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# Russia Accuses U.S. of Financing Bio Weapons Research in Ukraine

By AFP

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Russian Defense Ministry Spokesman Igor Konashenkov. **mil.ru**

Russia on Thursday accused the United States of funding research into the development of biological weapons in Ukraine, as Moscow stepped up its campaign to gain control of key Ukrainian cities.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a televised briefing that "the purpose of this — and other Pentagon-funded biological research in Ukraine — was to establish a mechanism for the stealthy spread of deadly pathogens."

Konashenkov claimed the ministry had obtained documents detailing U.S. military-biological activities in Ukraine, including on the transfer of Ukrainians' biomaterial abroad.

He said Washington "planned to carry out research on bird, bat and reptile pathogens," as well as on African swine fever and anthrax.

"Bio-laboratories set up and funded in Ukraine have been experimenting with bat coronavirus samples," Konashenkov added.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in a press conference later Thursday following talks with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba repeated the claim, saying Washington had funded development of biological weapons in Ukraine.

"The Americans carried out this work in complete secrecy. Just like how they work in other former Soviet states, creating their military-biological labs right along Russia's borders," he said.

Both Washington and Kyiv have denied the existence of laboratories intended to produce biological weapons in the country, which has faced a Russian assault by tens of thousands of troops since Feb. 24.

Russia has repeatedly accused the United States of secretly carrying out biological experiments in a lab in Georgia, another former Soviet republic, which like Ukraine aims to join NATO and the European Union.

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