

*Pentagon admits to operating 46 biolabs in Ukraine after months of denial*

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Washington, June 16 (RHC)-- Washington has been urged to come clean over its biolab program in Ukraine after the Department of Defense admitted it has operated 46 biolabs handling dangerous pathogens, after previously dismissing the charges as Russian propaganda.

China has joined calls for United States to explain the role and capacity of the laboratories following the Pentagon's stunning reversal after months of denial.

In March, leaked papers appeared to suggest that its operations in Ukraine were sensitive while Kiev was reportedly blocked from public disclosure about the program.

According to a document signed between the two nations, Ukraine is obliged to transfer the dangerous pathogens to the U.S. Department of Defense for biological research. Those who had raised concerns over the presence of the biolabs have been dismissed as conspiracy theorists and accused of regurgitating Russian disinformation.

But comments made by U.S. Deputy Secretary of state Victoria Nuland in March prompted further suspicions when she appeared to confirm the biological program, saying she feared the labs would "fall into Russian hands."

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said that the U.S. must explain its activities and called on it to stop "single-handedly opposing the establishment of a verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

"As I stressed time and again, the US conducts more bio-military activities than any other country in the world. "Moreover, the U.S. is the only country opposing the establishment of a verification mechanism for the BWC.

"The international community has long had concerns over this. Recently, Russia has further revealed the U.S.'s bio-military activities in Ukraine, and raised clearly that the US has violated the BWC.

"According to the stipulations of the BWC, the US is under an obligation to provide clarifications on Russia's allegation so as to restore the international community's confidence in the U.S.'s compliance," he said.

Washington denies Russian claims that it has experimented on humans after it was alleged that testing of pathogens was carried out on psychiatric patients from Kharkiv. The United States has been accused of engaging in biological warfare in the past.

In the 1980s, the leader of the Cuban Revolution Fidel Castro said that the CIA had introduced swine fever and dengue fever into the country, with a previously unknown strain of the latter created in a laboratory. The aim was to create "the largest number of victims possible," he said.



**Radio Habana Cuba**