



November 13, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
U.S. Secretary of Defense  
Department of Defense

The Honorable Christine E. Wormuth  
Secretary of the U.S. Army  
c/o Mark F. Averill, Deputy Administrative Assistant  
Department of Defense

Via e-mail: [ExecSecMA2@sd.mil](mailto:ExecSecMA2@sd.mil); [mark.averill.civ@army.mil](mailto:mark.averill.civ@army.mil)

Dear Mr. Secretary and Madam Secretary:

Thank you in advance for your time. I'm writing on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals—PETA entities have more than 9 million members and supporters globally—to thank you for heeding our request and canceling the U.S. Army's cruel brain-damaging weapon-wounding experiment on ferrets at Wayne State University (federal award number [W81XWH2211105](#)), which involved bombarding these sensitive animals with radio waves in a purported attempt to study Havana syndrome in humans,<sup>1</sup> apparently more than six months ahead of schedule, according to a subsequent separate entry posted for this same award.<sup>2</sup>

**Based on this precedent in cutting short the Army's ferret weapon-wounding experiment as well as on the information presented in our prior letters to you dated September 29, 2022,<sup>3</sup> and March 13, 2023,<sup>4</sup> we urge you to immediately renew the ban on weapon-wounding tests on dogs, cats, marine animals, and nonhuman primates—a practice currently permitted under U.S. Army Medical Research and**

<sup>1</sup>Project Grant W81XWH2211105—The pathogenesis of radio wave-induced brain injury. Award Profile Grant Summary. USA Spending.gov. Accessed March 10, 2023. [https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_W81XWH2211105\\_2100](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_W81XWH2211105_2100)

<sup>2</sup>Project Grant W81XWH2211105—Traumatic brain injury and psychological health research program. Award profile grant summary. USA Spending.gov. Accessed October 30, 2023. [https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_W81XWH2211105\\_97DH](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_W81XWH2211105_97DH)

<sup>3</sup>Wiśniewska M. Letter from PETA to Secretary Christine Wormuth. September 29, 2022. Accessed October 30, 2023. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-09-29-request-to-army-re-reinstating-ban-on-wound-labs-1.pdf>

<sup>4</sup>Wiśniewska M. Letter from PETA to Secretaries Austin and Wormuth. March 13, 2023. Accessed October 30, 2023. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03-13-letter-to-secdef-and-secarmy-re-havana-syndrome-animal-tests-1.pdf>

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**Development Command (USAMRDC) “Policy 84”<sup>5</sup>—and to no longer permit the wounding of *any* animals with weapons for medical research, development, testing, or evaluation.**

As you know, *Politico* published an article on March 9, that broke the news about this Army experiment, stating, “The Army in September awarded Wayne State University in Michigan a [\\$750,000 grant](#) to study the effects of radio frequency waves on ferrets ... according to information on the grant posted on USASpending.gov. The aim is to determine whether this exposure induces similar symptoms to those experienced by U.S. government personnel in Havana, Cuba, and China, the documents show.”<sup>6</sup> This article also reported that U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) spokesperson Lt. Cdr. Tim Gorman confirmed that the Army’s grant to Wayne State University (WSU), with collaborators from the University of Michigan, “will develop and test a novel laboratory animal model to mimic mild concussive head injury.”<sup>7</sup> The article also quoted PETA’s criticism of the Army’s Havana syndrome experiment on ferrets at WSU, reporting, “Shalin Gala, vice president of the animal rights group PETA, slammed the news that DOD is testing this technology on animals. ‘We are disturbed by a reported military plan [exposing] monkeys to pulsed microwave radiation in a misguided attempt to determine human brain effects associated with Havana Syndrome,’ Gala said. ‘This has been debunked as has the purported justification for the Army’s current \$750,000 taxpayer-funded brain injury experiment that bombards 48 ferrets with radio waves.’”<sup>8</sup>

After this *Politico* article ran, USASpending.gov added a separate entry for the Army’s ferret weapon-wounding experiment that has the same federal award number (W81XWH2211105), this time canceling that grant more than six months ahead of schedule (on March 10)<sup>9</sup> instead of on the original award’s end date of September 29),<sup>10</sup> stating, “This modification is to close out the subject award. Wayne State has elected to rescind this award and the [U.S. Government] has agreed that a collaborative closeout is in the best interest of both parties. Due to the timing of the award and early closeout, reporting requirements, other than the final financial report have been waived.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command. Summary of change. January 15, 2020. Accessed October 30, 2023. <https://mrhc.health.mil/assets/docs/orp/acuro/MRDC-Policy-84-Wounding.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Seligman L. The Pentagon is funding experiments on animals to recreate “Havana Syndrome.” *Politico*. March 9, 2023. Accessed March 10, 2023.

<https://www.politico.com/news/2023/03/09/pentagon-funding-experiments-animals-havana-syndrome-00086393>

<sup>7</sup>*Id.*

<sup>8</sup>*Id.*

<sup>9</sup>Project Grant W81XWH2211105—Traumatic brain injury and psychological health research program. Award profile grant summary. USA Spending.gov. Accessed October 30, 2023.

[https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_W81XWH2211105\\_97DH](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_W81XWH2211105_97DH)

<sup>10</sup>Project Grant W81XWH2211105—The pathogenesis of radio wave–induced brain injury. Award Profile Grant Summary. USA Spending.gov. Accessed March 10, 2023.

[https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_W81XWH2211105\\_2100](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_W81XWH2211105_2100)

<sup>11</sup>Project Grant W81XWH2211105—Traumatic brain injury and psychological health research program. Award profile grant summary. USA Spending.gov. Accessed October 30, 2023.

[https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST\\_NON\\_W81XWH2211105\\_97DH](https://www.usaspending.gov/award/ASST_NON_W81XWH2211105_97DH)

Furthermore, the “Transaction History” tab of the award modification shows that on August 30, there was a “-\$512,418” entry marked as an “Adjustment to the Completed Project,” which presumably is WSU’s return of taxpayer funds it had been awarded for the Army’s ferret weapon-wounding experiment. The timing of this award cancellation—seemingly on March 10, more than six months ahead of schedule—makes it appear that our public comments and the negative media attention from *Politico*’s article were taken into consideration in the DOD’s decision to cancel this award.

Since your office didn’t inform us that the Army’s ferret weapon-wounding experiment had been cut short as of March 10, you’ll recall that we sent you a follow-up letter on March 13,<sup>12</sup> which *Politico* covered in another article on that same date,<sup>13</sup> urging you to “renew the ban on weapon-wounding tests on dogs, cats, marine animals, and nonhuman primates and to no longer permit the wounding of any animals with weapons for medical research, development, testing, or evaluation.” In this letter, we specifically noted that “[s]uch a prohibition should apply to but not be limited to ... an apparent military plan to expose monkeys to pulsed microwave radiation in a misguided attempt to determine human brain effects associated with an acquired neurosensory syndrome, commonly referred to as ‘Havana syndrome,’ and the ongoing experiment funded by the U.S. Army (award number W81XWH2211105) at Wayne State University that involves irradiating ferrets with a radio frequency (RF) directed energy weapon in an irrelevant attempt to study the cognitive, behavioral, vestibular, and cochlear health effects of Havana syndrome in humans.”<sup>14</sup>

More than 59,000 supporters have joined PETA in demanding an end to using weapons to wound any and all animals for such military tests,<sup>15</sup> and the continuation of USAMRDC’s “Policy 84” that allows this highly secretive and deadly practice—which the Army has deemed “classified ... in the interest of national defense and foreign policy”<sup>16</sup> in response to our Freedom of Information Act request seeking relevant public records—adds insult to injury for both animals and taxpayers.

You can contact me at [ShriyaS@peta.org](mailto:ShriyaS@peta.org). Thank you for your consideration of this important matter. I look forward to your response.

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<sup>12</sup>Wiśniewska M. Letter from PETA to Secretaries Austin and Wormuth. March 13, 2023. Accessed October 30, 2023. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03-13-letter-to-secdef-and-secarmy-re-havana-syndrome-animal-tests-1.pdf>

<sup>13</sup>Seligman L. PETA urges Pentagon to stop “disturbing” radiation tests on ferrets, monkeys. *Politico*. March 13, 2023. Accessed November 7, 2023. <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/03/13/peta-urges-pentagon-to-stop-disturbing-radiation-tests-on-ferrets-monkeys-00086661>

<sup>14</sup>Wiśniewska M. Letter from PETA to Secretaries Austin and Wormuth. March 13, 2023. Accessed October 30, 2023. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023-03-13-letter-to-secdef-and-secarmy-re-havana-syndrome-animal-tests-1.pdf>

<sup>15</sup>PETA. Action Alert. PETA to U.S. Army: Ban weapon-wounding tests on dogs, cats, and others. Accessed November 7, 2023. <https://support.peta.org/page/49917/action/1>

<sup>16</sup>Department of the Army. FOIA Denial. May 2, 2022. Accessed November 7, 2023. <https://www.peta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/2022-07-15-denied.pdf>

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Shriya Swaminathan', written in a cursive style.

Shriya Swaminathan  
Science Policy Advisor  
International Laboratory Methods  
Laboratory Investigations Department