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military

# US military working on laser tech to create human voices out of thin air

**THE US military’s Non-Lethal Weapons Program is developing an experimental laser technology that has an insane party trick.**



Nick Whigham @NWWHIGHAM

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Video Image

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THE United States military is working on experimental laser technology that would usher in a fascinating new capability.

The Pentagon wants to use the developmental laser technology to create the sound of voices out of thin air by altering atoms.

It sounds crazy but in the next few years the US military’s Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Program, or JNLWD, thinks it can achieve the goal, according to military publication [Defense One](#).

The unusual weapon comprises of two parts — a femtosecond laser, which shoots a burst of light for 10–15 seconds, creating a ball of plasma. Scientists then hit that plasma with a nanolaser to manipulate it in a way that can produce light and noise.

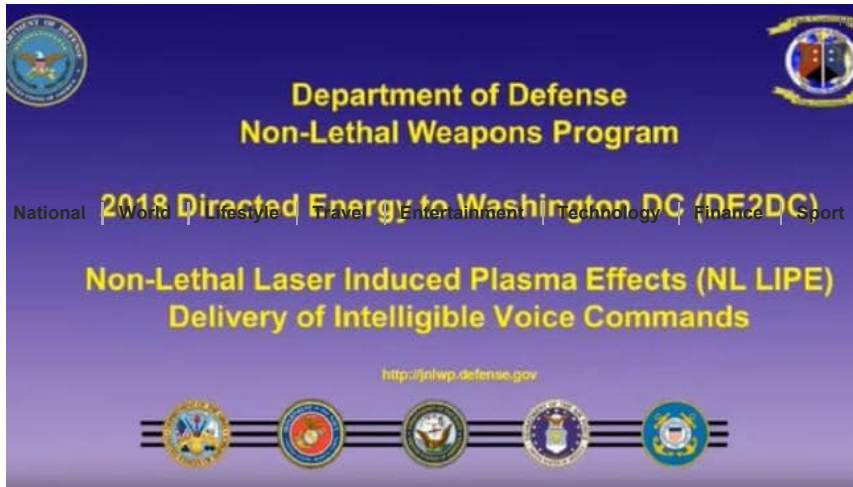
While the research is still in the early stages, the lab has already achieved human-like sounds.

“We’re this close to getting it to speak to us. I need three or four more kilohertz,” said David Law, who runs JNLWD’s technology division.

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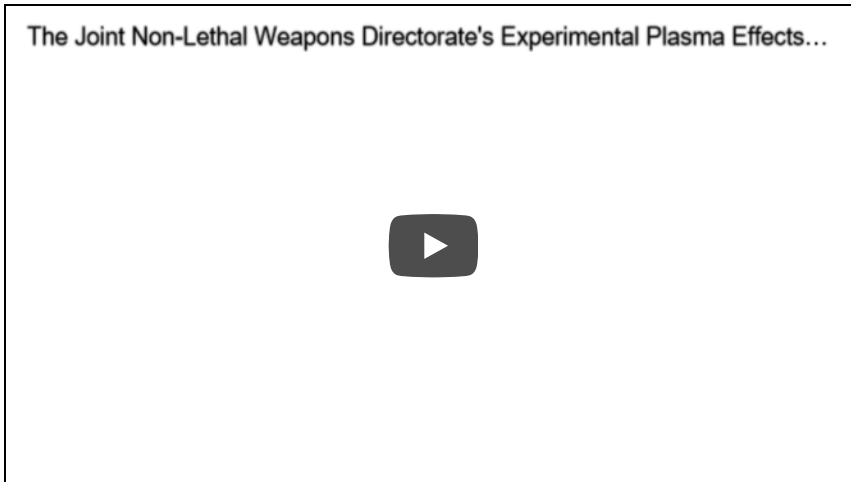
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Defense One reporter Patrick Tucker shared a video of the laser in action.

"It's called the Laser-Induced Plasma Effect and, fingers crossed, they hope to be able to say intelligible words within the next three years," he wrote in the caption.

If the military scientists get the laser interaction precise enough "you get something that sounds like a haunted walkie-talkie".



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There could be some interesting potential applications for the technology but the Pentagon reportedly thinks it could be useful to stop people from charging checkpoints or intimidate enemy groups into over-estimating the presence of opposition soldiers.

The voice laser doesn't project sound from a speaker, but can beam it directly towards an enemy, meaning the voices appear from thin air.

Global military powers have been investing heavily in laser technology in recent years.

Last month, it was revealed the US was close to [unveiling new super-powered lasers](#) capable of blasting drones straight out of the sky. The 150-kilowatt weapons will be fitted to warships and are able to 'take out' drones, aircraft, cruise missiles and even other ships.

Meanwhile earlier this month, [Russian backed reports](#) boasted of the country's new plane-mounted lasers capable of taking out enemy satellites.

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