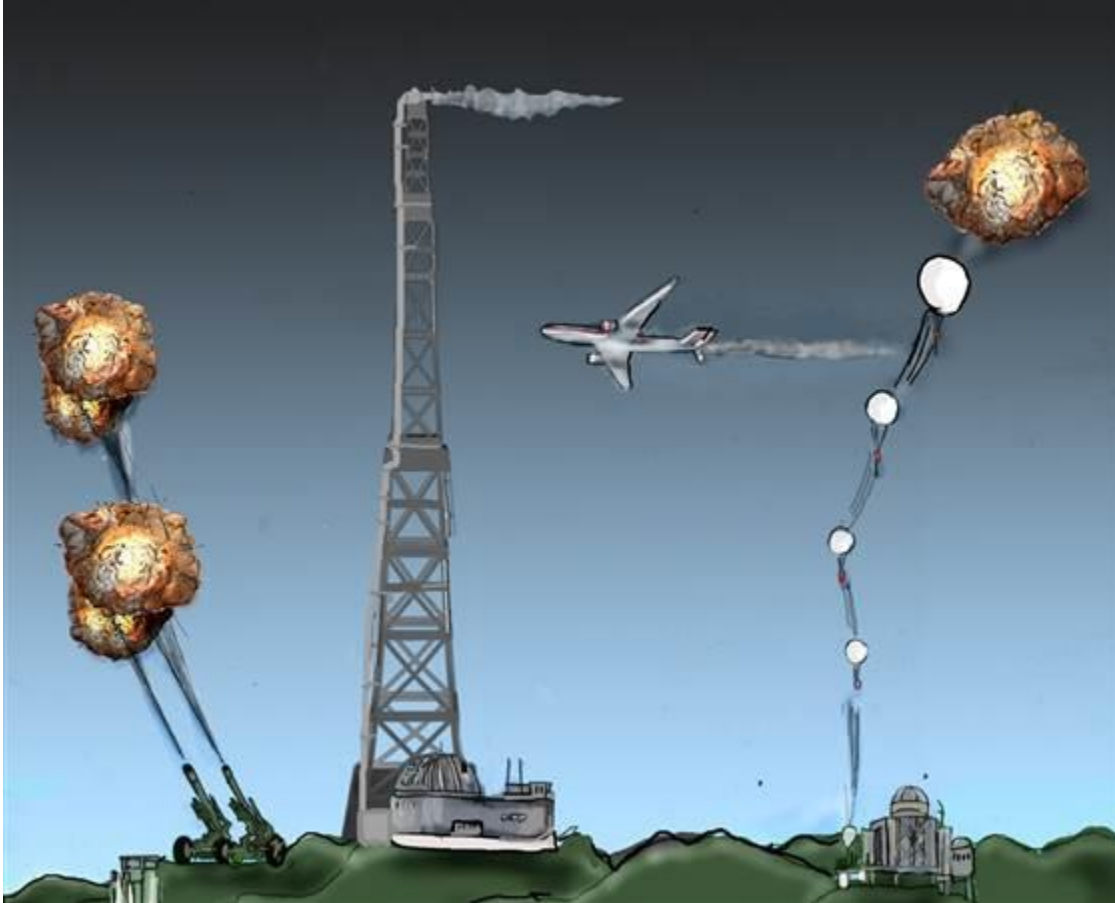


CIA said to back study on ways to hack the global climate



John Roach NBC News



Brian West / American Geophysical Union

This file graphic illustrates techniques to cool the Earth via a thin cloud of aerosols, including, from left, artillery cannons, a miles-long tower, military aircraft and stratospheric balloons.

The U.S. intelligence community is helping to fund a study that is evaluating ways to cool the global climate, including proposals to pump the skies full of sunlight reflecting particles and build machines that vacuum greenhouse gases from the atmosphere.

A final report is tentatively scheduled for release in the spring or summer of 2014 by the National Academy of Sciences, which has convened a [committee of science and policy experts](#) to study the issue.

"It is an assessment of the science — what do we know, what do we not know, what are the risks based on what we know and don't know right now," Lauren Rugani, a spokeswoman for the [National Academy of Sciences](#), told NBC News.

"We are not conducting experiments, we are not producing original research, we are not developing any new technologies," she added.

In addition to the U.S. intelligence community, [sponsors of the \\$630,000 study](#) include the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NASA and the sciences academy. According to [Grist, an environmental news website](#), the term "U.S. intelligence community" refers to the CIA.

Edward Price, a [spokesperson for the CIA](#), would not confirm the agency's involvement, but told NBC News in an email that "on a subject like climate change, the agency works with scientists to better understand the phenomenon and its implications on national security."

An intelligence community report in [2008](#) found that climate change, among other things, is likely to [destabilize governments and could add to terrorism](#), posing a threat to U.S. national security, for example.

A 2011 National Research Council report [urged the U.S. Navy to prepare for climate change impacts](#) including the prospect for geopolitical conflicts in the Arctic as the sea ice there continues to dwindle, opening the region up to increased mineral exploration and shipping traffic.

To that end, military contractor [Raytheon](#) is working with the Navy to develop technologies that will improve communications and "maintain vigilant situational awareness over a somewhat austere area and very logistically challenging to be able to operate in," Tim Raglin, a program manager for the Raytheon Innovation and Prototyping team, told NBC News in a technology briefing in April.

That the government's top science agencies and intelligence community are also willing to fund research on techniques to cool the climate suggests the seriousness with which the government takes the potential impacts of global warming.

The study committee held its first formal meeting this week in Washington, D.C. On top of evaluating proposed geoengineering techniques, the final report will comment on the "possible environmental, economic, and national security concerns" associated with the technologies, according to the [project description](#).

As for concerns that intelligence community funding will make some or all of the committee's findings secret, Rugani said not to worry.

"The report is unclassified. It will be conducted in the public sphere and will be made available to the public in its entirety once it is completed," she said. "So, there's nothing nefarious going on here."

John Roach is a contributing writer to NBC News. To learn more about him, visit his [website](#).