

**Formal Consultative Meeting of the States Parties
to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling
of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction**

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Item 6 of the agenda

**Respective outstanding questions by the Russian Federation
to the United States and to Ukraine concerning the fulfilment
of their respective obligations under the Convention in the context
of the operation of biological laboratories in Ukraine**

**United States Technical Briefing to the Article V
Consultative Meeting under the Biological and
Toxin Weapons Convention**

Submitted by the United States of America

**TITLE SLIDE 1: United State Presentation: Biological and Toxin Weapons
Convention Article V Consultative Meeting**

**TITLE SLIDE 2: United States Department of Defense, Defense Threat Reduction
Agency Presentation to the State's Parties, BWC**

TITLE SLIDE 3: Overview of the Biological Threat Reduction Program and Ukraine

Thank you, Deputy Minister Kuzin. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ambassadors and Delegates:

1. My name is Kevin Garrett, and I am the Deputy Director of the Biological Threat Reduction Program, which I will refer to as "BTRP" – the part of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program that addresses biological threats. I am also the former lead for our public health and animal health work in Ukraine and have been with the DoD Cooperative Threat Reduction program for 10 years. I am very familiar with the work our program has done in partnership with the Government of Ukraine and can speak authoritatively on it. As referenced in the US written response to Russia, specifically "US Cooperation with Labs in Ukraine," I would like to begin by providing an overview of the partnership between the Biological Threat Reduction Program and Ukraine.
2. Our work in Ukraine is very similar to the cooperative engagement we once had with the Russian Federation, and still have with many other countries. Our engagement with the Government of Ukraine dates to 2005. It is governed by a bilateral legal agreement, concluded in 2005 that provides for support in areas such as "cooperative biological research, biological threat agent detection and response, and assistance for improving biological material protection, control and accountability in order to reduce the risk of theft or unauthorized use of dangerous pathogens." I will talk a bit more about this agreement later, but the goal is to sustainably strengthen Ukraine's biosafety, biosecurity, and disease surveillance capabilities.
3. One important element of our work has been to implement biosafety and biosecurity improvements in Ukrainian laboratories and other facilities that once belonged to the Soviet



Union, so they can operate safely, securely and effectively as public and animal health laboratories.

4. [Slide 4] You can now see a sample of the laboratories Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union and the nature of the upgrades BTRP provided [Slide 5]. Until 2013, we provided very similar support to numerous facilities in the Russian Federation with results that look similar to these. We have also supported training in biorisk management for laboratory personnel because safety and security are not purely a matter of physical infrastructure.

5. Since our cooperation with Ukraine began nearly two decades ago, we have supported more than 46 laboratories, human and animal health facilities, and diagnostic sites for the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food, and the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences, as well as field diagnostic equipment for the Ministry of Defense. Ukraine owns, operates, and staffs all these laboratories and facilities. Aside from occasional site visits, where we monitor the progress of construction and renovation activities or are present for trainings, there are no U.S. government personnel in these laboratories and facilities.

6. In addition to addressing the safety and security of potentially hazardous biological materials, we have worked with our Ukrainian partners to build disease detection capacity, and to help integrate Ukraine into the broader public and global scientific community by encouraging and supporting Ukrainian scientists' efforts to publish peer-reviewed research in scientific journals.

7. [SLIDE 6] You can see here some events that BTRP sponsored to promote openness and transparency, the development peaceful research, communication to the public through publications, and integration into the broader community – even for scientific studies that BTRP did not fund. The last of these events that we were able to host in Ukraine included 600 applicants from 10 countries. This event is but one of many examples where Ukraine has been a consistent and transparent partner—not only with various agencies from the United States government, but with the broader international community. This includes collaborating on activities with organizations such as the European Union, the World Health Organization, international universities and research institutions, as well as other countries.

8. [SLIDE 7] Another example of our work has to do with trainings, such as developing a cadre of field epidemiologists in Ukraine in partnership with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control. Here are Ukrainian graduates of this two-year program who came from the Ministries of Health, Agrarian Policy and Food, and Defense. Having a robust field epidemiological workforce is vital for outbreak monitoring and investigation, and ultimately mitigating the spread of infectious diseases.

9. [SLIDE 8] Also recently, BTRP has provided extensive COVID-19 assistance to partners around the world in the form of training, equipment, diagnostic kits and personal protective equipment. A few examples are on display – including in Ukraine.

10. TITLE SLIDE 9: Addressing the Specific Allegations: Agreements

11. As Special Representative Ward said earlier, the Russian Federation's false allegations consist of a series of baseless assertions and mischaracterizations of various documents. I will now walk through these documents and address specific laboratory-related allegations.

12. [SLIDE 10] - I will start with the Russian Federation's selective choice of text to misrepresent the purpose of a PUBLICLY available agreement, titled the "Agreement Concerning Cooperation in the Area of Prevention of Proliferation of Technology, Pathogens, and Expertise that could be Used in the Development of Biological Weapons" that the U.S. Department of Defense and the Ukrainian Ministry of Health entered in 2005. For simplicity, I will refer to this as the "2005 Agreement," which is referenced in the US written response, "Russia's mischaracterization of the 2005 Agreement." As the full title infers, this 2005 Agreement provided a framework for cooperation between the United States and Ukraine to PREVENT the proliferation of technology, pathogens, and expertise. The Government of Ukraine publicly posts this agreement on their Rada's website.

13. Regarding Sample Storage and Transfer and Data Sharing: The Russian Federation alleges that the Agreement requires Ukraine to “...store all dangerous pathogens at the laboratories assisted by the US DoD as well as transfer to the United States the copies of all strains collected in Ukraine and data generated by the infectious disease surveillance in that country.” This includes 3 separate elements presented in a misleading way and some factual errors, which I will describe on the following slides:

- [SLIDE 11] First, that pathogens must be stored at laboratories assisted by the US DoD. This agreement provided a framework for the US DoD to make necessary infrastructural repairs at sites that house pathogens to allow for their safe storage. Yes, we did ask that once the U.S. renovated these safe, secure storage spaces for dangerous pathogens, that the Government of Ukraine would store their dangerous pathogens there. Otherwise, what would be the point of investing in these renovations? In practice, this meant improving biosecurity through trainings, strengthening procedures, providing appropriate protective equipment, and making physical security improvements. There is no residual US presence at any of these sites upon completion of these upgrades.
- [SLIDE 12] Second, the 2005 Agreement requires only the transfer of “requested copies” of pathogen strains for “cooperative biological research” intended to achieve “prophylactic, protective, or other peaceful purposes.” That is a far cry from “all strains collected in Ukraine.” Indeed, such sample transfers are a long-accepted best practice within the scientific community and broadly endorsed by international health organizations, so that countries can collaborate on detecting and treating infectious disease threats. (The WHO has entire frameworks devoted to virus sample-sharing, as one example.) Furthermore, sample-sharing is encouraged under Article X of this convention. In practice, sample transfers under the 2005 Agreement have been infrequent, and are requested specifically to support Ukrainian efforts to further sequence, characterize, or identify new and emerging strains of pathogens where required technology or expertise may not be locally available.
- [SLIDE 13] Third, sharing disease surveillance data, as described in the 2005 Agreement, is another critical activity that the Russian Federation seeks to malign. Data-sharing between countries is ESSENTIAL to dealing with pandemics. Data-sharing enables us to collectively “better detect, diagnose, and monitor disease outbreaks.” During the COVID-19 pandemic, we all witnessed the importance of sharing disease surveillance data to control the spread of outbreaks and rapidly detect new variants wherever they emerge. In practice, the U.S. has not sought to require Ukraine to share this data, but has provided assistance to facilitate Ukraine’s continuing compliance with the World Health Organization’s International Health Regulations reporting requirements. Such activity is also encouraged under Article X of this convention.

14. [Slide 14] Next, Regarding Sensitive Markings: The Russian Federation similarly mischaracterizes another provision of the 2005 Agreement, specifically Article VII, paragraphs 1 and 2, asserting that “information under the Agreement as well as information on its implementation become sensitive by default.” The Agreement actually states that if the U.S. considers a document to be “sensitive,” or the Ukrainian Ministry of Health regards it as “restricted information,” then both the U.S and Ukraine will respect the determination of the other and handle the document accordingly. Contrary to the Russian Federation’s allegation, there is no blanket provision that that makes information classified. It simply calls for each country to respect the others’ system of protecting privacy and other such information. You would expect to see such clauses in scientific research study protocols to prevent personal information from being improperly accessed or in commercial transactions to keep proprietary information safe.

15. TITLE SLIDE 15: Addressing the Specific Allegations: Plan to Provide Technical Assistance to Certain Recipients of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine

16. The Russian Federation has also mischaracterized a project planning document called, “The Plan to Provide Technical Assistance to Certain Recipients of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine” as ‘proof’ of some nefarious activity. These documents, also known in Ukraine as “Technical Assistance Plans” are a standard legal requirement in Ukraine to register foreign assistance programs. This is referenced in the United States’ written response to Russia on page 7.

17. [SLIDE 16] This specific Technical Assistance Plan outlines the details of the proposed assistance. In this case with the Ministry of Defense’s Technical Assistance Plan, not all of the approved assistance has yet occurred, but may be completed under subsequent contracts and Technical Assistance Plans. The Technical Assistance Plan addresses basic practical information such as:

- First, who provides and receives the assistance: In this case, BTRP provided assistance through a contract that DTRA publicly competed and awarded to a company called “Black & Veatch”. Several assistance recipients are listed, including several Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Departments in Ukraine’s Ministry of Defense.
- Second, the nature of the assistance: Pages 2-3 of the document clearly state that this includes:
 - i. Providing infectious disease surveillance training
 - ii. Providing assistance for rapid response to infectious disease outbreaks
 - iii. Construction and modernization
 - iv. Common research projects
 - v. Participation in international conferences
- Third, the goal of this assistance: The plan makes it clear that the overall goal of this project is to improve the ability of Ukraine to “detect and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases.” As described, the expected results included ensuring the proper functioning of the institutions of the Preventive Medicine Service of the MoD; achieving Ukrainian biosafety and biosecurity standards in the recipient institutions; “improving knowledge of Ukrainian specialists in the detection of infectious disease outbreaks, epidemiology, laboratory diagnosis of infectious disease pathogens and management of biosecurity and biosafety systems”; and “expanding Ukraine’s expertise in biological research and strengthening long-term relationships with research scientists from the United States and other countries in infectious disease surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, clinical research, biosafety, and other related fields.”

18. The Russian Federation portrays this Project Plan as evidence the U.S. has financed “military-biological activities in Ukraine” and evidence of nefarious activity by US citizens, including alleged “biological weapons experts.” The truth is more boring: this is a routine, legally required document describing a plan to improve the ability of multiple Ukrainian entities – including Regional Sanitary and Epidemiological Departments of the Ministry of Defense – to safely collect, store, and transport clinical samples to regional Ukrainian laboratories for standard analysis.

19. Contrary to the Russian Federation’s assertions, no U.S. citizen was involved in the handling of any pathogens associated with this project. The characterization of US personnel as so-called “biological weapons experts” is simply false as the U.S. does not have a biological weapons program. In fact, the people the Russian Federation references in their report were performing routine diplomatic and program management duties, not scientific ones.

[Addressing the specific allegations: Laboratory-related. BWC Confidence Building Measures.]

20. Finally, Confidence Building Measures.

21. The Russian Federation suggests that cooperation between the U.S. and Ukraine is nefarious simply because it is not reported in the U.S. submissions under the BWC Confidence Building Measures. In fact, none of this cooperation was hidden. The cooperation is showcased whenever there was a relevant opportunity, including:

- Several BWC Working papers about Article X Cooperation
- On public facing websites, such as the National Academy of Agrarian Sciences of Ukraine's Institute of Veterinary Medicine's homepage
- Many presentations at scientific conferences and publications

22. Moreover, there is no section in the BWC Confidence Building Measures where it would make sense to include details on bilateral assistance in areas such as biosafety, biosecurity, and disease surveillance.

23. With me today is Dr. Rebecca Dunfee, the Chief of Science for our Biological Threat Reduction Program. Dr. Dunfee received her doctoral degree in Virology from Harvard University. Her specific expertise is related to identifying viral variants that could impact public health. Saut de page

Title Slide 18: Science in the Biological Threat Reduction Program

24. Thank you, Mr. Garrett. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ambassadors and Delegates, as stated by Deputy Assistant Secretary Reif earlier today, my organization believes that “scientists with the facilities, the expertise, and the equipment to safely and securely conduct quality science, benefit our collective defense from biological outbreaks.” Therefore, an important part of our mission is to support the professional development of scientists in our disease surveillance capacity-building efforts so that they can contribute to international science. This is referenced in the United States’ written response to Russia, “US funding of animal disease surveillance projects.”

25. [Slide 18] First, I would like to talk about how our program funds science projects, which is outlined on this slide. The basic process for any science funded by the Biological Threat Reduction Program is as follows:

- We announce a funding opportunity. Science may be part of a larger capacity-building effort or may be an opportunity on its own. No matter what kind of opportunity it is, any new opportunities are posted online. Our opportunities focused solely on science are broadly available to a variety of countries and types of organizations.
- Organizations in the United States or abroad can apply for the funding. Multiple organizations can collaborate on an application. The applicants propose the specifics of the science project.
- BTRP and scientific subject matter experts review the project proposal’s relevance to the opportunity and the scientific merit of the proposed work. We also review the proposed work to ensure that it can be done safely and to identify and mitigate any dual-use concerns.
- Once we award a project, the organization that proposed it will carry out the scientific work. BTRP program managers make sure the project stays on track and supports scientists in publishing and presenting their work to a range of audiences. For example, BTRP frequently funds travel for scientists to attend international scientific conferences. BTRP requires any summaries of funded scientific work to be publicly available.

26. This process is typical of most any scientific funding process.

27. [SLIDE 19] Now to address specific allegations on the scientific projects. In the Aide Memoire, the Russian Federation specifically named two scientific projects that have funding from BTRP. The first is titled “Risk assessment of selected especially dangerous pathogens carried by migratory birds over Ukraine”, which was identified by UP-4, and the second is “Emerging Infections from Insectivorous Bats in Ukraine and Georgia”, or “P-781”. The

terms UP-4 and P-781 are simply project identifiers where U stands for Ukraine and P stands for Project. The identifiers help us quickly catalogue projects; they do not imply anything secretive. Today, I will refer to the studies as “The Migratory Bird Study” and the “Native Bat Study”.

28. [SLIDE 20] Birds and bats are wild animals that can travel widely, including across international borders, and some of their migratory patterns are well known, including migratory routes through Eastern Europe and across the Caucasus. The international scientific community understands these wild bird and bat populations often carry pathogens that can infect human populations or domestic livestock populations, sometimes with devastating effect. For example, scientific analysis indicates that the 2014 West Africa Ebola outbreak most likely started when a young boy became infected through contact with a wild bat. For this reason, thousands of scientists around the world, including world renowned experts from the Russian Federation, publish scientific studies that include collecting and analyzing samples from wild birds and bats to try to understand if there are pathogens present in those populations that potentially pose threats to human or animal health. Such studies are critical in helping nations track where infectious diseases may spread and where outbreaks might occur, so that they can take the appropriate steps to quickly detect and contain them. As you can see on this slide, a recent Russian-Chinese study performed pathogen analysis from birds migrating along similar pathways to those cited in the Migratory Bird Study, which shows that scientists from many different countries are using the same foundational information to investigate problems that we all need to solve.

29. The Ukrainian delegation will present on the specifics of the science of the projects from the Aide Memoire, which will be familiar to any scientific expert in these fields conducting similar studies. I will focus on the professional development of the scientists.

30. [SLIDE 21] A critical part of scientific studies is collaboration, and these studies foster collaboration between Ukraine and other nations so that they can cooperatively address a shared challenge in health security. Some examples of BTRP-supported collaboration are shown on this slide. These studies include scientists from across the world so that they can work together and share results. For example, in The Migratory Bird Study, Ukrainian scientists worked with scientific colleagues from the Republic of Georgia, Moldova, Armenia, and Poland; the World Organization for Animal Health reference centers in the United Kingdom; and academic universities in the United States and Sweden. In The Native Bat Study, Ukrainian scientists are working with experts in public, animal and environmental health from the Republic of Georgia and the United States. To date in this work, scientists have worked together on developing common safety protocols and project plans and will begin collaborative studies this fall.

31. Another critical part of these studies is full transparency to the international community. BTRP fully supports publication of all study results and requires their funded study summaries to be publicly available. For example, Ukrainian scientists presented Migratory Bird Study work to the international scientific community at the 2017 European Influenza meeting, the 2018 International Avian Respiratory Disease Conference, and the 2019 American Society for Microbiology Biothreats conference. In fact, the documents on the Migratory Bird Study provided by the Russian Federation are from a presentation at a public scientific meeting.

32. As Mr. Garrett stated earlier when he talked about events in scientific mentoring, BTRP also encourages the scientists it supports, whether it funded the study or not, to publicly present their findings at scientific conferences and publish results.

33. [SLIDE 22] We have provided mentorship in scientific writing and supported publication of findings, which includes collaborative work from Ukraine and Russia, an example of which is shown in this slide. Russian scientists thanked Defense Threat Reduction Agency for supporting the preparation and submission of this study in 2020. These opportunities help scientists around the world gain valuable insights and is critical for international scientific cooperation and collaboration.

34. In summary on the science involved in these allegations, these two studies as well as any others funded by BTRP that are cited by the Russian Federation as “concerning” are common biosurveillance studies and just good science. Promoting good science for peaceful

purposes is one core value of the Biological Weapons Convention. We are proud of our international scientific assistance and cooperation – which should not be undermined by disinformation.

35. I will now hand the microphone to the Ukrainian delegation and Dr. Denis Muzyka.

TITLE SLIDE 23: Summary and Conclusion

36. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ambassadors and Delegates: I am the Deputy Director of the CTR program at the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, which implements the CTR program. I would like to conclude our discussion of the Biological Threat Reduction Program, its partnership with Ukraine, and Russia's allegations.

37. It should by now be clear to everyone in this room that the allegations of the Russian Federation are without merit. The United States has not engaged in biological weapons development in Ukraine or anywhere else. On the contrary, the core fundamental purpose of BTRP is to prevent biological threats – not create them. There has never been anything secretive about BTRP's support to Ukraine to prevent, detect, and report infectious disease outbreaks.

38. The activities we have discussed today – safety and security upgrades at laboratories; training in safe, secure sample collection; disease surveillance; and international scientific cooperation – are about as far from biological weapons development as you can get, which is why Russia's allegations seem so strained and implausible. Migratory birds and bats as biological weapons? I am sorry, that is not only illegal and unethical, it is silly. It seems clear to us that what has excited the imaginations of some in the Russian Federation is not the activity itself, but the fact that it was funded by the U.S. Department of Defense, and specifically the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. It is no more sinister than when the Department of Defense engages in emergency relief efforts after a hurricane or an earthquake somewhere in the world – it is simply part of what we do.

39. Mr. Chairman, the Biological Threat Reduction Program supports countries globally, including Ukraine, to enhance their biosafety, biosecurity, and disease detection capabilities to keep us all safe from infectious disease outbreaks. The Biological Threat Reduction Program is one of many U.S. Government programs that work hard every day to strengthen global health security. It implements activities in direct alignment with the BWC Article X, promotes biosafety and biosecurity, and supports the peaceful exchange of scientific information, equipment, and materials.

40. However, before I close out this presentation today, I feel it is also important to briefly remind those in this room of this program's roots. Mr. Chairman, the history of this program is critically important context that everyone needs to know.

41. [SLIDE 24] In 1991, the United States Congress created DoD's Cooperative Threat Reduction Program to help Russia and the newly created, sovereign nations that were once part of the Soviet Union secure and eliminate weapons of mass destruction and their production facilities. The lack of security, command, and control over thousands of nuclear weapons that were dispersed across Russia and the former Soviet Union was a threat to world security. Additionally, there were tons of chemical and biological weapons agents, susceptible to falling into disrepair, or worse, potentially falling into the hands of groups who might proliferate or use them. Specifically, and related to today's discussion, this history includes Biological Threat Reduction Program work with the Russian Federation for many years - the same type of work we do today and with all of our foreign partners – including Ukraine. This may seem puzzling in the context of today's geopolitical environment. But - these peaceful biological threat reduction activities were the cornerstone of our future biological engagements with other countries.

42. As depicted on this slide, these activities in Russia can be summarized into 3 categories, including Biological Safety and Security and associated best-science training practices; Infrastructure Elimination from legacy Soviet biological weapons production facilities; and most importantly for today's discussion, Collaborative Biological Research – the same type of activities we currently conduct today with all our partner countries, including Ukraine, aimed at strengthening global health security. It is important to note that

the lead implementer of these activities was the International Science and Technology Center (ISTC), which was based in Moscow at the time.

43. [SLIDE 25] As depicted on the next slide, the Biological Threat Reduction Program spent over \$100 million USD in Russia to train thousands of Russian scientists to re-direct them to peaceful biological research activities; enhance the safety and security at 6 key biological facilities in Russia; and conduct hundreds of collaborative and peaceful biological research studies with Russian scientists. BTRP also funded efforts to improve the safety and security of former Soviet biological weapons laboratories and manufacturing plants, which were part of the largest biological weapons program in history, in flagrant violation of the Biological Weapons Convention. The facilities we helped secure were located in Russia at the 6 sites depicted on the slide. It should be noted that the facilities at Vector and Obolensk were two of the highest-priority engagements due to the dubious nature of the facilities; however, they were also the two that generated the most engagement challenges, primarily due to Russian sensitivities about accessing these sites. Moreover, and most importantly for this discussion today, Russian scientists also participated in collaborative research projects on pathogens such as Monkeypox, Anthrax, Brucellosis, Yersinia Pestis (Plague), Marburg, Ebola, Smallpox, and Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever, just to name a few.

44. These two slides are only a summary of the biological threat reduction efforts conducted in Russia for nearly 13 years. And I will not elaborate further today. However, this is important context given the nature of the allegations. No matter what false allegations the Russian Federation introduces here and other international forums, they cannot hide from the historical facts and everyone in this room recognizes the hypocrisy of their claims.

45. Mr. Chairman, before I close, I want to make one more final statement. I want to note that this is my second trip to Geneva this year and my second time speaking at a Biological Weapons Convention meeting. We are committed to transparency and openness and stand by our work. When we heard that there were delegations who had questions or concerns about our work, we made the considerable effort to provide a transparent and open opportunity to address them. Five months ago, I joined the U.S. delegation for the Preparatory Committee meeting specifically to make myself available in person, to every BWC delegation participant, in order to describe our biological threat reduction activities in Ukraine. I had the privilege and honor to stand alongside colleagues from the United States, Ukraine, Canada, and Germany to describe what we actually do, and critically, what we do not do. Our side event was an open forum, and all States Parties were welcome to attend and ask any question they wished and raise any concern they might have. This event was attended by more than 70 people from over a dozen countries and international organizations, and yet - the Russia delegation that demanded this consultative meeting was notably absent. I would like to again thank those countries that attended our side event in April.

CLOSING

46. Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ambassadors, and Delegates: on behalf of the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, thank you for your time. While we appreciate the opportunity to be here alongside our colleagues from the U.S. Department of State and Ukraine, we regret that it had to be under these circumstances. We are proud of our efforts in strengthening public health and reducing the threat of infectious disease and related threats around the world, and are grateful for the partnerships we have enjoyed with a number of countries represented in this room today. We look forward to growing additional partnerships over the coming years.

47. I request that this presentation and accompanying statement be included as Official Documents of this Article V meeting, and that it be posted by the Implementation Support Unit on the UN Geneva public website.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
