



Victoria Nuland: Ukraine Has “Biological Research Facilities,” Worried Russia May Seize Them

Description



Nuland testifies before a Senate Foreign Relation Committee hearing on Ukraine on March 08, 2022 in Washington, DC. (Photo by Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images)

USA: Self-anointed “fact-checkers” in the U.S. corporate press have [spent two weeks mocking as disinformation](#) and [a false conspiracy theory](#) the claim that Ukraine has biological weapons labs, either alone or with U.S. support. They never presented any evidence for their ruling — how could they possibly know? and how could they prove the negative? — but nonetheless they invoked their characteristically authoritative, above-it-all tone of self-assurance and self-arrogated right to decree the truth, definitively labelling such claims false.

Claims that Ukraine currently maintains dangerous biological weapons labs came from Russia as well as China. The Chinese Foreign Ministry this month [claimed](#): “The US has 336 labs in 30 countries under its control, including 26 in Ukraine alone.” The Russian Foreign Ministry [asserted](#) that “Russia obtained documents proving that Ukrainian biological laboratories located near Russian borders worked on development of components of biological weapons.” Such assertions deserve the same level of skepticism as U.S. denials: namely, none of it should be believed to be true or false absent evidence. Yet U.S. fact-checkers dutifully and reflexively sided with the U.S. Government to declare such claims “disinformation” and to mock them as QAnon conspiracy theories.

Unfortunately for this propaganda racket masquerading as neutral and high-minded fact-checking, the neocon official long in charge of U.S. policy in Ukraine testified on Monday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and strongly suggested that such claims are, at least in part, true. Yesterday afternoon, Under Secretary of State Victoria Nuland appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Sen. Marco Rubio (R-FL), hoping to debunk growing claims that there are chemical weapons labs in Ukraine, smugly asked Nuland: “Does Ukraine have chemical or biological weapons?”

Rubio undoubtedly expected a flat denial by Nuland, thus providing further “proof” that such speculation is dastardly Fake News emanating from the Kremlin, the CCP and QAnon. Instead, Nuland did something completely uncharacteristic for her, for neocons, and for senior U.S. foreign policy officials: for some reason, she told a version of the truth. Her answer visibly stunned Rubio, who — as soon as he realized the damage she was doing to the U.S. messaging campaign by telling the truth — interrupted her and demanded that she instead affirm that if a biological attack were to occur, everyone should be “100% sure” that it was Russia who did it. Grateful for the life raft, Nuland told Rubio he was right.

But Rubio’s clean-up act came too late. When asked whether Ukraine possesses “chemical or biological weapons,” Nuland did not deny this: at all. She instead — with palpable pen-twirling discomfort and in halting speech, a glaring contrast to her normally cocky style of speaking in obfuscatory State Department officialese — acknowledged: “uh, Ukraine has, uh, biological research facilities.” Any hope to depict such “facilities” as benign or banal was immediately destroyed by the warning she quickly added: “we are now in fact quite concerned that Russian troops, Russian forces, may be seeking to, uh, gain control of [those labs], so we are working with the Ukrainiahhhns [sic] on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach” — [interruption by Sen. Rubio]:

Nuland’s bizarre admission that “Ukraine has biological research facilities” that are dangerous enough to warrant concern that they could fall into Russian hands ironically constituted more decisive evidence of the existence of such programs in Ukraine than what was offered in 2002 and 2003 to corroborate

U.S. allegations about Saddam's chemical and biological programs in Iraq. An actual against-interest confession from a top U.S. official under oath is clearly more significant than Colin Powell's holding up some test tube with an unknown substance inside while he pointed to grainy satellite images that nobody could decipher.

It should go without saying that the existence of a Ukrainian biological "research" program does not justify an invasion by Russia, let alone an attack as comprehensive and devastating as the one unfolding: no more than the existence of a similar biological program under Saddam would have rendered the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq justifiable. But Nuland's confession does shed critical light on several important issues and raises vital questions that deserve answers.

Any attempt to claim that Ukraine's biological facilities are just benign and standard medical labs is negated by Nuland's explicitly grave concern that "Russian forces may be seeking to gain control of" those facilities and that the U.S. Government therefore is, right this minute, "working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces." Russia has its own advanced medical labs. After all, it was one of the first countries [to develop](#) a COVID vaccine, one which *Lancet*, on February 1, 2021, [pronounced](#) was "safe and effective" (even though U.S. officials [pressured multiple countries](#), including Brazil, not to accept any Russian vaccine, while U.S. allies such as Australia [refused for a full year](#) to recognize the Russian COVID vaccine for purposes of its vaccine mandate). The only reason to be "quite concerned" about these "biological research facilities" falling into Russian hands is if they contain sophisticated materials that Russian scientists have not yet developed on their own and which could be used for nefarious purposes — *i.e.*, either advanced biological weapons or dual-use "research" that has the potential to be weaponized.

What is in those Ukrainian biological labs that make them so worrisome and dangerous? And has Ukraine, not exactly known for being a great power with advanced biological research, had the assistance of any other countries in developing those dangerous substances? Is American assistance confined to what Nuland described at the hearing — "working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces" — or did the U.S. assistance extend to the construction and development of the "biological research facilities" themselves?

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Tweets

stated on February 24, 2022

Russia is biological Ukraine is

FACEBOOK FACT-CHECKS



By [Jeff Cercone](#)

February 25, 2022

There are no U contrary to so

PolitiFact, Feb. 25, 2022.

For all the dismissive language used over the last two weeks by self-described “fact-checkers,” it is confirmed that the U.S. has worked with Ukraine, as recently as last year, in the “development of a bio-risk management culture; international research partnerships; and partner capacity for enhanced bio-security, bio-safety, and bio-surveillance measures.” The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine [publicly boasted](#) of its collaborative work with Ukraine “to consolidate and secure pathogens and toxins of security concern and to continue to ensure Ukraine can detect and report outbreaks caused by dangerous pathogens before they pose security or stability threats.”

This joint US/Ukraine biological research is, of course, described by the State Department in the most unthreatening way possible. But that again prompts the question of why the U.S. would be so gravely concerned about benign and common research falling into Russian hands. It also seems very odd, to put it mildly, that Nuland chose to acknowledge and describe the “facilities” *in response to a clear, simple question from Sen. Rubio about whether Ukraine possesses chemical and biological weapons*. If these labs are merely designed to find a cure for cancer or create safety measures against pathogens, why, in Nuland’s mind, would it have anything to do with a biological and chemical weapons program in Ukraine?



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The U.S. Department of Defense's Biological Threat Reduction Program helps partner countries to counter the threat of outbreaks (deliberate and accidental) of dangerous infectious diseases. The program accomplishes this through the development of a bio-risk management culture; international cooperation; and for enhanced bio-security, bio-safety, and bio-surveillance.

Program's priorities in Ukraine are to consolidate and strengthen existing capabilities and to continue to ensure Ukraine can detect and respond to biological threats.

The indisputable reality is that — despite long-standing international conventions banning development of biological weapons — all large, powerful countries conduct research that, at the very least, has the capacity to be converted into biological weapons. The work conducted under the guise of “defensive research” can, and sometimes is, easily converted into the banned weapons themselves. Recall that, [according to the FBI](#), the 2001 anthrax attacks that terrorized the nation came from a U.S. Army Research scientist, Dr. Bruce Ivins, working at the U.S. Army’s infectious disease research lab in Fort Detrick, Maryland. The claim was that the Army was “merely” conducting defensive research to find vaccines and other protections against weaponized anthrax, but to do so, the Army had to *create* highly weaponized anthrax strains, which Ivins then unleashed as a weapon.

A 2011 [PBS Frontline program](#) on those anthrax attacks explained: “in October 2001, Northern Arizona University microbiologist Dr. Paul Keim identified that the anthrax used in the attack letters was the Ames strain, a development he described as ‘chilling’ because that particular strain was developed in U.S. government laboratories.” Speaking to *Frontline* in 2011, Dr. Keim explained why it was so alarming to discover that the U.S. Army had been cultivating such highly lethal and dangerous strains in its lab, on U.S. soil:

We were surprised it was the Ames strain. And it was chilling at the same time, because the Ames strain is a laboratory strain that had been developed by the U.S. Army as a vaccine-challenge strain. We knew that it was highly virulent. In fact, that’s why the Army used it, because it represented a more potent challenge to vaccines that were being developed by the U.S. Army. It wasn’t just some random type of anthrax that you find in nature; it was a laboratory strain, and that was very significant to us, because that was the first hint that this might really be a bioterrorism event.

This lesson about the severe dangers of so-called dual-use research into biological weapons was re-learned over the last two years as a result of the COVID pandemic. While the origins of that virus have not yet been proven with dispositive evidence (though remember, fact-checkers declared early on that it was definitively established that it came from species-jumping and that any suggestion of a lab leak was a “conspiracy theory,” only for the Biden White House in mid-2021 [to admit](#) they did not know the origins and ordered an investigation to determine whether it came from a lab leak), what is certain is that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was [manipulating various coronavirus strains](#) to make them more contagious and lethal. The justification was that doing so is necessary to study how vaccines could be developed, but regardless of intent, cultivating dangerous biological strains has the capacity to kill huge numbers of people. All of this illustrates that research that is classified as “defensive” can easily be converted, deliberately or otherwise, into extremely destructive biological weapons.



REPORT: **False Claims of U.S. Biowarfare Labs in Ukraine Grip QAnon**

REPORT

False Claims of U.S. Biowarfare Labs in Ukraine

The conspiracy theory has been boosted by U.S. diplomats.

By Justin Ling, a journalist based in Toronto.



, Mar. 2, 2022.

At the very least, Nuland's surprising revelation reveals, yet again, just how heavily involved the U.S. Government is and for years has been in Ukraine, on the part of Russia's border which U.S. officials and scholars from across the spectrum have spent decades warning is the most sensitive and vulnerable for Moscow. It was Nuland herself, while working for Hillary Clinton and John Kerry's State Department under President Obama, who was [heavily involved](#) in what some call the 2014 revolution and others call the "coup" that resulted in a change of government in Ukraine from a Moscow-friendly regime to one far more favorable to the EU and the West. All of this took place as the Ukrainian energy company Burisma paid \$50,000 per month not to the son of a Ukrainian official but to Joe Biden's son, Hunter: a reflection of who wielded real power inside Ukraine.

Nuland not only worked for both the Obama and Biden State Departments to run Ukraine policy (and, in many ways, Ukraine itself), but [she also was](#) Vice President Dick Cheney's deputy national security adviser and then President Bush's Ambassador to NATO. She comes from one of America's [most prestigious neocon royal families](#); her husband, Robert Kagan, was a co-founder of the notorious neocon war-mongering group Project for the New American Century, which [advocated](#) regime change in Iraq long before 9/11. It was Kagan, along with liberal icon Bill Kristol, who (next to current editor-in-chief of *The Atlantic* Jeffrey Goldberg), was [most responsible](#) for [the lie](#) that Saddam was working hand-in-hand with Al Qaeda, a lie that played a key role in [convincing Americans to believe](#) that Saddam was personally involved in the planning of 9/11.

That a neocon like Nuland is admired and empowered regardless of the outcome of elections illustrates how unified and in lockstep the establishment wings of both parties are when it comes to questions of war, militarism and foreign policy. Indeed, Nuland's husband, Robert Kagan, was [signaling that neocons would likely support Hillary Clinton for president](#) — doing so in 2014, long before anyone imagined Trump as her opponent — based on the recognition that the Democratic Party was now more hospitable to neocon ideology than the GOP, where Ron Paul and then Trump's neo-isolationism was growing.

You can vote against neocons all you want, but they never go away. The fact that a member of one of the most powerful neocon families in the U.S. has been running Ukraine policy for the U.S. for years — having gone from Dick Cheney to Hillary Clinton and Obama and now to Biden — underscores how little dissent there is in Washington on such questions. It is Nuland's extensive experience in wielding power in Washington that makes her confession yesterday so startling: it is the sort of thing people like her lie about and conceal, not admit. But now that she did admit it, it is crucial that this revelation not be buried and forgotten.

by Glenn Greenwald

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