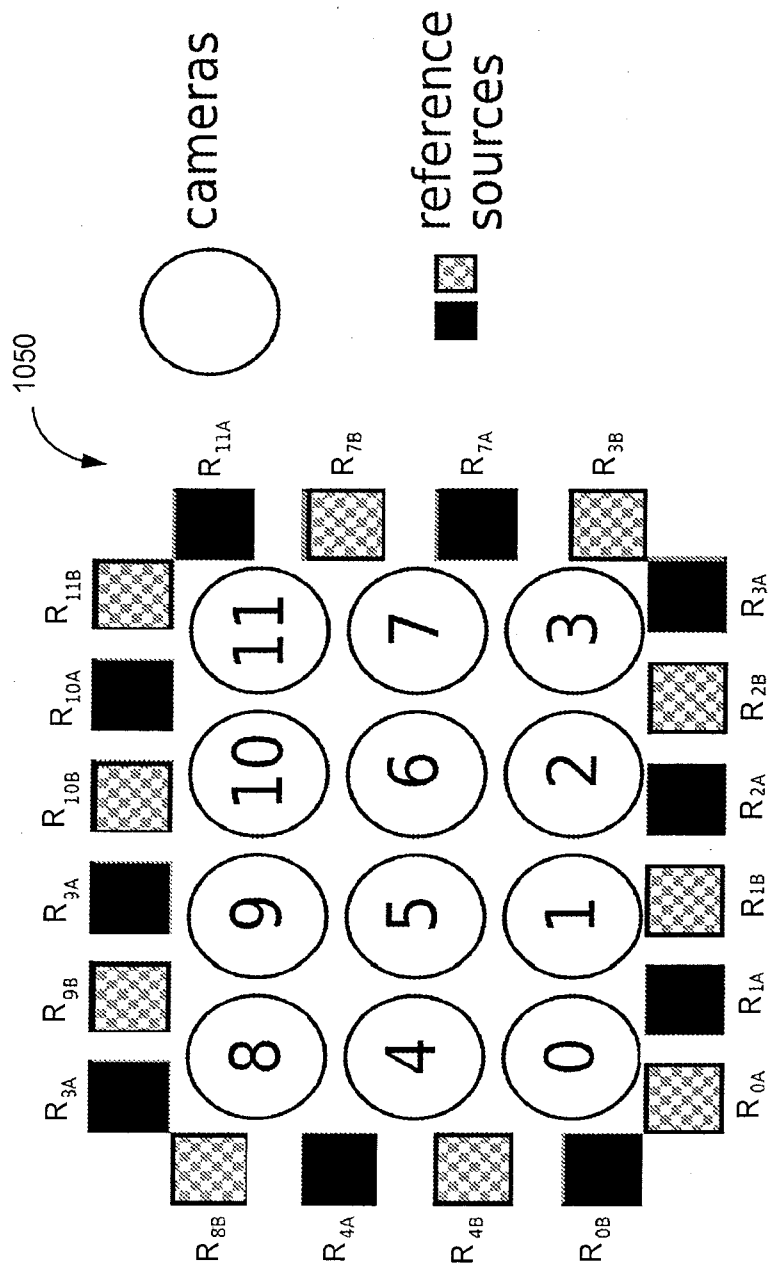


FIG. 10C

16/23

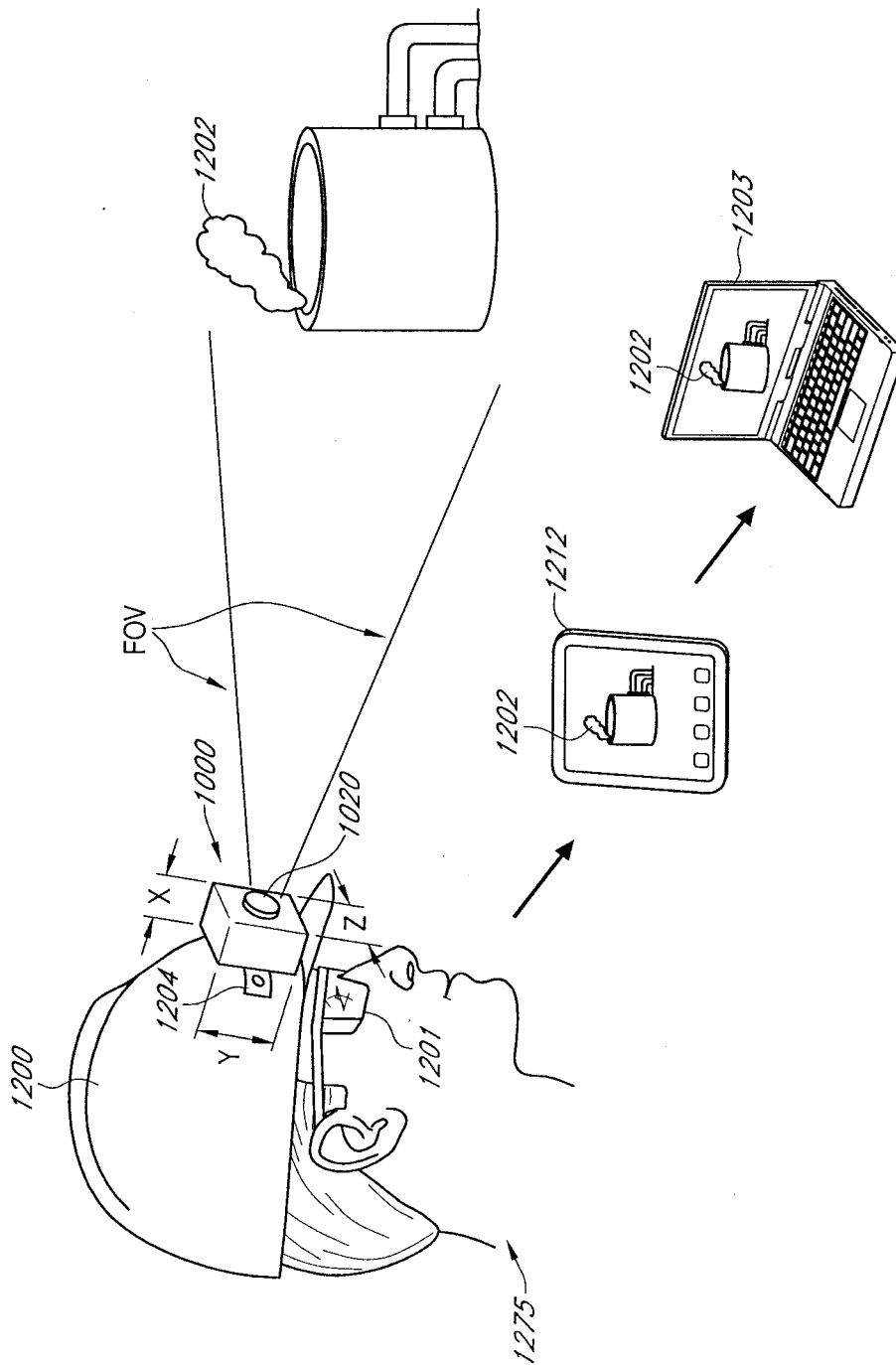


FIG. 11A

17/23

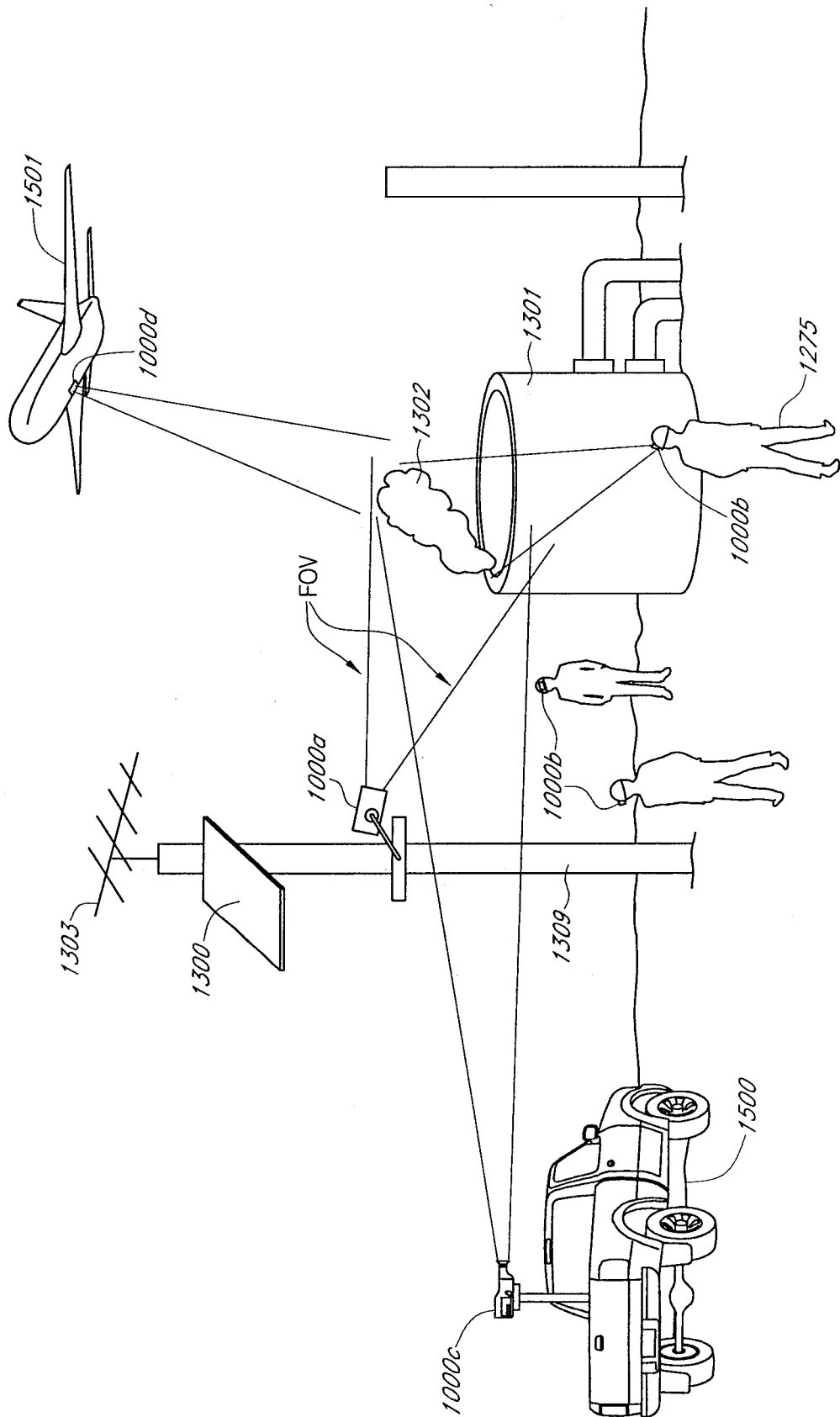


FIG. 11B

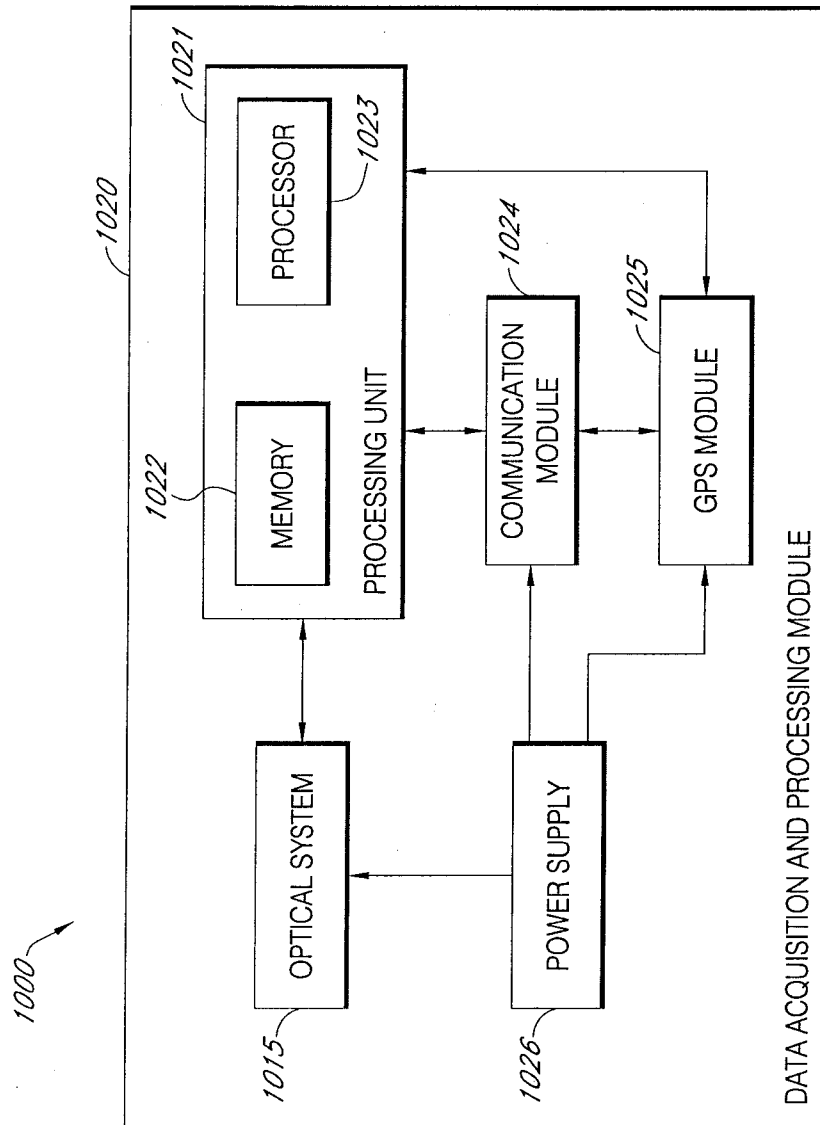


FIG. 12

19/23

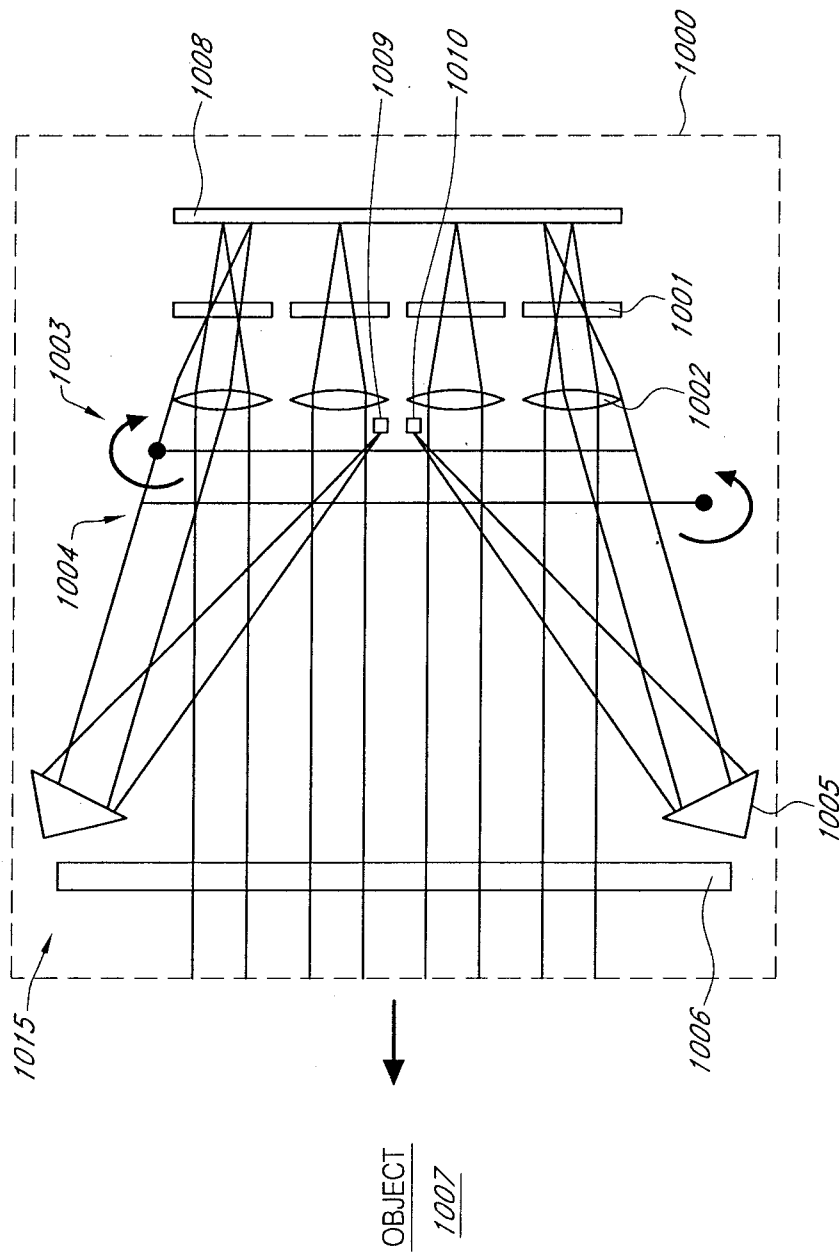


FIG. 13A

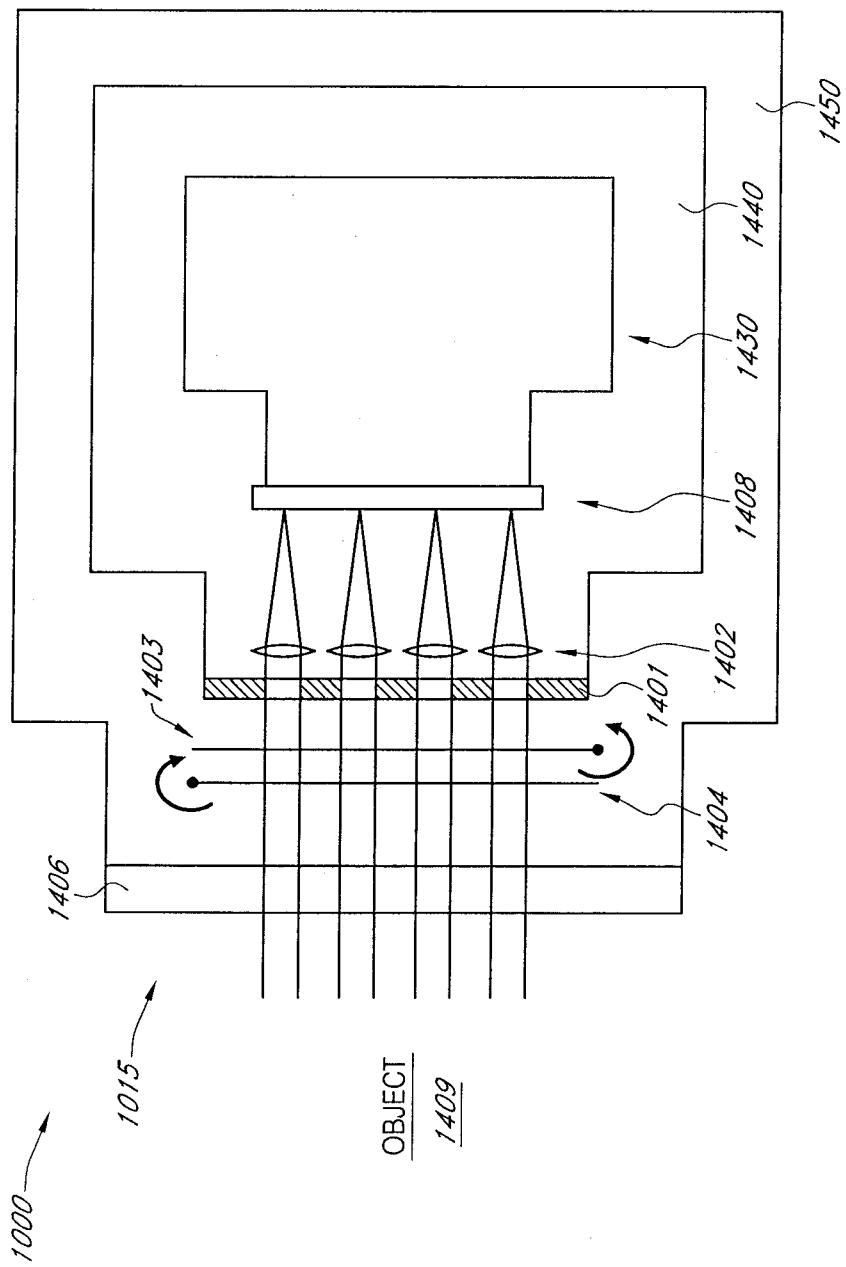


FIG. 13B

21/23

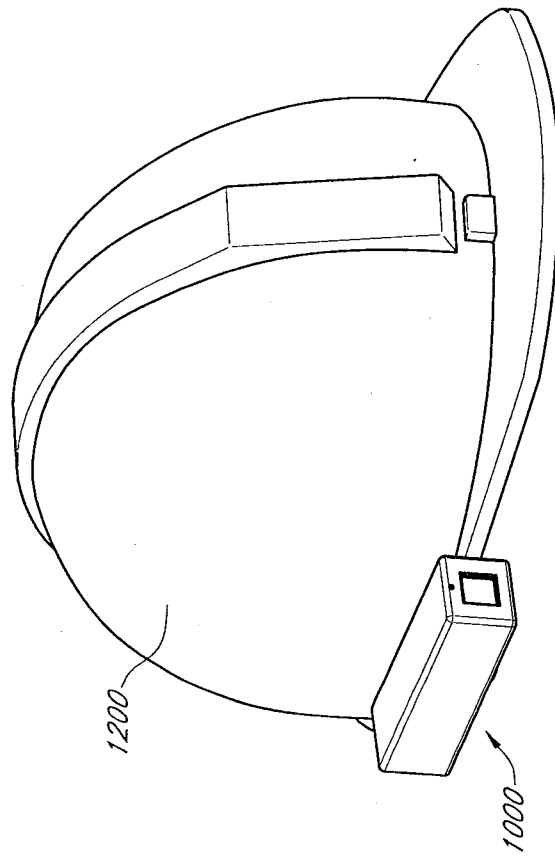


FIG. 14A

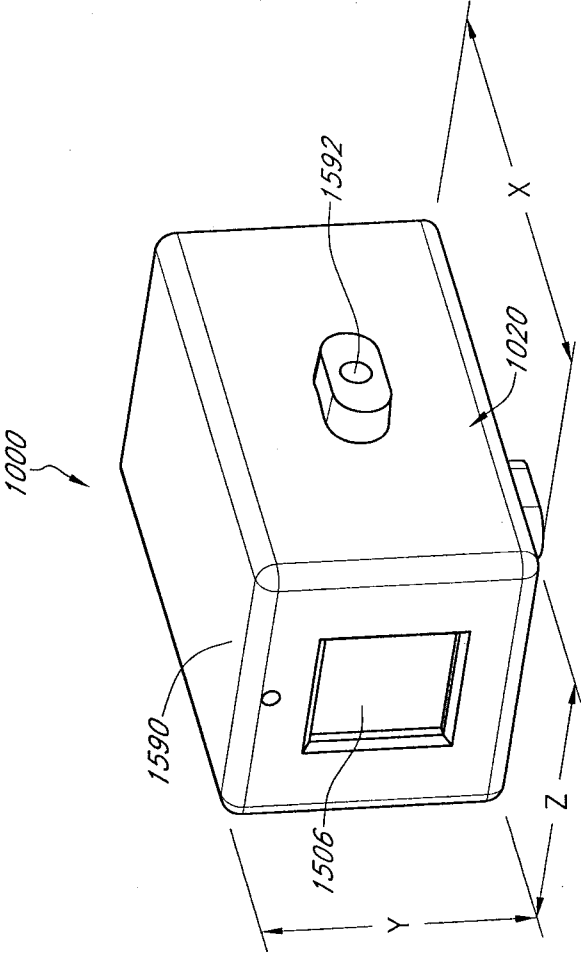


FIG. 14B

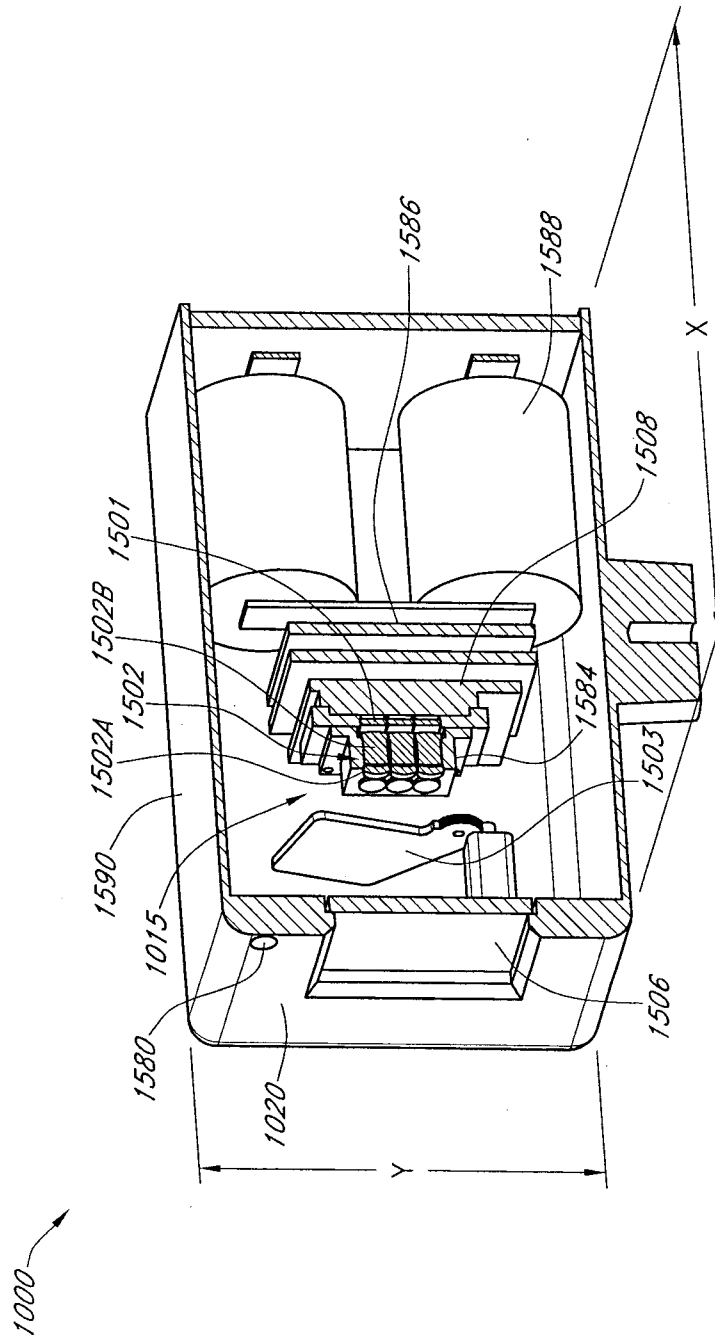


FIG. 14C

