

US undersecretary of state acknowledges there are biological warfare labs in Ukraine

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9 March 2022

On Tuesday, Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland stated before a Senate hearing that “biological research facilities” have been operating in Ukraine, in response to a question from Senator Marco Rubio (Republican of Florida) about the presence of chemical or biological weapons in the country.

While she said nothing about US involvement in the labs, Nuland rapidly shifted her testimony during the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing to efforts by the State Department to “prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces.” She went on, in a carefully orchestrated exchange with Rubio, to say that if there were a biological or chemical weapons attack inside Ukraine, it would “no doubt” be carried out by Russia.

The following is the transcript of the exchange between Rubio and Nuland:

Sen. Marco Rubio: Does Ukraine have chemical or biological weapons?

Victoria Nuland: Ukraine has biological research facilities which, in fact, we’re now quite concerned Russian troops, Russian forces may be seeking to gain control of, so we are working with the Ukrainians on how we can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces should they approach.

Sen. Marco Rubio: I’m sure you’re aware that the Russian propaganda groups are already putting out there all kinds of information about how they have uncovered a plot by the Ukrainians to unleash biological weapons in the country, and with NATO’s coordination.

If there is a biological or chemical weapon

incident or attack inside Ukraine, is there any doubt in your mind that 100% it would be the Russians behind it?

Victoria Nuland: There is no doubt in my mind, senator. And in fact, it is a classic Russian technique to blame the other guy for what they are planning to do themselves.

The extraordinary admission by Nuland about Ukrainian bioweapons labs confirms reports from Moscow that a military biological program was being operated inside the country by the US. The State Department admission also proves that statements by the Pentagon calling the Russian reports “absurd,” and from the office of Ukrainian President Zelensky denying that such programs existed, were entirely false.

A report by Reuters on Wednesday morning said, “Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said evidence of the alleged programme had been uncovered by Russia during what it calls its military operation in Ukraine, which its forces invaded on Feb. 24.”

Reuters reported that Zakharova also said that Russia had “documents showing that the Ukrainian health ministry had ordered the destruction of samples of plague, cholera, anthrax and other pathogens after Feb. 24.” Zakharova said, “We can already conclude that in Ukrainian biological laboratories in direct proximity to the territory of our country, development of components of biological weapons was being carried out.”

Responding to the exposures, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday demanded that the US “give a full account” of biological weapons research that the Russians say was being carried out in Ukraine

with US funding.

Spokesperson for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Zhao Lijian, said, “In particular, the US, as the party that knows these laboratories the best, should publish relevant specific details as soon as possible, including the types of pathogens stored and the research conducted,” in order to ensure the “health and safety of people in Ukraine, the surrounding areas and even around the world.”

Details about the biological weapons facilities in Ukraine were reported by the Russian Defense Ministry on March 6 when Major General Igor Konashenkov alleged that pathogens for deadly diseases for biological warfare were being created in Ukrainian labs that were funded by the Pentagon.

Konashenkov told the Russian news agency TASS, “Obviously, with the start of a special military operation, the Pentagon had serious concerns about disclosing the conduct of secret biological experiments on the territory of Ukraine.”

A damage-control Twitter thread posted by White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki late Wednesday afternoon did not reference Nuland’s congressional testimony but called the Russian and Chinese reports “preposterous” and a “disinformation operation.” Psaki went on to state that the US “is in full compliance with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and does not develop or possess such weapons anywhere.”

The White House press secretary then accused Russia of a “long and well-documented record of using chemical weapons, including in attempted assassinations and poisoning of Putin’s political enemies like Alexey Navalny.” She also wrote that Russia “continues to support the Assad regime in Syria, which has repeatedly used chemical weapons.”

However, the alleged poisoning of Navalny —the leader of the imperialist-backed anti-Putin opposition in Russia—with Novichok in December 2020 was never proven and quickly turned out to be part of an international propaganda campaign aimed at stoking US war preparations against Russia in advance of the inauguration of Biden as president. Meanwhile, documents published by WikiLeaks have exposed the accusations of a Syrian chemical weapons attack in Duoma in 2018 as an elaborate scheme to justify an

assault by the US, Britain and France against the government in Damascus.

Psaki finished her tweet by saying Russia has a “track record of accusing the West of the very violations that Russia itself is perpetrating,” a claim that is thoroughly exposed as false by the Nuland testimony on Tuesday.

Nuland’s devastating revelation, which exposes before the entire world the preparations of US imperialism for war in Ukraine long before Russia invaded the country, has caught the corporate media by surprise. Apparently waiting for their line from the White House, no major American news outlet has reported it yet. Meanwhile, news reports are continuing to call the now verified Russian allegations of biological weapons labs in Ukraine “a false narrative” and “debunked conspiracy theory.”

A *Newsweek* report published at noon on Wednesday says, for example, “In fact, the U.S. Defense Department has never had a biological laboratory in Ukraine.” *Newsweek* also reported that the partnership between the Pentagon and Ukraine Ministry of Health “is part of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program, which began in 1991 with the aim of reducing the threat of weapons of mass destruction following the fall of the Soviet Union.”

The exposure of Pentagon-backed biological weapons development in Ukraine is a warning to the international working class as to what US imperialism is preparing militarily against Russia. Given its decades-long wars of aggression, which have resulted in the deaths of millions in the Middle East and North Africa, there can be no illusions as to the degree of lying, provocation and military violence that the US is prepared to carry out in pursuit of its geostrategic aims.



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