

US Military Invests in ‘Doomsday Genetics’ Technology: ‘My Main Worry Is that We Do Something Irreversible’

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Amid United Nations fears that genetic extinction technology could be used by militaries, a United States military agency has invested \$100 million in the doomsday biological technology that can wipe out an entire species.

[Scientists now have the knowledge and the tools](#) they need to create and deliver Doomsday genes which can selectively target and exterminate an entire species. And to make matters worse, emails released under the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#), suggest that the United States’s uber-secretive [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency \(DARPA\)](#) has become the world’s largest funder of this “gene drive” research and will heighten international tensions further ahead of [a UN expert committee meeting](#) in Montreal beginning on Tuesday.

The UN is debating a ban on this technology as several southern countries fear the application of using extinction technology. The use of [genetic extinction technologies in bioweapons is the stuff of nightmares](#), but so far, known research is focused entirely on pest control and the elimination of diseases. The key word there being “known.”

UN diplomats confirmed that the new email release would worsen the “bad name” of gene drives in some circles. “Many countries [will] have concerns when [this technology comes from DARPA, a US military science agency](#),” one said.

“You may be able to remove viruses or the entire mosquito population, but that may also have downstream ecological effects on species that depend on them. My main worry,” he added, “is that we do something irreversible to the environment, despite our good intentions, before we fully appreciate the way that this technology will work.”

Jim Thomas, a co-director of [the ETC group](#) which obtained the emails, said the US military’s influence in furthering this technology would strengthen the case for a moratorium.

“The dual-use nature of altering and eradicating entire populations is as much a threat to peace and food security as it is a threat to ecosystems,” he said. “Militarization of gene drive funding may even contravene the [Enmod convention](#) against hostile uses of environmental modification technologies.”

But while we are on the subject of UN bans, [the sanctions they placed on North Korea are](#)

[being willfully ignored](#) by the rogue regime. It stands to reason that should a military seek the use of this technology, they will also defy the UN's "authority."

Todd Kuiken, who has worked with the [GBIRd](#) (genetic biocontrol) program, which receives \$6.4 million from DARPA, said that the US military's centrality to genetic technology funding meant that "researchers who depend on grants for their research may reorient their projects to fit the narrow aims of these military agencies," which could include doomsday genetic weapons. Between 2008 and 2014, the US government [spent about \\$820 million on synthetic biology](#). Since 2012, most of this has come from [DARPA and other military agencies](#), Kuiken says.

DARPA believes that a sharp decrease in the costs of gene-editing toolkits has created a greater opportunity for hostile or rogue actors to experiment with the technology.

"This convergence of low cost and high availability means that applications for gene editing – both positive and negative – could arise from people or states operating outside of the traditional scientific community and international norms," the official said. "It is incumbent on DARPA to perform this research and develop technologies that can protect against accidental and intentional misuse."

[Interest in the technology among US army bureaus has shot up](#) since a secret report by the elite [Jason group](#) of military scientists last year "received considerable attention among various agencies of the US government," according to an email by Gerald Joyce, who co-chaired a Jason study group in June. A second Jason report was commissioned in 2017 assessing "potential threats this technology might pose in the hands of an adversary, technical obstacles that must be overcome to develop gene drive technology and employ it 'in the wild'," Joyce wrote.

The paper would not be publicly disclosed but "widely circulated within the US intelligence and broader national security community", his email said.

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