

It's Official: Your DNA is Weaponized

Description

A House Intelligence Committee member warns Americans against using DNA testing kits

Biosamples gathered by various DNA testing services could be sold and used to develop bioweapons specifically tailored to target certain groups or even individuals, US lawmakers have claimed at the Aspen Security Forum – echoing concerns long voiced by Russian officials.

“There are now weapons under development, and developed, that are designed to target specific people,” US Representative Jason Crow (D-Colorado), a member of the House Intelligence Committee, [said](#) in Colorado on Friday. “That’s what this is, where you can actually take someone’s DNA, take their medical profile, and you can target a biological weapon that will kill that person or take them off the battlefield or make them inoperable.”

Given that threat, Crow added, it’s troubling that expectations of privacy for personal data have diminished over the past 20 years, to the point that young people have “very little expectation of privacy” and readily give their data to private companies, such as DNA testing services.

“People will very rapidly spit into a cup and send it to 23andMe and get really interesting data about their background,” Crow said. “And guess what? Their DNA is now owned by a private company. It can be sold off with very little intellectual property protection or privacy protection.”

He added that the US will need to create new guidelines for protection of personal health data, including DNA, “because that data is actually going to be procured and collected by our adversaries for the development of these systems.”

Moscow has been warning about the dangers of uncontrolled gathering of DNA samples for years, with President Vladimir Putin stating back in 2017 that according to Russian intelligence services, biological samples were being [harvested](#) “purposefully and professionally” all over Russia by various NGOs and other organizations for unclear purposes.

Over the past years, the Pentagon has “significantly expanded its research potential not only in the field of creating biological weapons, but also obtaining information about antibiotic resistance and the presence of antibodies to certain diseases in populations of specific regions,” Lieutenant-General Igor Kirillov, the head of the Russian Radiation, Chemical and Biological Protection Force, claimed in May.

In a series of briefings starting in March, the Russian military has been presenting evidence of the Pentagon’s alleged involvement in funding biolaboratories in Ukraine. According to Russia’s Investigative Committee, the US poured more than \$224 million into biological research in Ukraine between 2005 and early 2022.

While Washington admitted its support of 46 biological research facilities in Ukraine over the past 20 years, it insists it was all part of a peaceful public health project. The US military accused Russia and China of “spreading disinformation and sowing mistrust” about its efforts to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction – while Western media dismissed the claims as a [conspiracy theories](#) and [science fiction](#).

Concerns over customized bioweapons extend beyond human DNA data, according to Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa), a member of the Senate’s Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities and Armed Services Committee, who spoke on a panel with Crow. America’s adversaries can also direct bioweapons specifically at US livestock and crops to create a food security crisis, she claimed.

“There’s a number of ways we can look at biological weapons and the need to make sure not only are we securing human beings, but then also the food that will sustain us,” Ernst added.

A report issued earlier this year by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission suggested that China could someday attempt to wage [biological warfare](#) against genetically modified American crops, given its increased “interest in US agriculture” and GMO-related intellectual property.

“While China’s main interest in obtaining GM seeds from the United States is in improving its crop yields, the potential weaponization of agricultural IP is possible,” it said. “Similar to hacking a computer code, Beijing could easily hack the code or DNA of US GM seeds and conduct biowarfare by creating some type of blight that could destroy US crops.”