

## New Fort Detrick BioDefense Laboratory May Reflect a Bush Germ War Effort

By [Sherwood Ross](#)

Global Research, February 05, 2007

[afterdowningstreet.org/node/5](http://afterdowningstreet.org/node/5) February 2007

Theme: [Biotechnology and GMO](#),  
[Militarization and WMD](#)

Although no foreign power has threatened a bioterror attack against America, since 9/11 the Bush administration has allocated a stunning \$43-billion to “defend” against one. Critics are now saying, however, Bush’s newest “biodefense” initiative is both offensive and illegal.

The latest development, according to the Associated Press, is that the U.S. Army is replacing its Military Institute of Infectious Diseases at Fort Detrick, Md., “with a new laboratory that would be a component of a biodefense campus operated by several agencies.” The Army told AP the laboratory is intended to continue research that is only meant for defense against biological threats.

But University of Illinois international law professor Francis Boyle charged the Fort Detrick work will include “acquiring, growing, modifying, storing, packaging and dispersing classical, emerging and genetically engineered pathogens.” Those activities, as well as planned study of the properties of pathogens when weaponized, “are unmistakable hallmarks of an offensive weapons program.”

Boyle made his comments to Fort Detrick as part of its environmental impact assessment of the new facility. Boyle pointed out in his letter that he authored the 1989 U.S. law enacted by Congress that criminalized BWC violations.

The Fort Detrick expansion is but one phase of a multi-billion biotech buildup going forward in 11 agencies sparked by the unsolved, Oct., 2001, anthrax attacks on Congress that claimed five lives and sickened 17.

The attacks, and ensuing panic, led to passage of the BioShield Act of 2004. There is strong evidence, though, the attacks were not perpetrated by any foreign government or terrorist band but originated at Fort Detrick, the huge, supposedly super-safe biotechnology research center. Despite an intensive FBI investigation, no one has been charged with a crime.

Referring to the work undertaken at Fort Detrick, Mark Wheelis, Senior Lecturer in the Section of Microbiology of the University of California, Davis, told the Global Security Newswire(GNS) as far back as June 30, 2004, “This is absolutely without any question what one would do to develop an offensive biological weapons capability.”

“We’re going to develop new pathogens for various purposes. We’re going to develop new ways of packaging them, new ways of disseminating them. We’re going to harden them to environmental degradation. We’ll be prepared to go offensive at the drop of a hat if we so desire,” he told GNS.

Alan Pearson, director of the chemical and bioweapons control program at the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation Studies in Washington, told the Baltimore Sun government scientists must tread carefully lest they wind up “in essence creating new threats that we’re going to have to defend ourselves against.”

Richard Novick, a New York University microbiology professor has stated, “I cannot envision any imaginable justification for changing the antigenicity of anthrax as a defensive measure.” (That is, to create a new strain for which there is no known vaccine.)

Milton Leitenberg, a University of Maryland arms control advocate, told The Washington Post last July 30th, “If we saw others doing this kind of research (Fort Detrick), we would view it as an infringement of the bioweapons treaty. You can’t go around the world yelling about Iranian and North Korean programs, about which we know very little, when we’ve got all this going on.”

One alarming example of such Federally-funded research reported in the October, 2003, issue of “New Scientist,” is the creation of “an extremely deadly form of mousepox, a relative of the smallpox virus, through genetic engineering.”

The publication warned such research “brings closer the prospect of pox viruses that cause only mild infections in humans being turned into diseases lethal even to people who have been vaccinated.”

Edward Hammond, director of The Sunshine Project of Austin, Tex., a non-profit working for transparency in biological research, said the recreation of the deadly 1918 “Spanish flu” germ that killed an estimated 40-million world-wide, means “the possibility of man-made disaster, either accidental or deliberate, has risen for the entire world.”

Richard H. Ebright, a Rutgers University chemist who tracks arms control issues, told The Baltimore Sun the government’s tenfold expansion of Biosafety Level-4 laboratories, such as those at Fort Detrick, raises the risk of accidents or the diversion of dangerous organisms. “If a worker in one of these facilities removes a single viral particle or a single cell, which cannot be detected or prevented, that single particle or cell can form the basis of an outbreak,” he said.

The current expansion at Fort Detrick flows from a paper penned by President Bush. His Homeland Security Presidential Directive, HSPD-10, written April 28, 2004, states, “Among our many initiatives we are continuing to develop more forward-looking analyses, to include Red Teaming efforts, to understand new scientific trends that may be exploited by our adversaries to develop biological weapons and to help position intelligence collectors ahead of the problem.”

Boyle said the Bush paper is “a smoking gun” fired at the BWC. “Red Teaming means that we actually have people out there on a Red Team plotting, planning, scheming and conspiring how to use biowarfare.”

Boyle traces advocacy for aggressive biowarfare back to the neo-conservative Project for a New American Century(PNAC), whose members, including Paul Wolfowitz, later influenced President George Bush’s military and foreign policy. Before assuming his current post as World Bank head, Wolfowitz served Bush as deputy secretary of defense.

Before the anthrax attacks on Congress, PNAC advocated “advanced forms of biological warfare that can ‘target’ specific genotypes may transform biological warfare from the

realm of terror to a politically useful tool,” Boyle wrote in “Biowarfare and Terrorism,” (Clarity Press).

Biological warfare involves the use of living organisms for military purposes. Such weapons can be viral, bacterial, and fungal, among other forms, and can be spread over a large geographic terrain by wind, water, insect, animal, or human transmission, according to Jeremy Rifkin, author of “The Biotech Century”(Penguin).

Rifkin has written “it is widely acknowledged that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between defensive and offensive research in the field.” And Jackie Cabasso, of Western States Legal Foundation of Oakland, Calif., noted, “With biological weapons, the line between offense and defense is exceedingly difficult to draw. In the end, secrecy is the greatest enemy of safety.”

She added, “The U.S. is now massively expanding its biodefense program, mostly in secretive facilities. Other countries are going to be suspicious. This bodes badly for the future of biological weapons control.”

Critics following the biowarfare trail at Fort Detrick, are wondering if President Bush — who scrapped the nuclear proliferation treaty and then had the Pentagon design new nuclear weapons — isn’t also ignoring the BWC in order to create new germ warfare pathogens.

(Sherwood Ross is an American reporter and columnist. He worked for the Chicago Daily News and has written for wire services and national magazines. Reach him at [sherwoodr1@yahoo.com](mailto:sherwoodr1@yahoo.com))

The original source of this article is [afterdowningstreet.org/node](http://afterdowningstreet.org/node)

Copyright © [Sherwood Ross](http://afterdowningstreet.org/node), [afterdowningstreet.org/node](http://afterdowningstreet.org/node), 2007

---

**[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)**

**[Become a Member of Global Research](#)**

Articles by: [Sherwood Ross](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)