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# Russian Lawmaker Blames U.S. for Flu Epidemic

By Anna Dolgov

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A State Duma lawmaker has blamed Russia's flu epidemic on the United States, and said he would ask government and security agencies to take "serious" action in response, the Russian News Service reported Tuesday.

Communist lawmaker Vadim Solovyov said "Americans have for a long time waged and continue to wage an active bacteriological war against Cuba, when they unleashed plague on Cuba from their base, and I don't deny that their technologies are very seriously developed," the report said.

The current "wave" of flu in Russia has "come from Ukraine," Solovyov was quoted as saying. "I don't exclude [the possibility] that it was Americans who made a rush in this situation, and are starting this kind of war against our country," he said.

Earlier on Tuesday, Russia's consumer rights watchdog Rospotrebnadzor declared that there was an epidemic of flu and acute respiratory viral infection in Moscow, according to a decree

by the capital's chief sanitary inspector, Yelena Andreyeva, cited by the state-run TASS news agency.

This followed the consumer watchdog's announcement of a flu epidemic in St. Petersburg last week, and the introduction of a flu quarantine regime, banning mass gatherings and shutting down schools, among other measures, in a number of Russian regions, the Russian News Service reported.

Twenty-four people have died from the flu in Russia this week, TASS has reported.

Solovyov claimed he had a solution — bringing his chosen culprit, the United States, to account to stop the viral outbreak.

“I think the time has come for us to send a request to the Health Ministry, and the Prosecutor General's Office, and possibly to the FSB [Federal Security Service], so that they do some serious work through their channels, because this goes beyond all acceptable norms,” Solovyov was quoted as saying by the Russian News Service.

Since Moscow's relations with the West have grown fetid following the start of the Ukraine crisis a couple of years ago, ordinary Russians and government officials have blamed any and all troubles plaguing the country – from dwindling wages and declining living standards to reports of human rights violations – on the United States.

In one of the latest announcements, Russia's Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev said in an interview with the Moskovsky Komsomolets newspaper published Tuesday that the United States wants to dissolve Russia so it can gain access to its resources.

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