

Ebola: Are U.S. Bioweapons Labs the Solution, or the Problem?

By [Institute for Public Accuracy](#)

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On Friday, the New York Times published the article "[White House to Cut Funding for Risky Biological Study](#)," which states: "Prompted by controversy over dangerous research and recent laboratory accidents, the White House announced Friday that it would temporarily halt all new funding for experiments that seek to study certain infectious agents by making them more dangerous." The piece quotes Richard H. Ebright, "a molecular biologist and bioweapons expert at Rutgers University, [who has] argued that the long history of accidental releases of infectious agents from research labs made such work extremely risky and unwise to perform in the first place. Dr. Ebright called Friday's announcement 'an important, albeit overdue, step.'" See USA Today from Aug. 17: "[Hundreds of Bioterror Lab Mishaps Cloaked in Secrecy](#)."

MERYL NASS, M.D., [merylnass at gmail.com](mailto:merylnass@gmail.com), [@NassMeryl](#)

Nass writes at the [Anthrax Vaccine blog](#). She has debunked government claims from early on in the Ebola crisis, including the slowness of the response in Africa and the notion that U.S. hospitals were prepared. Her most recent post is "[Is This A New, More Virulent Ebola?](#)" She also suggests "examining the possibility of converting the excess BL4 labs to treatment centers for Ebola."

FRANCIS BOYLE, [fboyle at illinois.edu](mailto:fboyle@illinois.edu)

Professor at the University of Illinois College of Law, Boyle drafted the U.S. Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989, which is the U.S. domestic implementing legislation for the Biological Weapons Convention. His books include *Biowarfare and Terrorism*.

He said today: "If, as some in the Liberian press are claiming, this outbreak of Ebola is from one of the labs in west Africa run by the CDC and Tulane University, it could be an unprecedented human disaster. That could mean it was GMOed into a 'Fluebola.' Recall that the 2001 weaponized anthrax attacks were traced to a U.S. government lab. It's incredibly odd that this outbreak occurred 1,000 miles from past outbreaks and it is clearly more easily transmissible.

"Scientists like Yoshihiro Kawaoka at the University of Wisconsin have been 'researching' Ebola for years. Since the anthrax attacks, some \$79 billion has been spent. But we still don't have a vaccine ready to protect us. These labs have actually spent government money, including from the National Institutes of Health, to make viruses more deadly. The work done at these labs shouldn't be curtailed or temporarily suspended as the administration seems to be talking about, but stopped. This work is criminal. It violates the Biological Weapons Anti-Terrorism Act of 1989, which I wrote. It was passed unanimously by both Houses of Congress and states:

“Whoever knowingly develops, produces, stockpiles, transfers, acquires, retains, or possesses any biological agent, toxin, or delivery system for use as a weapon, or knowingly assists a foreign state or any organization to do so, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned for life or any term of years, or both. There is extraterritorial Federal jurisdiction over an offense under this section committed by or against a national of the United States.’

“After the law was passed, the government has claimed that it’s not violating it because it is creating these more deadly viruses to help protect against them should they develop elsewhere. It’s a ridiculous argument to get around the blanket prohibition in the law. This policy has been a catastrophe waiting to happen — a statistical certainty.”

BARRY KISSIN, [barrykissin at hotmail.com](mailto:barrykissin@hotmail.com)

Kissin is a researcher, lawyer and activist in Frederick, Maryland, where Fort Detrick, a major facility of the United States Army Medical Command installation, is based. He has closely monitored the expansion of the facility. He said today: “The fear is that the government is doing things in the biolabs in west Africa that it might be reluctant to do at Fort Detrick and other facilities inside the U.S.”

In 2010, Kissin [wrote a piece that noted](#): “The [Frederick] *News-Post* has published articles that reflect Fort Detrick has already aerosolized plague, and looks forward to a new facility, only recently announced, that plans on aerosolizing Ebola. Why in the world would we be aerosolizing plague and Ebola? The official answer is that this is necessary to the development of our defenses. Left out of the answer is the plain fact that these purported defenses are against ghastly threats that we ourselves are originating.”

Earlier in 2010, the *Frederick News-Post* reported in “[New facility to test drugs, vaccines for FDA approval](#)” that “George Ludwig, civilian deputy principal assistant for research and technology at Fort Detrick, said the project will represent a new level of research there. ... Ludwig said researchers at the facility will likely start out working on vaccines for filoviruses such as Ebola and Marburg, as well as new anthrax vaccines. ... The facility will have the capability to produce viruses in aerosolized form that would simulate a potential biological attack on the test animals. Ludwig said aerosol is the means of exposure researchers are most concerned with given its implications to battlefield and homeland defense.” [This particular facility was never built.]

See from the Global Security Newswire: “[Obama Seeks \\$260M Boost for Protecting African Disease Labs](#)” from 2011, which notes: “The Obama administration has requested \$260 million in fiscal 2012 funding to bolster protective measures at African research sites that house lethal disease agents, the *Examiner* reported on Sunday.” The piece noted they “hold potential biological-weapon agents such as anthrax, Ebola and Rift Valley fever.” From Vice in 2013: “[Why the U.S. Is Building a High-Tech Bubonic Plague Lab in Kazakhstan.](#)”

See *Guardian* piece from earlier this year: “[Scientists condemn ‘crazy, dangerous’ creation of deadly airborne flu virus](#)” about the work of Yoshihiro Kawaoka at the University of Wisconsin, who has worked on Ebola and reconstituted the Spanish Flu, which killed over 50 million people in 1918.” The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* just ran a positivity piece on Kawaoka on Oct. 17: “[UW-Madison scientist Kawaoka on front lines in fight against Ebola.](#)”

See overview article from 2007 from in *The Humanist*: “[America the Beautiful’s Germ Warfare Rash.](#)”

See 2006 piece in the *Washington Post*: "[The Secretive Fight Against Bioterror](#)," which states: "The government is building a highly classified facility to research biological weapons, but its closed-door approach has raised concerns. ... "If we saw others doing this kind of research, we would view it as an infringement of the bioweapons treaty,' said Milton Leitenberg, a senior research scholar and weapons expert at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy. 'You can't go around the world yelling about Iranian and North Korean programs — about which we know very little — when we've got all this going on.'"

See "[Russia Rejects Bioweapons Talk in U.S. Congress as 'Propaganda'](#)" from May 14, 2014. The piece states: "Russia issued the remarks in reaction to a hearing of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe, where University of Maryland senior scholar Milton Leitenberg said the existence of a Russian biological-arms program cannot be ruled out because Moscow does not permit outside access to key facilities of concern. According to the ministry, 'It is surprising that certain representatives of the U.S. establishment continue demanding unilateral access to the Russian biological facilities amid the U.S. refusal from such a fair and clear [verification] mechanism. Such demands are inappropriate and unacceptable.'"

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