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DEFENSE

The Pentagon Unveils Plan To Supercharge US Troops' Resistance To Diseases, Biological Weapons



(Photo by George Frey/Getty Images)

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MICAELA BURROW
REPORTER

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- **The Department of Defense unveiled a new strategy to supercharge troops' immune systems against a seemingly unlimited array of chemical and biological threats.**
- **Defense leaders say that not only has the threat of state-backed bioweapons increased, but naturally occurring pathogens, such as COVID-19, can cripple the force.**
- **“We may be entering a renewed era where nation state [biological warfare] threats will reemerge,” Gerald Parker, associate dean in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University, told the Daily Caller News Foundation.**

The Department of Defense (DOD) launched a new strategy aimed at making those who serve in the armed forces impervious to every conceivable chemical or biological threat, according to a strategy document released Tuesday.

Recent technological advances mean DOD's past strategy of developing individual preventative measures or cures for each known chemical or biological threat is no longer realistic, **according** to the document. Instead, DOD's Chemical and Biological Defense Program (CBDP) will focus on finding ways to engineer servicemembers' immune systems with catch-all vaccines, therapeutics and equipment that can handle a seemingly endless landscape of chemical and biological **threats**, including ones that aren't directly the result of weapons programs, Politico first **reported**.

"We may be entering a renewed era where nation state [biological warfare] threats will reemerge," Gerald Parker, a former deputy assistant secretary for CBDP and associate dean in the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences at Texas A&M University, told the Daily Caller News Foundation. **(RELATED: US Army Explains How To Respond When A Soldier Questions Showering With 'A Female Who Has Male Genitalia')**

"There is also an expansion of high containment labs worldwide with ready access to powerful new technologies, increasing the risk of accidental and deliberate outbreaks, even pandemics," he added.

CBDP will "leverage" **existing** relationships with pharmaceutical companies to fast-track development of immunization technologies, each of which can **protect** troops against multiple viruses, the Pentagon strategy states.

One thread of prevention DOD is developing looks to "modulate the immune system" through six different metabolic pathways, according to Politico. Researchers are also looking into monoclonal antibodies, a COVID-19 **remedy**, for three distinct groups of viruses.

The new approach will address "many bugs" with "one drug," Parker explained to the DCNF, calling it a "step in the right direction" toward guarding the force from pathogens and **maintaining** troops' readiness to jump into action whenever they are called upon.

The strategy **mimics** how former President Donald Trump's Operation Warp Speed provided funding and eased regulatory requirements to hasten discovery of a COVID-19 vaccine, experts told the DCNF.

“In a response preparedness posture, we need to invest in unique medical infrastructure designed to rapidly produce new vaccines and drugs, and leverage existing medical infrastructure by adapting them to target new agents quickly,” Kevin Wingerd, CBDP’s medical director, **said** in a release.



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DOD is also exploring wearable devices that can monitor vital signs, such as blood oxygen and heart rate, of troops in the field and generate a diagnosis when a pathogen, chemical or biological, attacks, Politico reported.