

Biological Warfare: Priority to Bioweapons Research over Public Health

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The priorities of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the area of bacteriology have been “catastrophically re-ordered” by emphasizing bioweapons research over non-bioweapons research, a prominent authority states.

Giving priority to bioweapons research at NIH, started under the Bush Administration and continuing under President Obama, “diverts resources from critical public-health and scientific objectives,” says Richard Ebright, Professor of Chemistry and Chemical Biology at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

“The negative impact has been most severe in bacteriology, in which NIH research priorities have been catastrophically re-ordered—with research on bacterial bioweapons receiving more support than research on the top five bacterial causes of death combined—and in which non-bioweapons research has suffered catastrophic losses in resources and personnel,” Ebright said.

Ebright cited the examples of research into two bacterial pathogens: “*Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Staphylococcus aureus*, which claim 40,000 and 20,000 U.S. lives each year, respectively. Each kills more Americans than HIV-AIDS (15,000 U.S. lives) “but neither of these bacterial pathogens is on the list of NIAID Priority Pathogens,” Ebright pointed out. (NIAID, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, is the subdivision of NIH responsible for infectious-disease research.)

“These two killer bacterial pathogens are not in NIAID’s ‘Category A’, with the anthrax bacterium and the smallpox virus, or even in NIAID’s ‘Category B’ or ‘Category C,’” Ebright says. “Something is wrong—very wrong—when NIAID fails to prioritize the top infectious cause of U.S. death,” he said in an email to this reporter.

Other top bacterial causes of U.S. deaths include *Enterococcus faecium/faecalis*, *Clostridium difficile*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. “Of these, only the last is on the NIAID Priority Pathogens list and this pathogen is only in Category C,” Ebright said.

Asked “What is the mood of the scientific life sciences community at this time toward the Administration?” Ebright responded, “Hopeful expectation” but “growing concern that, thus far, there has been more continuity [from the Bush Administration] than change.”

The scope of the government’s involvement in bioweapons research, may be gauged from its estimated expenditure of \$70 billion since 9/11 and the fact that, according to Ebright, more than 400 U.S. institutions are engaged in such work.

Francis Boyle, professor of international law at the University of Illinois, Champaign, said that in constant dollars the \$70 billion “is twice what they spent on the Manhattan Project to develop the A-bomb—ergo, this is a weapons program.”

Boyle, who drafted the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989 for the U.S., said President Bush “turned the NIH into a front organization for biowarfare work,” and “(President) Obama is simply continuing the Bush policies” and is “now even exporting biowarfare capabilities to Third World Countries.”

Asked about the scope of the nation’s biowarfare activities, Boyle estimated there are “about 13,000 death scientists involved...(so) Dr. (Josef) Mengele has arrived on American campuses all over and the universities’ Institutional Review Boards (to review biowarfare research programs) are a joke and a fraud, too.” (Mengele was a German SS officer and physician who, during WWII, performed diabolical experiments on prisoners at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in Poland.)

Boyle said, “There is so much money involved that universities simply are not going to turn down these proposals no matter how reprehensible they might read...”

At his own University of Illinois, Boyle said, previous biowarfare research and development contracts with the Pentagon clearly stated: “We have selected pigs (to gas with biowarfare agents) because they have a circulatory system and a respiratory system similar to human beings.”

Boyle said, “I am sure similar type biowarfare contracts that are clearly anti-human, anti-ethical, illegal and criminal on their face alone have been approved all over (at) American universities by now. Money talks. Ethics walks.”

Sherwood Ross formerly worked for the *Chicago Daily News* and contributed regular columns to *Reuters* and *UPI*. His articles on biowarfare have been published in *The Humanist* and other magazines. Reach him at sherwoodross10@gmail.com

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