

Robot soldiers taking over?

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The US military is designing and testing technology that could lead to science fiction robotic soldiers taking to the battlefields of future wars, yet the consequences are still unforeseen.

An example of such a robot called 'Ranger' already functions at the University of Maryland.

Barrett Dillow, an engineering graduate student of the University of Maryland who mans this machine says *"Ranger was designed to be a teleoperated robot for space. The arms themselves were designed to perform all the tasks that an astronaut would. So, with a robot we can do all the things they would have done but faster, stronger, and better."*

This is precisely how robots are portrayed: helping humans do their dirty work.

But that work may have gotten even dirtier. Now robots are turned into killing machines as the Pentagon tests new and 'exciting' ways to engage in warfare.

P.W. Singer, the author of the best selling book "Wired for War" which hints that the Terminator could one day come to life says *"Something big is going on here and the driving force for this is the fact that you can send a robot into certain combat situations and don't have to worry about writing a letter home to its mother afterwards."*

That driving force is only getting stronger as more sophisticated robots are being developed as the need for humans diminishes.

The robots could be helpful in war or space but the question of "reliability"- that is, whether they potentially could outsmart the very people who make them is still open.

P. W. Singer says *"that's my fear: suddenly you're going down a slippery slope further and further, giving a machine more judgment and decision and when it comes to war and that's a pretty scary prospect. But the reason we are working on these robotics is mainly because we cannot get passed our human need to destroy each other."*

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