

Defense Department Records Reveal U.S. Funding of Anthrax Laboratory Activities in Ukraine

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Judicial Watch announced today it received [345 pages](#) of records from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), a component of the U.S. Department of Defense, revealing that the United States funded anthrax laboratory activities in a Ukrainian biolab in 2018. Dozens of pages are completely redacted, and many others are heavily redacted. The records show over \$11 million in funding for the Ukraine biolabs program in 2019.

The records were obtained in response to a February 28, 2022, Judicial Watch Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency for records regarding the funding of [Black & Veatch](#) involving work of any manner with biosafety laboratories in the country of Ukraine.

Three phases of work are discussed in the records, several of which are indicated to have occurred "on site" at the Ukrainian labs.

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency provided [a report](#) titled "PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] at the [redacted [\(b\)\(3\)](#), which exempts information from disclosure when a foreign government or international organization requests the withholding, or the national security official concerned has specified in regulations that the information's release would have an adverse effect on the U.S. government's ability to obtain similar information in the future] Phase 2 On-the-Job Training Report, December 11-13/December 26, 2018" The Executive Summary includes information regarding "on-site" activities, likely referring to a Ukrainian biolab:

- PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] on-the-job training was conducted for users of the [redacted [\(b\)\(3\)](#)] on December 11-13, under Phase 2 implementation activities, Anthrax Laboratory activities were conducted on December 28, 2018.
- PACS existing configuration and customization were checked jointly with the on-

site PACS Working Group

- Phase 1 implementation activities including progress and current status were reviewed; issues and problems discussed and resolved;
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for PACS use at [redacted (b)(3)] was updated to include Subculturing Operation process - the updated SOP submitted to the on-site Working Group.

The report provides a list of titles of “OJT [on-the-job training] Participants” with all participants names from Black & Veatch redacted, citing exemptions (b)(6) for personal privacy and (b)(3).

- Senior Researcher Laboratory of Anaerobic Infections
- Leading Researcher Laboratory of Anaerobic Infections
- Senior Researcher Laboratory of Anaerobic Infections
- Researcher Laboratory of Anaerobic Infections
- Leading Veterinarian Laboratory of Anaerobic Infections
- Senior Researcher Laboratory of Bacterial Animal Diseases
- Head of Anthrax Laboratory
- Researcher Anthrax Laboratory
- Senior Research Scientist Laboratory of Mycotoxicology
- Leading Veterinarian Laboratory of Mycotoxicology
- Junior Researcher Laboratory of Leptospirosis
- Laboratory Assistant Neuroinfection Laboratory
- Research Scientist Sector of International Relationships and Geoinformation

A section titled “Future Activities” notes: “Phase 3 implementation agreed for March 2019.”

Included in the records is an [Order for Supplies or Services](#) dated August 1, 2019, is issued by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency to Black and Veatch Special Projects Corp. The total amount of the contract award is \$11,289,142.00. The order contains approximately 35 contract line items set forth in a statement of work (SOW), dated March 5, 2019, titled: “Electronic Integrated Disease Surveillance (EIDSS) and Pathogen Asset Control (PACS) Implementation” The statement of work, consisting of 24 pages, was not provided, nor was there an explanation for the withholding.

A [report](#) titled “PACS [Pathogen Asset Control] Implementation at the [redacted (b)(3)]. Phase 3 On-the-Job Training Report, November 28-29.2018” states in its Executive Summary:

- B&V has completed the final stage of PACS implementation at the [redacted (b)(3)]. The site has been fully commissioned in operations of PACS functionality.
- PACS on-the-job training and on-site activities were conducted for users on November 28-29, 2018 under Phase 3 implementation activities
- PACS existing configuration and customization were checked jointly with the on-site PACS Working Group
- Phase 2 implementation activities were reviewed; issues and problems discussed and resolved;

A [report](#) titled “PACS [Pathogen Asset Control] Implementation at the [redacted (b)(3)]. Phase 3 On-the-Job Training Report, April 3-5, 2019” has its Executive Summary and other

portions redacted, citing [FOIA exemptions](#) (b)(4) trade secrets, (b)(5) interagency or intra-agency communications and/or attorney-client privilege.

The Defense Threat Reduction Agency also provided [a 2018 report](#) titled “PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] Implementation Plan at [redacted (b)(3)]. Phase 2 On-the-Job Training Report, September 25-27, 2018.” The Executive Summary includes: “PACS on-the-job training was conducted for users of the [redacted (b)(3)] on September 25-27, 2018, under Phase 2 implementation activities.”

A list of “OJT [on-the-job-training] Participants” from contractor Black & Veatch includes job descriptions but all names have been redacted through exemptions [\(b\)\(6\)](#) personal privacy and [\(b\)\(3\)](#). Some of those job descriptions include:

- Head of Laboratory Virology
- Department of Molecular Diagnostics and Control
- Researcher of Pigs Diseases Research Laboratory
- Scientist of Laboratory of Virology
- Department of Avian Diseases
- Researcher of Department of Avian Diseases
- Laboratory for Biosafety, Quality Management
- Engineer of the Laboratory for Biosafety, Quality Management
- Laboratory of Biotechnology
- Researcher of the Laboratory of Biotechnology
- Head of the Brucellosis Laboratory
- Senior Researcher of the Brucellosis Laboratory
- Head of the Molecular Diagnostics and Control
- Head of the Tuberculosis Laboratory
- Researcher of Tuberculosis Laboratory
- Researcher of the Laboratory of Virology

The report also contains a section titled “Future Activities:”

PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] users to continue with material registration, moving and destruction operations.

PACS users to reflect the process of Subculturing in PACS.

B & V to update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to include the Subculture operations process.

[Redacted (b)(3)] to perform check of PACS interface and provide feedback (if any).

Phase 3 implementation agreed for December 2018.

A December 19-21, 2018, Pathogen Asset Control System [report](#) begins with an Executive Summary that states: “B & V has completed the final stage of PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] implementation at the Institute of Experimental and Clinical Veterinary Medicine of the National Academy Agrarian Sciences (NAAS) of the Ukraine. The site has been fully commissioned in all operations of PACS functionality.”

In [a report](#) titled “PACS Implementation Plan at the [redacted (b)(3)]” has the subtitle

“Phase 3 On-the-Job Training Report, October 30 – 31, 2018 / November 14, 2018” The Executive Summary provides in part:

B & V has completed the final stage of PACS implementation at the [redacted (b)(3)]. The site has been fully commissioned in all operations of PACS functionality.

PACS on-the-job training and on-site activities were conducted for users on October 30 – 31, 2018, under Phase 3 implementation activities. Virology Department “activities” were conducted on November 14.

A section of [the order](#) titled “Special Contract Requirements” cites the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act and states the contractor “shall not engage in activities that incur expenditures in the Russian Federation, such as project management activities, procurement and shipping activities, travel or direct and indirect cost incurrences.” The contractor may, however, procure Russian-origin equipment from a Russian or non-Russian vendor located outside of Russia.

The records include [10 reports](#) titled “Report of Transfer of U.S. Government Property Ownership.” between the Defense Threat Agency and the [redacted (b)(3)]. All of the property listed in the reports is redacted, citing [exemptions \(b\)\(3\)](#) and [\(b\)\(6\)](#). The total value of the property is \$20,293.05

The U.S. Embassy in Ukraine [claims](#) the U.S. Department of Defense’s Biological Threat Reduction Program is purely for bio-threat reduction:

The U.S. Department of Defense’s Biological Threat Reduction Program collaborates with partner countries to counter the threat of outbreaks (deliberate, accidental, or natural) of the world’s most dangerous infectious diseases. The program accomplishes its bio-threat reduction mission through development of a bio-risk management culture; international research partnerships; and partner capacity for enhanced bio-security, bio-safety, and bio-surveillance measures. The Biological Threat Reduction Program’s priorities in Ukraine are 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.

“These new documents shed needed light on U.S. involvement in the management and handling of pathogens in Ukrainian biolabs,” said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton.

On March 8, 2022, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland [admitted](#) to the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee: “Ukraine has biological research facilities, which in fact we are now quite concerned that Russian forces may be seeking to gain control of, so we are working with the Ukrainians on how they can prevent any of those research materials from falling into the hands of Russian forces, should they approach.”

On March 26, 2022, the *New York Post* reported that [Hunter Biden](#) helped secure funds for a U.S. biolab contractor in Ukraine.

According to a webpage expunged from the [website of the State Department](#):

PACS [Pathogen Asset Control System] was first installed in Ukraine in test mode in November 2009 at the Interim Central Reference Laboratory of the Especially Dangerous Pathogens (ICRL). Since then, Sanitary-Epidemiological Department (SED) of the Medical

Command of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense received four mobile laboratories from DTRA with the goal of reinforcing the system of epidemiological surveillance in the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

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