



# Meet the Americans coordinating bioweapons research in Ukraine labs

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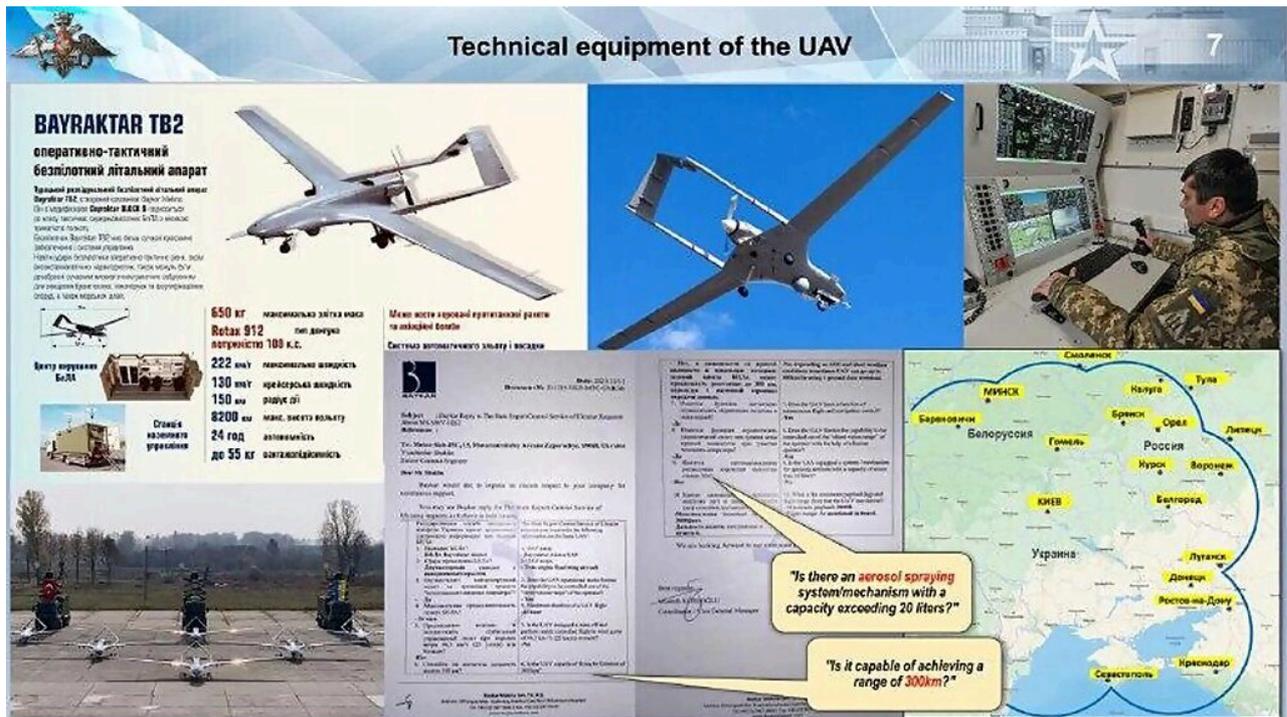


Amid its ongoing special operation in Ukraine, Russian forces discovered US-operated biolabs in the country carrying out dangerous pathogen research. While Washington initially tried to deny their existence, they later confirmed it, but claimed the labs' activities were unremarkable.

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Ukraine, including correspondences between American financier [Hunter Biden](#) - the son of US President Joe Biden - and figures involved in biological research in Ukraine, which an [investment firm](#) of his helped to bankroll.

The documents revealed an intent to create a "Central Depository of Especially Dangerous Microorganisms in Kiev," according to Russian MoD spokesperson Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, as well as ways to distribute biological agents via drone.



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Russia's MoD releases info on US involvement in Ukraine's bioweapons research

The emails revealed the names of several American figures central to the biological research projects from the firms Metabiota and Black & Veatch, as well as officials from the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA). Those named include:

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**US Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) activity in Ukraine** 3



**Dr. Robert Pope**  
DTRA Director  
2017 to 2020

Previously served in the US Air Force. He held various positions at the US Air Force European Command (USAFE), US Central Command (USCC), Pentagon. Participated in the development of radiochemical procedures for monitoring international treaties in the field of nuclear weapons (Air Force Technical Application Center)





**Dr. Rhys M. Williams**  
DTRA Director  
since 2020

Previously, he was DTRA's Director of Development, Test and Evaluation. He led the Department of Defence's program to develop capabilities to detect, locate and neutralize foreign WMD and improvised explosive devices. He served as Assistant Deputy Administrator for Nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) of the U.S. Department of Energy.



**Joanna Wintrol**  
Head of DTRA and all DTRA projects in Ukraine until 2021

Provided overall oversight for US biological programs in Ukraine. Moved to Chemical Security and Elimination (CSE) in early 2021.

The DTRA project manager in Ukraine is now Thomas Hatfield.

**Monitoring of projects implementation :**

- UP-2 Project** "Mapping of highly infectious diseases in Ukraine"
- UP-4 Project** "Risk assessment of particularly dangerous pathogens transmitted by birds in Ukraine during migration"
- UP-8 Project** "Spread of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever virus and hantaviruses in Ukraine and the potential need for differential diagnosis of patients with suspected leptospirosis"



U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency

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## Robert Pope

Pope was deputy director of operations, readiness and exercises at the DTRA from 2017 until 2020. He previously held various positions at US Air Force European Command (USAFE), US Central Command (USCC), and the Pentagon. Pope participated in the development of radiochemical procedures for monitoring international treaties in the field of nuclear weapons (Air Force Technical Application Center). The published emails revealed a correspondence between Pope and Ukraine's acting health minister between 2016 and 2019, American-born Ulana Suprun, who went to Ukraine to [participate in the US-backed coup](#) in 2014.

## Rhys M. Williams

Williams took over for Pope as acting DTRA director in 2020, having previously been the agency's director of development, test and

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Deputy Administrator for Nonproliferation at the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) of the US Department of Energy, the organization responsible for the country's nuclear weapons arsenal.

## Joanna Wintrol

Wintrol [headed](#) DTRA projects in Ukraine until 2021 at the US Embassy in Kiev's Defense Threat Reduction Office. Emails published by the MoD revealed she directly supervised experiments with deadly pathogens, including **the UP-2 Project** for "mapping highly infectious diseases in Ukraine," including anthrax; **the UP-4 Project**, described as a "risk assessment of particularly dangerous pathogens transmitted by birds in Ukraine during migration"; **the UP-8 Project** studying "spread of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus and hantaviruses in Ukraine and the potential need for differential diagnosis of patients with suspected leptospirosis. Previously released [documents](#) showed she also oversaw **Project P-782**, conducting research into the transmission of diseases through bats.

Wintrol moved to Chemical Security and Elimination (CSE) in early 2021. According to a [DTRA publication](#), CSE was formerly known as the Chemical Weapons Elimination (CWE) program and the Chemical Weapons Destruction (CWD) program. The effort "started in 1992 to build the capacity of the states of the Former Soviet Union (FSU) to reduce the threat from chemical weapons (CW) by securing and eliminating CW stockpiles, chemical research capabilities, and production facilities, while also redirecting scientists to peaceful purposes," the agency said.

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**Black&Veatch company activity in Ukraine**

**Steven L. Edwards**  
Chief Executive Officer of Black & Veatch  
Formerly Chief Operating Officer of Black & Veatch. He has been with the company since 1978. Graduated from the University of Missouri with a degree in Electrical Engineering

**Lance Lippencott**  
Project Manager, Ukrainian Area  
Manager, Biological Project Implementation Coordinator

**David Mustra**  
Biosafety Recruitment Manager in Ukraine  
Biosurveillance and control manager  
R&D Manager at Metabiota

Partnership agreement for the UP-1 project

Partnership Agreement for the UP-2 project

SSU Department in Kherson region report

Letter from Lance Lippencott to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence on the extension of the UP-8 project

"...a potential threat to the epidemiological and epizootic situation in our country has recently come to light as a result of DTRA's intentions through Black & Veatch to establish control over the functioning of Ukrainian microbiological laboratories that conduct research into particularly dangerous pathogens that can be used to create or upgrade new types of biological weapons"

Black&Veatch Special Projects Corp.

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## Steven L. Edwards

Since 2013, Edwards has been the CEO of American engineering firm Black & Veatch, a longtime [contractor for the Pentagon](#) used for a variety of construction tasks. He has been with the company since 1978 and was formerly its Chief Operating Officer. Black & Veatch was long known to be working on Pentagon projects in Ukraine, but the documents seized by Russian forces earlier this month [revealed the firm's job](#) in overseeing biological programs there, **including the UP-8 project previously mentioned**, studying Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, leptospirosis and hantaviruses.

## Lance Lippencott

He has been the project manager in Ukraine for Black & Veatch since 2011 and its biological project coordinator. In August 2021, [he told the Kansas City Business Journal](#) that his work on airborne

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## Academy at West Point.

In one of the documents published by the MoD, a report from the Security Service of Ukraine's Kherson region referred to "a potential threat to the epidemiological and epizootic situation in our country that has recently come to light as a result of DTRA's intentions through Black & Veatch to **establish control over the functioning of Ukrainian microbiological laboratories** that conduct research into particularly dangerous pathogens that can be used to create or upgrade new types of biological weapons."

Another document from Lippencott to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense concerns the extension of **the UP-8 project** mentioned above.

## David Mustra

"Issues of biomonitoring and transfer of information were supervised by David Mustra, who is closely associated with another Pentagon contractor, Metabiota," Konashenkov said. "Previously, he led military bio-projects in Ukraine and Eastern Europe as part of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program."

Mustra was the company's biosafety recruitment manager in Ukraine, its biosurveillance and control managers, and the head of Metabiota's research and development.

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With a doctorate in microbiology from UMass Amherst, Guttieri was the Executive Vice President at Metabiota from 2014 until 2019, and was previously the vice president of its Science & Technology Administration. She is now the lead scientist at Labyrinth Global Health.

In Ukraine, Guttieri was the integrator of research projects for the US biology program and supervised the execution of biological projects related to the **research of animals as vectors of disease**.

## Nita Madhav

Madhav has been the CEO of Metabiota since 2019. She specializes in epidemiology and pandemics and has a PhD in Public Health. However, according to the Russian MoD, there was no information in the documents about her supervising any specific biological programs in Ukraine.

## Scott Thornton

Thornton was Metabiota's senior microbiologist and laboratory start-up coordinator between 2006 and 2016. He previously spent 20 years in the US Navy, where he worked as a research microbiologist and head of the Navy's Threat Assessment Department. [According to his CV](#), Thornton did his work at secret facilities, including one in Cairo, Egypt, and **"conducted research on disease agents of military relevance, especially enteric pathogens."**

In Ukraine, Thornton advised local staff on highly dangerous pathogens as well as other epidemic disease related issues in DTRA projects, and coordinated the upgrade of reference laboratories in Ukraine to [biosafety level 3 \(BSL-3\)](#), which are used to study infectious agents or toxins that may be transmitted through the air and cause potentially lethal infections

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- [Russia's security chief: Biolabs conducting 'inhuman experiments' in Ukraine make US 'worthy successor of Third Reich'](#)
- [Dilyana Gaytandzhieva: Pentagon biolabs in Ukraine and the threat of ethnic bio-warfare](#)
- [US tried to fund bio-labs in Ukraine as early as 2005, records show](#)
- [Deleted web pages show Obama led an effort to build a Ukraine-based biolab handling 'especially dangerous pathogens'](#)

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