



United States Mission to the OSCE

Right of Reply to the Russian Federation's CI "On biological programmes and activities of the United States of America in Ukraine"

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Lewis Gitter
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
May 20, 2022

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

We regret, but are not necessarily surprised, Russia has sought again to peddle this preposterous disinformation, as it has done repeatedly in recent months, in this Council, in the FSC, in the UN Security Council and other multilateral forums.

For the record, let me briefly restate the facts regarding the Department of Defense's Cooperative Threat Reduction's (CTR) disease surveillance, biosafety, and biosecurity work in Ukraine:

- DoD's CTR program began its biological work with Ukraine to secure illegal biological weapons left in the Soviet successor states after the USSR fell.
- The CTR program provides training and equipment on biosafety and security to reduce biological threats and support public and veterinary health to reduce the risk of disease outbreaks. Notably, Russia itself accepted DoD CTR support for many years until 2014.
- The OSCE has also conducted biological and chemical security programs, supported by the United States and European Union, in Ukraine in furtherance of UNSCR 1540 implementation.
- There is clearly *no truth* to Russia's accusations. When Russia first raised these false allegations in the UN Security Council, UN Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu confirmed that the UN is not aware of any biological or chemical weapons programs in Ukraine.
- It is Russia, in fact, not Ukraine, that has long maintained a biological weapons program in violation of the Biological Weapons Convention. And it is Russia that has a well-documented history of using chemical weapons in violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Based on these facts, we are left to wonder *why* Russia continues to repeat its patently false accusations. No one gives them any credence as they are an obvious ploy, one among many

invented pretexts to falsely justify its war of choice in Ukraine. Worse yet, Russia's long track record of accusing others of the violations it itself is perpetrating, or plans to perpetrate, raises the possibility that the Kremlin may be laying the predicate for a false flag operation using biological or chemical weapons. *That* would indeed be not only regrettable but reprehensible and would lead to severe consequences, as President Biden has previously underscored.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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