



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on March 10, 2022

Word Games on Biolabs in Ukraine? DoD Contracted With Major U.S. Company to Build BSL-3 Lab to Work on Pathogens

The U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs seemed to confirm on Tuesday what her own agency denies: That the United States has built, funded, and maintained a network of biolabs in Ukraine.

The admission from Deep-Stater Victoria Nuland came in an answer to a question from Senator Marco Rubio, the Florida Republican, during a hearing of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

On Tuesday, Russia's ambassador to the United States and its Foreign Ministry spokesman both said Russian troops had uncovered labs in Ukraine, a claim the State Department denied and called projection on Russia's part. Russia frequently accuses other countries of activities in which Russia is engaged.



AP Images
Victoria Nuland

Defense Department spokesman John Kirby also denied it.

Question is, are U.S. officials playing word games? The U.S. Department of Defense did, in fact, contract with a major corporation to build a lab designated Biosafety Level 3 in Odessa.

Russia Will Use Them

[Rubio asked](#) Nuland directly whether Ukraine has chemical or biological weapons.

"Ukraine has biological research facilities, which, in fact, we are now quite concerned Russian forces may be seeking to gain control of," Nuland replied:

So we are working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces, should they approach.

The two then agreed that if bioweapons are released in Ukraine, Russia would be the culprit:

Rubio: I'm sure you're aware that the Russian propaganda groups are already putting out there all kinds of information about how they've uncovered a plot by the Ukrainians to release biological weapons in the country with NATO's coordination.

If there is a biological or chemical weapon incident or attack inside of Ukraine, is there any doubt in your mind that 100 percent, it would be the Russians that would be behind it?



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Nuland: There is no doubt in my mind, Senator. And it is classic Russian technique to blame on the other guy what they're planning to do themselves.

That last line reprised the [State Department's denial](#) that there are U.S.-run bioweapons and chemical weapons labs in Ukraine.

"The Kremlin is intentionally spreading outright lies that the United States and Ukraine are conducting chemical and biological weapons activities in Ukraine," the department said:

We have also seen PRC officials echo these conspiracy theories. This Russian disinformation is total nonsense and not the first time Russia has invented such false claims against another country. Also, these claims have been debunked conclusively and repeatedly over many years.

As we have said all along, Russia is inventing false pretexts in an attempt to justify its own horrific actions in Ukraine. The United States does not own or operate any chemical or biological laboratories in Ukraine, it is in full compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention, and it does not develop or possess such weapons anywhere. It is Russia that has active chemical and biological weapons programs and is in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and Biological Weapons Convention.

Finally, Russia has a track record of accusing the West of the very crimes that Russia itself is perpetrating. These tactics are an obvious ploy by Russia to try to justify further premeditated, unprovoked, and unjustified attacks on Ukraine. We fully expect Russia to continue to double down on these sorts of claims with further unfounded allegations.

DoD's Kirby put it this way: "The Russian accusations are absurd, they are laughable and you know, in the words of my Irish Catholic grandfather, a bunch of malarkey. There's nothing to it. It's classic Russian propaganda."

President Joe Biden's press secretary, Jen Psaki, said the Russians are just like those who believe the China Virus emerged from a U.S. funded lab in Wuhan:

We took note of Russia's false claims about alleged U.S. biological weapons labs and chemical weapons development in Ukraine. We've also seen Chinese officials echo these conspiracy theories.

"Urgent Eradication"

The "conspiracy theorists" in Moscow claim otherwise.

"The entire network of biological labs was created on the Ukrainian territory" and "includes more than 30 facilities," [said Anatoly Antonov](#), Russia's ambassador to the United States:

The contracting authority of the works carried out there is the US Department of Defense. It



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is the DoD affiliated contractor Black and Veatch that takes part in realization of these projects.

During the special military operation in Ukraine the Russian Armed Forces discovered multiple facts of an urgent clean-up of traces of the military biological program carried out by Kiev regime. Russian side possesses information on elimination of some most virulent pathogens of plague, anthrax, tularemia, cholera and other deadly diseases....

[T]he USA is afraid that these dangerous pathogens stored at the above mentioned facilities will get into the hands of Russian experts. In this case, the violation by Ukraine and the United States of the Convention on the Prohibition of Biological and Toxin Weapons will be confirmed.

It makes you wonder how Washington will react to today's accusation from the PRC that the Pentagon has deployed 336 biological laboratories in 30 countries? Why are these dangerous objects created abroad? We are waiting for an honest and direct answer.

[Russia's Foreign Ministry](#) said "the Kiev regime was found to have been concealing traces of a military biological programme implemented with funding from the United States Department of Defence."

The ministry said employees of the biolabs provided documents that prove the "urgent eradication of highly hazardous pathogens of plague, anthrax, rabbit-fever, cholera and other lethal diseases."

The eradication was ordered, the ministry said, "to prevent exposing a violation of Article I of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) by Ukraine and the United States."

Lab in Ukraine

[Black & Veatch](#), one of the largest privately owned companies in the United States, built a biolab in Ukraine, as [its website shows](#).

"Black & Veatch completed Ukraine's first Biological Safety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory in Odessa on time and under budget," an undated [news release says](#). "The new facility enhances the government's existing disease surveillance systems to detect, report and respond to bioterrorism attacks, epidemics and potential pandemics."

The lab, the website says, was the first in the region and "the first to be commissioned, accredited and operational under the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP)."



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Project Name	Location	Client
BSL-3 Laboratory	Odessa, Ukraine	U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency

Black & Veatch completed Ukraine’s first Biological Safety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratory in Odessa on time and under budget. The new facility enhances the government’s existing disease surveillance systems to detect, report and respond to bioterrorism attacks, epidemics and potential pandemics.

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“Completing the construction effort under budget definitely exceeded our expectations,” said Doug Gorsline, DTRA BTRP Ukraine Project Manager.

Bradley Karn, DTRA BTRP Program Manager, added, “More important was the quality of the effort. Black & Veatch was able to renovate a decades-old facility into a state-of-the-art diagnostics laboratory that will become the nexus of Ukraine’s biosurveillance network.”

The BSL-3 laboratory was specifically designed and constructed to support work with especially dangerous pathogens that can be naturally occurring or introduced through a bioterrorism attack. It serves as a central location for research, consolidation and training on the proper handling of dangerous pathogens. The lab also provides the Ukrainian Ministry of Health a safe environment to confirm diagnosis of suspected dangerous pathogens, enhancing public health while deterring bioterrorism.

As integrating contractor, Black & Veatch is responsible to DTRA and the Ministry of Health for the full rollout of the BTRP in Ukraine. Black & Veatch is ensuring the mission’s success by training Ukrainian personnel in molecular diagnostics, biosafety, operations and maintenance, and laboratory management techniques. This training, along with three years of gradually decreasing sustainment and transition support, will provide Ukrainian scientists with the necessary resources to manage the BSL-3 laboratory and the Ukrainian biosurveillance system going forward.



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BTRIC Ukraine



Project Name	Location	Client
BTRIC Ukraine	Ukraine	DTRA

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) competitively awarded Black & Veatch Special Projects Corp. (Black & Veatch) one of its Biological Threat Reduction Integrating Contracts (BTRIC) in 2008. The 5-year IDIQ contract (with a 5-year option) has a collective ceiling of \$4B among the five selected contractors. DTRA also competitively awarded Black & Veatch (Integrating Contractor) the first task order under BTRIC, BTRIC TO1 in Ukraine in 2008. BTRIC TO1 is a vital part of the Cooperative and Biological Threat Reduction (CTR and BTR) program of the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) / DTRA and Implementing (Executive) Agents of the Ukraine - Ministry of Health (MoH), Academy of Agrarian Sciences (AAS) and State Committee for Veterinary Medicine (SCVM).

As well, the website says:

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“BSL-3 laboratories are used to study infectious agents or toxins that may be transmitted through the air and cause potentially lethal infections,” the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says](#):

Researchers perform all experiments in a biosafety cabinet. BSL-3 laboratories are designed to be easily decontaminated. As an additional safety measure, these laboratories must use controlled, or “directional,” air flow to ensure that air flows from non-laboratory areas (such as the hallway) into laboratory areas.

The Russians aren’t lying. The United States has built biolabs in Ukraine. In fact, though the U.S. embassy had [reportedly scrubbed its website of related documents](#), as of this writing there is such information and documents on the embassy [website](#), including:

BTRP [U.S. Department of Defense’s Biological Threat Reduction Program] has upgraded many laboratories for the Ministry of Health and the State Food Safety and Consumer Protection Service of Ukraine, reaching Biosafety Level 2. In 2019, BTRP constructed two laboratories for the latter, one in Kyiv and one in Odesa.

The United States must explain.



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