

US Biological Warfare Program in the Spotlight Again

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This is a scoop to bring the US biological warfare effort back into the spotlight. On Sept. 11, Russian media reported that the Richard Lugar Center for Public Health Research laboratory, a research facility for high-level biohazard agents located near Tbilisi, Georgia, has used human beings for conducting biological experiments.

Former Minister of State Security of Georgia Igor Giorgadze said about it during a news conference in Moscow, urging US President Donald Trump to launch an investigation. He has lists of Georgians who died of hepatitis after undergoing treatment in the facility in 2015 and 2016. Many passed away on the same day. The declassified documents contain neither the indication of the causes of deaths nor real names of the deceased. According to him, the secret lab run by the US military was established during the tenure of former Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. The viruses could spread to neighboring countries, including Russia, Igor Giorgadze warned.

The laboratory's work is tightly under wraps. Only US personnel with security clearance have access to it. These people are accorded diplomatic immunity under the 2002 US-Georgia Agreement on defense cooperation.

Eurasia Review [reported](#) that in 2014 the Lugar Center [was equipped](#) with a special plant for breeding insects to enable launching the Sand Fly project in Georgia and the Caucasus. In 2014-2015 years, the bites of sand flies such as Phlebotomins caused a fever. According to the source,

“today the Pentagon has a great interest to the study of Tularemia, also known as the fever of rabbits, which is also equated with biological weapons. Distributors of such a disease can be mites and rodents”.

It makes remember the statement made by Nikolai Patrushev, Head of Russia's Security Council, in 2015. He [warned](#) about the threat stemming from biological weapons laboratories that operate on the territories of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). He specifically mentioned the Richard G. Lugar Center in Georgia.

The US has bio laboratories in 25 countries across the world, including the post-Soviet

space. They are funded by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). Foreign inspectors are denied access to them. It should be noted that independent journalist investigations [have been made public](#) to confirm the fact that the US military conducts secret research to pose a threat to environment and population. Jeffrey Silverman, an American journalist who has lived in Georgia for many years, [is sure](#) the Richard Lugar Center, as well as other labs, is involved in secret activities to create biological weapons. Georgia and Ukraine have been recently hit by mysterious disease outbreaks, with livestock killed and human lives endangered. The US military operates the Central Reference Laboratory in Kazakhstan since 2016. There have public protests against the facility.

In 2013 a Chinese Air Force Colonel Dai Xu [accused](#) the US government of creating a new strain of bird flu now afflicting parts of China as a biological warfare attack. According to him, the American military released the H7N9 bird flu virus into China in an act of biological warfare. It [has been reported](#) that the source of Ebola virus in West Africa were US bio-warfare labs.

Russian experts do not exclude the possibility of the use of a stink-bug by the US military as a biological weapon. A couple of years ago, mosquitoes with Zika virus have been spotted in Russia and South Ossetia to cause outbreaks of human and animal flu.

The US activities violate the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), a legally binding treaty that outlaws biological arms. It effectively prohibits the development, production, acquisition, transfer, retention, stockpiling and use of biological and toxin weapons and is a key element in the international community's efforts to address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In force since 1975, the convention has [181 states-parties](#) today. The BWC reaffirms the 1925 Geneva Protocol, which prohibits the biological weapons use. In 1969, US President Richard Nixon formally ended all offensive aspects of the US biological warfare program. In 1975, the US ratified both the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the BWC.

Negotiations on an internationally binding verification protocol, which would include on-site inspections by an independent authority to the BWC, took place between 1995 and 2001. The US did not sign up. Its refusal to become a party to the verification mechanisms makes any attempt to enhance the effectiveness of the BWC doomed. A Review Conference is held every five years to discuss the convention's operation and implementation. The last one, which convened in November 2016, was a frustration with minimal agreement on the final document and no substantive program of work to do before the next event takes place in 2021. There is little hope the BWC will ever be strengthened to have teeth. With no verification mechanism, the US military bio-warfare labs will always be a matter of concern. The issue is serious enough to be included into global security architecture. The UN General Assembly is the right place to raise it. Its 73rd session will open on September 18.

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