## Article

## Are There US Bioweapons in Ukraine? Putin's Propaganda Fails to Persuade

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When the Berlin Wall fell, the entire internal history of the East German Secret Police (better known as the 'Stasi') were made available to the public. Among the many missions in the archive, journalists discovered one called '<u>Operation DENVER</u>', a joint operation by the Stasi, KGB, and Bulgarian Secret Police to accuse the United States of creating AIDS in a lab, and then allowing the disease to leak. They did this in hopes of driving a wedge between the US and its allies, and to distract from their own Bioweapons programme.

In the past few days, a story that began on the Russian State-Owned Network *TASS* about Russian soldiers finding Bioweapons facilities in Ukraine owned by the US Military has made the rounds. It went to Chinese State Media, then to *Fox News*'s Tucker Carlson, and as of last week, it had made it all the way to the antivax protests at the Octagon <u>here</u> in <u>Dunedin</u>.

According to the <u>Associated Press</u>, "the labs are owned and operated by Ukraine, and the work is not secret. It's part of an initiative called the <u>Biological Threat Reduction</u> <u>Program</u> that aims to reduce the likelihood of deadly outbreaks, whether natural or manmade. The U.S. efforts date back to work in the 1990s to dismantle the former Soviet Union's program for weapons of mass destruction."

The fact that these labs were not run by the military, had been known to the public the entire time, and were originally made during the period when the USA and the USSR were trying to find peace, seems to have had little impact on the minds of many. So, let us take that out of the equation and just ask if it makes logical sense for the *TASS* story to be true.

Would it make sense for the USA to put secret Bioweapons facilities in Ukraine? Well, let us remind ourselves that for most of Ukraine's post-Soviet existence, it had a pro-Russian leader in charge. It wasn't until the 'Orange Revolution' of 2005 that a pro-EU/US leader was brought into power, and then five years after that, another pro-Russian leader was elected by the Ukrainian people, and then in 2014 he was ousted by protesters during the 'Revolution of Dignity', and then almost immediately after that Russia invaded Crimea and the far eastern regions of Ukraine seceded, setting off an eight year war, culminating in an invasion by Russian Forces this year. In order to have a top-secret Bioweapons facility in another country, one would need to have a firm ally, and a stable operating area. The US would need to be sure that enemy forces would not destroy the lab, that enemy agents would not infiltrate it, and that the government of the host country would not suddenly become friendly with an enemy country and then give away the secrets kept at the lab. Ukraine in the past 20 years seems like a uniquely hostile area to host a secret US Bioweapons lab.

So, it would obviously have been a bad idea to put a Bioweapons lab in Ukraine if the US did not want it to be found/destroyed/captured/turned over willingly after the election of an unfriendly leader, but this does not preclude the possibility that the US built these labs anyways regardless of the obvious dangers. That would only happen, however, if the US really wanted to give Ukraine access to Bioweapons.





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**Copyright:** © 2022 by the author. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/license s/by/4.0/). If you were following US politics in 2019, you may recall that then President Trump was impeached. Why? Because in a phone call with President Zelenskyy, President Trump asked for dirt on his political opponent. Trump said that he would essentially only release military aid to Ukraine if Ukraine launched an investigation against Joe Biden's son. The call was recorded and leaked and resulted in a trial where multiple people testified to Congress. Trump eventually released the aid, but possibly just to take heat off himself.

If we come into the present, just last week Poland offered Ukraine fighter jets, but only if the US took them first and then gave them to Ukraine. The US <u>refused this offer</u>.

Two administrations, back-to-back, were opposed to the idea of even giving Ukraine high end conventional weapons. Why would an administration opposed to giving a country conventional weapons suddenly be fine with giving them Weapons of Mass Destruction?

And in an era of *Wikileaks*, and NSA spying tactics getting published in <u>The Guardian</u>, and top-level officials <u>whistleblowing</u> on the President of the United States to Congress, how would this not have been known before? The US government could not even keep <u>footage of jets chasing UFOs</u> secret, but somehow this could be kept secret?

My PhD is dedicated to understanding weapons, focusing on why some get banned and others do not. I have researched many government cover-ups as part of my thesis, but this just does not look like a cover-up. It is a modern day Operation DENVER. It looks like Putin is trying to use propaganda to justify the unjustifiable. Here is a man who wants to wage a war of conquest in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and he is trying to convince us that Ukraine is somehow the villain.

This past week, in spite of new laws promising 15 years in prison for denying the Kremlin's official line on the "special operation" in Ukraine, thousands of ordinary Russians took to the street to protest. <u>Over 4000 of them were arrested in a single day</u>. The easiest thing we can do to support these brave anti-war protesters is not to buy into Vladimir Putin's propaganda.

Matt Fuller is a PhD student from the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago. Before that he was a Lecturer of Philosophy at St. Philip's College.

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