



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 31, 2023

Case No. FL-2023-00013

Reed Rubinstein
America First Legal Foundation
611 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, #231
Washington, DC 20003

Dear Mr. Rubinstein:

As we noted in our letter dated February 28, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified an additional 47 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined that 47 records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Kevin Bell, U.S. Department of Justice Trial Attorney, at kevin.k.bell@usdoj.gov and (202) 305-8613. Please refer to the case number, FL-2023-00013, and the civil action number, 22-cv-03386, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diamonece Hickson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

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The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:
- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ARMSEXP | Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c) |
| CIA PERS/ORG | Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g) |
| EXPORT CONTROL | Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c) |
| FS ACT | Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004 |
| INA | Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f) |
| IRAN | Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505 |
- (b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Personal privacy information
- (b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:
- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

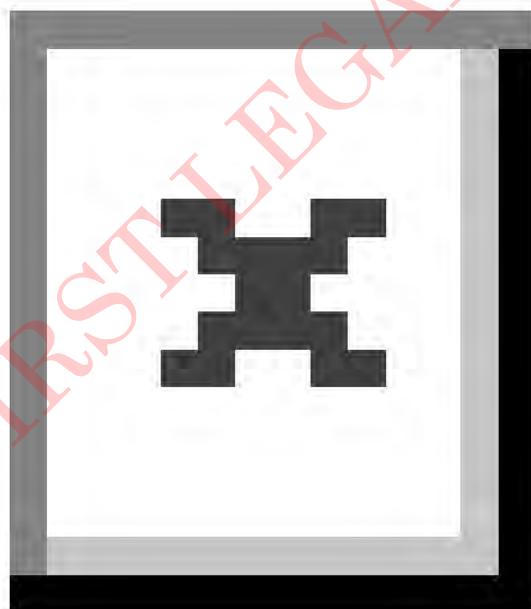
- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

From: Reuters <account@reuters.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Your account is now confirmed

Date: Thu, 3 Nov 2022 13:53:30 +0000



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Sender: Reuters <account@reuters.com>

Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: What's Next Retail with Jeni Britton Bauer, Dionna Dorsey, and Philip Krim

Date: Fri, 30 Apr 2021 17:33:19 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Watch Now: Inside the Story of Watergate with legendary reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein

Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2022 23:00:52 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: [REDACTED]@state.gov>

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From: Katherine O'Hearn <washpostlive@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: WashPost Invite: In-person entrepreneurship event with Isabella Casillas Guzman, Theresia Gouw and more, 9/13 [Response Requested]
Date: Tue, 6 Sep 2022 18:03:17 +0000

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

Sender: Katherine O'Hearn <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: Kristine Coratti Kelly <washpostlive@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: WashPost Invite: In-person entrepreneurship event with Heather Boushey and Steve Case, 6/21 [Response Requested]
Date: Mon, 13 Jun 2022 15:02:32 +0000

Sender: Kristine Coratti Kelly <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: "Nakashima, Ellen" (b)(6)@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Upcoming GEC release
Date: Wed, 14 Oct 2020 16:09:23 +0000

Hi, (b)(6)

I'm a national security reporter with The Washington Post covering election security, among other things. I understand the GEC is doing a release of more declassified Russian disinformation soon. Can you give me a call about that?

Many thanks,

Ellen

(b)(6) cell

Ellen Nakashima

National Security reporter

The Washington Post

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/ellen-nakashima/>

Sender: "Nakashima, Ellen" (b)(6)@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Tues. at 4:00 p.m. ET: The startup boom with AOL Co-Founder Steve Case, White House Council of Economic Advisers member Heather Boushey and more

Date: Mon, 20 Jun 2022 20:41:38 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Tomorrow at 9:00 a.m. ET: Women business founders and SBA Administrator on growth of minority-owned businesses

Date: Mon, 12 Sep 2022 15:14:20 +0000

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From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Today at 9:00 a.m. ET: Women business founders and SBA Administrator on growth of minority-owned businesses

Date: Tue, 13 Sep 2022 11:18:53 +0000

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From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Today at 4:00 p.m. ET: AOL Co-Founder Steve Case, White House Council of Economic Advisers member Heather Boushey and more
Date: Tue, 21 Jun 2022 15:14:58 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Today at 1:30 p.m. ET: Inflation, supply chain disruptions and reinventing small business
Date: Wed, 13 Jul 2022 12:11:25 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6) [redacted]@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Thurs. at 12:30pm ET: COVID-19 impact on minority-owned businesses with Rep. Judy Chu, US Black Chambers President

Date: Wed, 21 Jul 2021 20:51:54 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Thurs. at 12:00 p.m. ET: Business owners on navigating the pandemic and country's racial reckoning
Date: Wed, 1 Dec 2021 20:05:19 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
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From: NYTimes.com <ordercs@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: The log in link you requested is enclosed
Date: Wed, 7 Dec 2022 01:10:48 +0000



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To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
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Date: Wed, 28 Dec 2022 14:44:16 +0000



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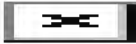
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From: NYTimes.com <ordercs@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: The log in link you requested is enclosed
Date: Fri, 26 Feb 2021 18:41:45 +0000



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Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: The New York Times <carefeedback@nytimes.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Tell us about your recent experience with Customer Care

Date: Tue, 11 Jan 2022 22:17:00 +0000



To help us improve our tools and services, we invite you to share feedback about a recent action you took on your Account on January 11.

The survey takes approximately 1 minute to complete. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and used in accordance with [The New York Times Privacy Policy](#).

Thank you,

Customer Care
The New York Times

[Complete the Survey](#)

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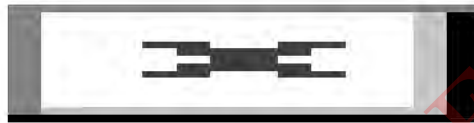
Sender: The New York Times <carefeedback@nytimes.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Opal Barclay (b)(6)@ap.org>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Stay ahead with our lightning-fast API
Date: Wed, 10 Feb 2021 09:01:05 -0600



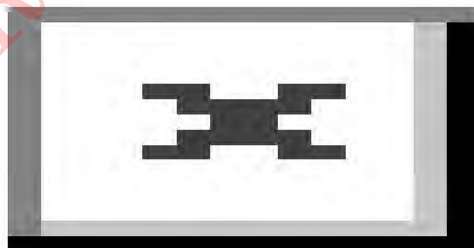
[View in browser](#)



A new way to access data

API for AP Planner is now available so you can save time, plan, organize and update events data straight from your CMS.

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Manage data easier

- Publish content from your CMS automatically.
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- Years of historical archive of planned events also available.

View our extensive data streams in one cohesive way and **build a strategy to fit with your workflow.**

Stay secure

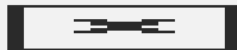
Security should be the last thing on your mind. Using an API provides you with an extra layer of security due to the unique authentication, enabling you to access the secure endpoints that deliver your CMS data.

Schedule a free demo

If you'd like to learn more about how you can begin using our API service, feel free to reach out to me, Opal Barclay. Reply directly to this email or at Obarclay@ap.org.



Opal Barclay
AP Planner Specialist



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Sender: Opal Barclay (b)(6)@ap.org>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: "Shesgreen, Deirdre" (b)(6)@usatoday.com>
To: GECPress@state.gov <GECPress@state.gov>
Subject: Russian disinformation/vaccines
Date: Mon, 8 Mar 2021 16:16:07 +0000

Hi,

I'm a reporter with USA TODAY, and I'm hoping to confirm the Wall Street Journal's reporting on Russia's efforts to undermine confidence in the COVID vaccines. Would someone be available to call me today on this? I can be reached at (b)(6)

Thanks,
Deirdre

Deirdre Shesgreen
Foreign Affairs Reporter
USA TODAY
Cell/Signal/WhatsApp: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@usatoday.com
@dshesgreen



Sender: "Shesgreen, Deirdre" (b)(6)@usatoday.com>
Recipient: GECPress@state.gov <GECPress@state.gov>

From: Reuters <account@reuters.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Reuters.com Password Reset
Date: Mon, 28 Nov 2022 12:36:30 +0000



Reset password

Reset your password by following the link. This link will expire after 24 hours.

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Sender: Reuters <account@reuters.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Customer Care <help@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Response to Ticket #[2512669] Re: RE: WashPost Invite: In-person climate change event with Sen. Brian Schatz, Patagonia CEO Ryan Gellert and more, 9/20 [Response Requested]

Date: Fri, 16 Sep 2022 18:44:48 +0000

- Please type your reply above this line -

Charles (Washington Post Customer Care)

Sep 16, 2022, 2:44 PM EDT

Thank you for letting us know.

(b)(6)

Sep 16, 2022, 2:07 PM EDT

Katherine,

Thank you for the invitation. Unfortunately, I have another obligation immediately adjacent to the time-slot and cannot make it work. Please keep me in mind for future events.

Best,

(b)(6) senior adviser, GEC Iran Team, All Native Group contractor, (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: Katherine O'Hearn <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Sent: Friday, September 16, 2022 2:02 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: WashPost Invite: In-person climate change event with Sen. Brian Schatz, Patagonia CEO Ryan Gellert and more, 9/20 [Response Requested]

Hello,

I'm following up on the invitation I sent for Washington Post Live's upcoming event, **Protecting Our Planet**, which will be held on Tuesday, September 20 at The Post's headquarters.

In order to reserve your seat, please make sure that you register [here](#) by Friday, September 16.

We hope to see you at the event this Tuesday.

Kathy and Marisa

Katherine O'Hearn
Executive Producer
Washington Post Live

Marisa Fariña
Managing Director
Washington Post Live

Washington Post Live would like to offer you an exclusive invitation to **Protecting Our Planet**, where speakers such as **Sen. Brian Schatz** (D-Hawaii), Patagonia CEO **Ryan Gellert**, Black Girl Environmentalist founder **Wanjiku "Wawa" Gatheru**, Climate Cardinals executive director **Sophia Kianni** and Novoloop CEO **Miranda Wang** join Washington Post Live in person for a series of conversations about the human, environmental and economic consequences of climate change and the efforts to combat them.

In a segment presented by SK Group, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of SK Growth Opportunities Corporation **Richard Chin** discusses the importance of sustainable business strategies and investment across the clean energy landscape. This segment will explore how SK is investing in next-generation clean energy technologies, products, and services to enhance sustainable growth and value for all stakeholders.

The event is at The Post's D.C. headquarters and invitations are limited, but we would like to give you priority access. **Please [RSVP here](#) to reserve your spot by Friday, September 16.**

Date & Time

Tuesday, September 20, 2022
Doors open for coffee reception at 8:15 a.m. ET.
Program 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. ET

Location

The Washington Post
1301 K Street, NW

Speakers

Sen. Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii)
Ryan Gellert, CEO, Patagonia Works and Patagonia, Inc.
Wanjiku "Wawa" Gatheru, Climate Justice Advocate & Founder, Black Girl Environmentalist
Sophia Kianni, Founder & Executive Director, Climate Cardinals and U.S. Representative on UN Youth Advisory Group on Climate Change
Miranda Wang, CEO & Co-Founder, Novoloop

Content from SK:

Richard Chin, Executive Officer & Board Member, SK Growth Opportunities Corporation

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions. We look forward to having you join us.

Best,

Kathy and Marisa

Katherine O'Hearn
Executive Producer
Washington Post Live

Marisa Fariña
Managing Director
Washington Post Live

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From: Washington Post Live <postlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Response to Ticket #[2377303] Re: Protecting Public Safety, 6/28

Date: Tue, 28 Jun 2022 15:55:16 +0000

- Please type your reply above this line -

Michaella Mannix (Washington Post Customer Care)

Jun 28, 2022, 11:55 AM EDT

Hello,

Thank you for letting us know. There was a technical glitch in our system. You have been removed from the list for this event.

Best,

Washington Post Live Team

(b)(6)

Jun 27, 2022, 5:12 PM EDT

Good evening,

I do not remember signing up for this event. Would you please remove me from the attendance list?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Sent: Monday, June 27, 2022 4:22 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Final Arrival Details: Protecting Public Safety, 6/28

Thank you for registering to attend **Protecting Public Safety** at The Washington Post tomorrow, June 28.

Guest check-in will be located in the West Tower at 1301 K Street NW. Please be prepared

to show Photo ID and proof of COVID-19 vaccination and booster. Doors will open at 8:15 a.m. and registration will conclude at 9:15 a.m.

Tuesday, June 28

Doors open at 8:15 a.m. ET for coffee reception

Program 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. ET

Location

The Washington Post Live Center

1301 K St NW, Washington DC 20071

Directions

McPherson Square is the closest metro stop via the blue, orange and silver lines. Take the exit toward 14th and I Streets. The Washington Post is one block north and to your right on K Street.

COVID-19 Protocol

All attendees must be fully vaccinated and boosted, meaning you have either received one dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and a booster or two doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines and a booster.

Proof of vaccination and booster will be required upon arrival in the form of a physical vaccination card or a digital photo on a mobile device.

Security

Please bring a photo ID. All bags will be searched prior to entry.

For program updates visit: wapo.st/postlive

If you have any questions prior to the event, email postlive@washpost.com

This presenting sponsor of this event is [The Council on Criminal Justice](#).

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Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: WashPost Invite: In-person Entrepreneurship event on Tuesday, 9/13 [Response Requested]

Date: Mon, 29 Aug 2022 15:00:59 +0000

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FL-2023-00013

A-00000598584

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3/28/2023

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Katherine O'Hearn <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: WashPost In-Person Invite: "This is Climate" event with John Kerry and Sen. Mitt Romney, 12/8

Date: Tue, 6 Dec 2022 16:35:39 +0000

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Sender: Katherine O'Hearn <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Today at 12:00 p.m. ET: Rebuilding minority-owned businesses after the pandemic with chef Cheetie Kumar and entrepreneur Tristan Walker

Date: Thu, 2 Dec 2021 12:19:34 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Thurs. at 11:00am ET-Consumer retail trends with Casper CEO Philip Krim and more

Date: Wed, 28 Apr 2021 20:06:03 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

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From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Thurs. at 11:00am ET-Consumer retail trends with Casper CEO Philip Krim and more

Date: Wed, 28 Apr 2021 20:06:04 +0000

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From: Steven Erlanger (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: thanks
Date: Fri, 22 Apr 2022 14:42:01 +0200

dear (b)(6)

thanks for taking the time to talk to us this morning (22 april).

it was very much appreciated.

allbest,
steven erlanger
ny times

Sender: Steven Erlanger (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

From: Nancy Nussbaum (b)(6)@ap.org>

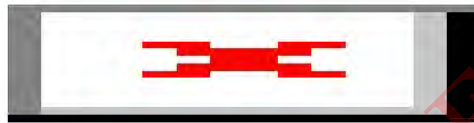
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Reminder: RSVP to join the discussion on faith and mental health, June 8

Date: Mon, 6 Jun 2022 09:43:26 -0600



[View in browser](#)



Does faith have a place in mental health?

Join us this week, Wednesday, June 8 at 2 p.m. EDT for our webinar, **"Does faith have a place in mental health?"**

Our panel of leaders in this space will address the role of faith and clergy in managing urgent mental health issues with the young and society as a whole. The panel will address believers' need to seek out faith institutions for help with their mental health, including the benefits and limitations of going that route. The session also will cover the mental health environment of various faith institutions.

The session is being offered through a collaboration between The Associated Press, The Conversation and Religion News Service.

Please register even if news may prevent you from joining. **We will send a recording link to everyone who registers.**

Who

Moderator:

- **Natasha Mikles**, assistant professor, Texas State University/Philosophy and Religious Studies

Panelists:

- **Thema Bryant**, president-elect, American Psychological Association
- **David Morris**, publisher/literary agent/author, Lake Drive Books
- **Rabbi Seth Winberg**, senior chaplain, Brandeis University

When**Date:** June 8, 2022**Time:** 2 p.m. Eastern (1800 GMT)[REGISTER HERE >](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

Please feel free to share this invitation with anyone from your staff who might be interested in these topics.

Thank you in advance for your participation.



Nancy Nussbaum
Global Director of Engagement

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[Customer Support](#) (technical queries, access and account issues, account creation)



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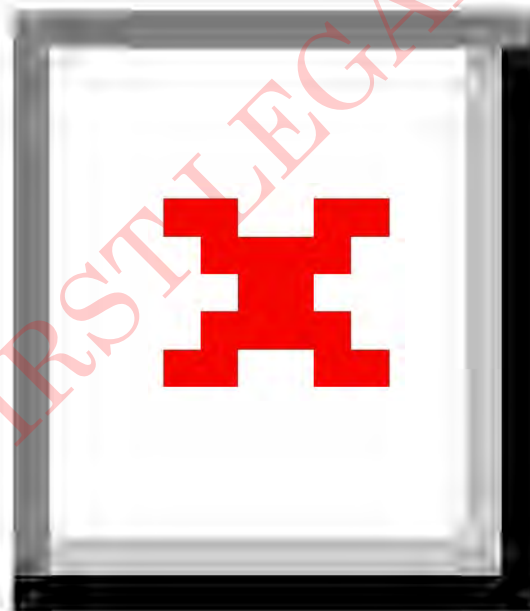
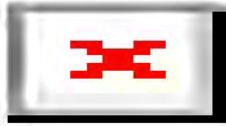
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Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

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To: [REDACTED]@state.gov>
Subject: Reminder – please confirm your email
Date: Wed, 25 May 2022 13:04:20 +0000



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From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Register: John Kerry, Sen. Mitt Romney and more in a special, week-long climate series, 12/5 - 12/9

Date: Thu, 1 Dec 2022 19:00:58 +0000

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>
Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Register: Inflation, supply chain disruptions and small business survival with Offline Ventures and Brit + Co's Brit Morin and more, 7/13

Date: Tue, 12 Jul 2022 20:09:06 +0000

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FL-2023-00013

A-00000598595

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3/28/2023

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Sender: Washington Post Live <washpostlive@washpost.com>

Recipient: (b)(6) @state.gov>

From: Ellen Tordesillas (b)(6)@verafiles.org>
To: Rabi Alhassan (b)(6)@ghanafact.com>
Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Gulin (b)(6)@teyit.org>;
Rajneil Kamath (b)(6)@ncmn.in>;
Coreena Soares (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
(b)(6)@15min.lt>;
Inga Springe (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Jency (b)(6)@boomlive.in>;
Thanos (Epachtitis) Sitistas (b)(6)@ellinikahoaxes.gr>;
(b)(6)@newsmobile.in>;
Ana Brakus (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Angie Holan (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Bwhitaker (b)(6)@ap.org>;
CC: Jeanfreddy (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Maarten Schenk (b)(6)@leadstories.com>;
Pmfernandez (b)(6)@chequeado.com>;
(b)(6)@zastone.ba>;
MStewart (b)(6)@usatoday.com>;
(b)(6)@gmail.com>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@mdfgeorgia.ge>;
Tijana Cvjetičanin (b)(6)@istinomjer.ba>;
Enock NYARIKI (b)(6)@pesacheck.org>;
Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Alanna Dvorak (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Harrison Mantas (b)(6)@poynter.org>
Subject: Re: Working group to address harassment against fact-checkers
Date: Mon, 5 Jul 2021 17:53:02 +0200

Thank you very much, Baybars for giving this matter a priority.
Glad to be part of it.
Hopefully, we can do something to stop this menace.

Ellen

On Mon, Jul 5, 2021 at 4:08 PM Rabi Alhassan (b)(6)@ghanafact.com> wrote:
Hello everyone,

Fantastic work so far. It looks very promising and glad to be part of it.

Regards,
RA

On Mon, Jul 5, 2021 at 11:12 AM Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:
Dear friends & colleagues,

Hope you had a restful weekend.

I would like to thank you so much for your interest in this working group to help fact-checkers around the world to address harassment and threats for our work.

We have received a total of 23 submissions to join this working group. It's great to see such a high volume of interest!

I would like to suggest the below model to launch this working group.

Broader group for monitoring and evaluation

This broader group convenes on a quarterly basis to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of IFCN's actions to help fact-checkers around the world under stress and risks due to harassment and threats. It also provides feedback to IFCN on such activities and evaluates IFCN's performance in those areas by working with IFCN on publishing quarterly "Harassment against fact-checkers" reports for verified signatories and the public.

This group will be updated on a 2/3 basis in a calendar year.

Core group for consulting and planning (group of 11)

A smaller group acts as the core group for consulting and planning by convening on a monthly basis to discuss reported harassment cases and advising IFCN with action items. This group is provided with immediate updates on every harassment case reported by the fact-checking community and asked for their guidance and input.

This group will be updated on a 2/3 basis in a calendar year.

To move forward, I'm suggesting inviting the following names to the core group considering the diversity in geography and background.

Ana Brakus | Faktograf | Croatia
Angie Holan | Politifact | United States
Barbara Whitaker | Associated Press | United States
Ellen Tordesillas | Vera Files | Phillippines
Gülin Çavuş | Teyit | Turkey
Jency Jacob | Boom | India
Maarten Schenk | Lead Stories | Belgium / United States
Pablo M. Fernandez | Chequeado | Argentina
Rabiu Alhassan | GhanaFact | Ghana
Thanos Sitistas | Elinika Hoaxes | Greece
Tijana Cvjetićanin | Raskrinkavanje | Bosnia-Herzegovina

Action items for next steps

I would like you to let me know if you approve the suggested core group by submitting this form no later than this Friday, 9th of July.

Once we have the core group formed, I'll send further information on regular calls (quarterly for the broader group and monthly for the core group) as well as communication methods to foster rapid and effective dialogue.

Please kindly note that this proposed model is not to be set in stone and will require further consultation and discussion to be a better asset for the fact-checking community. Your inputs and feedback are highly needed and appreciated! There will be more opportunities to reflect on this and improve the model on the go as we tackle future challenges and identify room for improvement!

Thank you so much!

Best-

--

[Baybars Örsek](#)

Director | International Fact-Checking Network
[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

Sender: Ellen Tordesillas (b)(6)@verafiles.org>
Rabiu Alhassan (b)(6)@ghanafact.com>;
Baybars Örsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Gulin (b)(6)@tevit.org>;
Rajneil Kamath (b)(6)@ncmn.in>;
Coreena Soares (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
(b)(6)@15min.lt>;
Inga Springe (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Jency (b)(6)@boomlive.in>;
Thanos (Epachtitis) Sitistas (b)(6)@ellinikahoaxes.gr>;
(b)(6)@newsmobile.in>;
Ana Brakus (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Angie Holan (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Recipient: Bwhitaker (b)(6)@ap.org>;
Jeanfreddy (b)(6)@gmail.com>;
Maarten Schenk (b)(6)@leadstories.com>;
Pmfernandez (b)(6)@chequeado.com>;
(b)(6)@zastone.ba>;
MStewart (b)(6)@usatoday.com>;
(b)(6)@gmail.com>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@mdfgeorgia.ge>;
Tijana Cvjetićanin (b)(6)@istinomjer.ba>;
Enock NYARIKI (b)(6)@pesacheck.org>;
Ferdı Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Alanna Dvorak (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Harrison Mantas (b)(6)@poynter.org>

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From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>;
Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific
Date: Wed, 3 Mar 2021 19:55:38 +0000

Thanks Dave-

We will send them the below materials and share John's email. 4 pm your time is good for us so can you share a day that works for you and we can invite them to participate?
Have a lovely one.

Many thanks, (b)(6)

From: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>
Sent: Thursday, March 4, 2021 7:50 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi (b)(6)

Please have the user's that require account verification and resets reach out directly to John Khin above.
*John please re-run current users list to and provide for (b)(6)

Resending the link for online training materials on AP Academy:

<https://www.ap.org/ap-academy/>

Also, we would like to let you know that we now have a product training and client engagement team and would be happy to schedule a Zoom presentation for the group. Realize difficult with time change involved but we have some people that could be game to do this at an odd hour.

Thanks,

Dave

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 03, 2021 12:49 AM
To: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>; Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

[EXTERNAL]

Hi Dave and John-

I am following up on the below email. We'd really like to reach out to the members and give them helpful info on using this service.

Have a good one.

Many thanks, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:29 AM

To: (b)(6)@ap.org; Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi Dave and John-

Per the report you sent to (b)(6) I can see that several of the users need to verify accounts or change their passwords. Can you send us the Youtube videos you mentioned as well as the best email for the users who need assistant resetting or verifying their accounts. We'd like to reach out to all of them again to encourage them to use the service and we can ask if they'd like a training via WebEx.

In the meantime is there any way to see how much the active users are accessing and/or downloading from AP?

Have a wonderful day.

Many thanks, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 11:18 AM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: FW: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi (b)(6)

FYI

(b)(6)

Press and Media Coordinator | Public Diplomacy Office

U.S. Embassy Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

📞 (b)(6)@state.gov

158 Princess Road | PO Box 218, Suva

✉ ✉ ✉

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 2:23 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: FW: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi (b)(6)

Received this from Dave today. Have emailed him back to ask for some guidance on how to read this report as its not very clear to me.

Appreciate if you have more insight on this to share, thank you.

Cheers,

(b)(6)
Press and Media Coordinator | Public Diplomacy Office
U.S. Embassy Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu
📞 (b)(6)@state.gov
158 Princess Road | PO Box 218, Suva
✕ ✕ ✕

From: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>
Sent: Thursday, November 5, 2020 8:46 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>
Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi (b)(6)

Well we made it to November 4th but still no declared winner, historic and exhausting at once. Here is the information you requested. It seems to me that it would be a good idea to organize a training session or training materials for you users. Realize there is a time difference issue but we can be flexible for a webex session, there is also a plethora of information online including instructional YouTube videos – please let me know how that sounds.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dave

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 6:44 PM
To: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>

Cc: Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>

Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

[EXTERNAL]

Hi Dave,

Awesome to hear from you! Yes thank you, usage reports will be most appreciated when you get a chance. Of course, the elections just around the corner, I'm excited seeing and hearing all about that. Wishing you and the team all the very best in your coverage.

Talk soon. Have a gorgeous evening on that end.

Cheers,

(b)(6)

Press and Media Coordinator | Public Diplomacy Office
U.S. Embassy Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

📞 (b)(6)@state.gov

158 Princess Road | PO Box 218, Suva



From: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>

Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 10:38 AM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>

Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Hi (b)(6)

My apologies for the delayed response and thank you for bumping this up in my inbox. We can run usage reports for you, typically it would take a couple days to compile and deliver, it may take a bit longer as elections are currently consuming a lot of resources.

I will keep you posted and provide a delivery date on the reports shortly.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dave

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 4:52 PM

To: Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>

Cc: Khin, John <(b)(6)@ap.org>

Subject: RE: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

[EXTERNAL]

Good Afternoon Mr. Rizzo,

Just following up on my email. Appreciate if you have had a moment to consider the request.

Thank you for your time and look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you.

Cheers,

(b)(6)

Press and Media Coordinator | Public Diplomacy Office

U.S. Embassy Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

(b)(6)@state.gov

158 Princess Road | PO Box 218, Suva

✕ ✕ ✕

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, October 5, 2020 3:52 PM

To: (b)(6)@ap.org' (b)(6)@ap.org>

Cc: (b)(6)@ap.org' (b)(6)@ap.org>

Subject: Usage of free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service in the Pacific

Good Afternoon Mr. Rizzo,

Trust this email finds you well. My name is (b)(6) and I'm working with the US Embassy in Suva, Fiji.

I understand you were integral in the free provision of AP content for the Pacific Islands and I would appreciate your assistance in my current task to highlight some data on the program's uptake.

I'm hoping to compile some data on how many news organizations in the Pacific are using the free AP Asia Online and AP Top News Service since the inception of the grant/program.

Is there a way in which your organization is able to assist with this information gathering, also how often they are using the content?





Appreciate your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

Cheers,

(b)(6)

Press and Media Coordinator | Public Diplomacy Office

U.S. Embassy Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Tonga and Tuvalu

 (b)(6)@state.gov
158 Princess Road | PO Box 218, Suva
  

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Sender: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Rizzo, Dave (b)(6)@ap.org>;
Khin, John (b)(6)@ap.org>;

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>







From: Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Vonda Wolcott <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>;
Alan Davis <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>;
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Ferd Ozsoy <(b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis
Date: Thu, 4 Mar 2021 22:21:57 -0500

Hi there,

Hope this email finds you well.

Just wanted to give you an update to share that we have agreed with GEC (Les Grandes Ecoles de Communication) to provide our trainings.

Really appreciate the introduction!

I'll share more updates as the weeks move forward.

All the best-

Baybars

On Tue, Feb 2, 2021 at 8:11 PM Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:

Dear all,

@(b)(6) - thanks a lot for those kind words! We are grateful for such an acknowledgment of our work as the fact-checking community, even though that's a very early stage in such an unparalleled process.

Hi Erica -

That would be great to be connected with them and hear more about them + explore a possible partnership for our Tunisian engagement.

Please kindly feel free to set up an introduction.

All the best-

Baybars

On Mon, Feb 1, 2021 at 9:48 AM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon Erica,

I defer to Baybars from Poynter and Vonda from IWPR (who manages this sub-award for GEC). From the latest IWPR monthly report I received, Poynter is preparing to roll out its initial trainings in February in select countries, although it is unclear when Tunisia activities will occur. To note, Poynter's International Fact-Checking Network received a 2021 Nobel Peace Prize nomination. We are thrilled to support Baybars on such impactful work.

Kindly,

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On January 29, 2021 at 02:24:51 EST, Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:

Hi Baybars and (b)(6)

Happy New Year. I'm checking in to see if you have any updates on the Poynter Tunisia project. I look forward to your feedback.

Erica Thibault

(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(6)

I am currently teleworking

From: Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 11:27 PM

To: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan

Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy

(b)(6)@poynter.org>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Baybars

I hope that you are doing well. As Gabby noted, HAICA appears to be a great fit. Is there anything specific that you need from Embassy Tunis in order to move forward? If not, what is your current timeline and your planned next steps, knowing that COVID may require adjustments?

Best regards,

Erica Thibault

Counselor for Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy Tunis

(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

I am currently teleworking

From: Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 6:44 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis)

Cc: (b)(6); Vonda Wolcott; Alan Davis; (b)(6); Ferdi Ozsoy; Thibault, Erica (Tunis); Fanous, Mary K (Tunis)

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Gabrielle,

Thanks for sharing those with me.

Hope you have completed your transition smoothly.

Erica and Mary,

I'd be more than happy to jump on a call and discuss about this to know more about their fitness to our program.

Would that be possible to do it next week?

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best-

Baybars

On Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 1:26 PM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Hi Baybars,

I am transitioning out of post, so I will leave my colleagues Erica and Mary to respond to this officially. I think the HAICA proposal looks promising and that it is worth serious consideration. (My only issue with the proposal is that they have the Covid timeline in Tunisia wrong.) It appears to dovetail with another project supported by the Embassy / GEC on Counter disinformation and propaganda on the Covid-19 pandemic in Tunisia. Our grantee is the Grande Ecole de la Communication (GEC) which is working with the Tunisian Ministry of Health.

Best regards,

(b)(6)

From: Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 3:21 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hello again,

Hope this finds you in a good health.

Just wanted to kindly remind my inquiry about your thoughts on HAICA from Tunisia as a potential local partner for our training engagement in the country.

I'm sharing two documents that I've received about the organization (via UNDP) and kindly asking your feedback on their status and eligibility to be a good partner for this project.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

On Fri, Sep 25, 2020 at 10:35 AM Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:
Hello everyone,

Just wanted to get a quick feedback on haica.tn and their collaborative initiative <https://tunisiachecknews.com/>

UNDP and Council of Europe seem to be supporting them

I'm aware that HAICA is a constitutional body set up after the revolution and is not a private organization, however, wondering if they are more independent than similar organizations around the world.

Thanks a lot!

Baybars

On Mon, Sep 21, 2020 at 12:42 PM Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:
Hi (b)(6),

Hope you had a great weekend!

Just wanted to kindly check in since I have not received an invite yet.

I believe we are still confirmed for tomorrow 11am EDT.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

On Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 9:25 AM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:
Super!

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 2:22 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (LEO) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Gabby,

Sure thing! Please kindly feel free to send an invite with your preferred method of communication.

Looking forward to it!

Best-

Baybars

On Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 9:16 AM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:
Baybars,

That's great. Would it be possible to push the moving back to 11 am Tampa / 4 pm Tunis? That better suits a key person on our side. We can set the meeting up via Teams or Zoom. Let us know your preference and we'll send a link by Monday am our time.

Thanks again,

Gabby

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 2:07 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan

Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy
<(b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (LEO) <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis)
(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Yes, that works for me.

Looking forward to it!

Baybas

On Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 5:53 AM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Hi Baybars,

Tuesday morning (Eastern time) works well for us too. Are you available around 10 am Tampa /
3 PM Tunis?

Thanks,

Gabby

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 5:35 PM
To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan
Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy
<(b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (LEO) <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis)
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Gabby,

Great to hear from you!

Next week would be very ideal for me!

I'm based in Florida, Eastern Time Zone

My Tuesday morning (EDT) seems flexible. I hope that would work for you given the time
difference and your schedule.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

On Thu, Sep 17, 2020 at 12:31 PM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:
Dear Baybars,

It is a pleasure to meet you. Perhaps we can meet next week over Zoom. Please let me know where you are based so that we can work out a date and time. I would like to include out incoming PAO, Erica Thibault, and our new press officer, Mary Fanous in the call.

Best regards,

Gabby

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 3:52 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Subject: Fwd: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Dear Gabby Price and all,

Hope this email finds you well.

Thanks a lot for this introduction, (b)(6) Happy to be connected.

Gaby, we are lacking a trainee organization in Tunisia to kick off the trainings. Dogruluk Payi from Turkey will be our regional partner in those trainings, therefore will be providing guidance and support throughout the implementation of the engagement.

We like to hear your thoughts and guidance on identifying a Tunisian newsroom and/or non-profit organization to engage with and train them to be eligible for the International Fact-Checking Network's Code of Principles.

I'll be more than happy to connect with the colleagues at the embassy to seek help in our search for a partner in the country.

Available for a call at your convenience.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Date: Wed, Sep 16, 2020 at 5:35 PM

Subject: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

To: (b)(6)@poynter.org <(b)(6)@poynter.org>

Cc: Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net, Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net, (b)(6)@state.gov

Baybars,

I hope you are doing well! I'm touching base with you regarding the Tunisia portion of your IFCN program. I understand from your recent amendment that Poynter still seeks a local Tunisian organization with whom to partner.

May you provide our public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis with an update on where things stand regarding Tunisia **by open of business tomorrow (Thursday)**? Her name is Gabby Price and her email is (b)(6)@state.gov. She is already aware that you and IWPR will reach out with an update and to begin coordinating on potential local implementers. The embassy likely can assist you in your search.

Please cc myself, Vonda, Alan, and (b)(6)@state.gov from our Near Eastern Affairs Bureau on your email. I ask with urgency because Gabby is leaving her position within the next several days. She would like to brief her successor on all pending projects to avoid any disconnect or confusion that the transition may cause. It would also be useful for you to mention that you've identified Doğruluk Payı -- the Turkish fact-checking organization -- as the one who will be connected with the Tunisian organization TBD.

Thank you again, and I do hope you and your family are remaining healthy these days.

Kindly,

(b)(6)

Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)@state.gov

--

[Baybars Örsek](#)

Director | International Fact-Checking Network
[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

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[Baybars Örsek](#)

Director | International Fact-Checking Network

[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

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[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

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[Baybars Örsek](#)

Director | International Fact-Checking Network
[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

Sender: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>;
Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>;
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>

From: "Thibault, Erica (Tunis)" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>;
Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>
Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
CC: Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>
Subject: RE: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis
Date: Tue, 2 Feb 2021 23:43:27 +0000

Hi Baybars and Ferdi

We have another organization that Embassy Tunis would like to recommend for the factchecking project. Last spring the Embassy received funding from GEC to combat fake news related to COVID. The implementing partner in Tunisia is Les Grandes Ecoles de Communication (ironically, also GEC), which is a small NGO that has successfully implemented two MEPI local grants. The Embassy believes that this could be the right fit because the team has already proven to be responsive and capable partner, and they would benefit from additional training. I provided additional information on the current GEC-funded project below. Please let me know if you would like us to arrange an introduction.

This project aims to support the MoH to implement a Communication of Crisis and Risks and disseminate information ensuring Community Engagement -- by creating a platform to check facts and news during the COVID-19 crisis and training social media influencers in 24 governorates.

Les Grandes Ecoles de Communication (GEC) plans to select and train 240 social influencers in the 24 governorates by starting to engage established social media influencers with large pools of followers, which will help the project gain visibility and credibility.

The project will be working on achieving two main objectives:

1. Launch a Fact Check platform to provide accurate information to media outlets, government officials, and social influencers to counter the Disinformation on the Covid-19
2. 240 youth are trained to be social influencers or descramblers promoting accurate information in their local communities to help the Ministry of Health MoH disseminate The Crisis and Risks Communication plan related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Erica Thibault

(b)(6)@state.gov

Cell (b)(6)

Office (b)(6)

I am currently teleworking

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, February 1, 2021 3:49 PM

To: Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Cc: Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Good afternoon Erica,

I defer to Baybars from Poynter and Vonda from IWPR (who manages this sub-award for GEC). From the latest IWPR monthly report I received, Poynter is preparing to roll out its initial trainings in February in select countries, although it is unclear when Tunisia activities will occur.

To note, Poynter's International Fact-Checking Network received a 2021 Nobel Peace Prize nomination. We are thrilled to support Baybars on such impactful work.

Kindly,

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On January 29, 2021 at 02:24:51 EST, Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Baybars and (b)(6)

Happy New Year. I'm checking in to see if you have any updates on the Poynter Tunisia project. I look forward to your feedback.

Erica Thibault

(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(6)

I am currently teleworking

From: Thibault, Erica (Tunis) <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 11:27 PM

To: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis

(b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Baybars

I hope that you are doing well. As Gabby noted, HAICA appears to be a great fit. Is there anything specific that you need from Embassy Tunis in order to move forward? If not, what is your current timeline and your planned next steps, knowing that COVID may require adjustments?

Best regards,

Erica Thibault
Counselor for Public Affairs
U.S. Embassy Tunis

(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(6)

I am currently teleworking

From: Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 6:44 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis)

Cc: (b)(6); Vonda Wolcott; Alan Davis; (b)(6) Ferdi Ozsoy; Thibault, Erica (Tunis); Fanous, Mary K (Tunis)

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Gabrielle,

Thanks for sharing those with me.

Hope you have completed your transition smoothly.

Erica and Mary,

I'd be more than happy to jump on a call and discuss about this to know more about their fitness to our program.

Would that be possible to do it next week?

Looking forward to hearing from you!

Best-

Baybars

On Wed, Oct 7, 2020 at 1:26 PM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:

Hi Baybars,

I am transitioning out of post, so I will leave my colleagues Erica and Mary to respond to this officially. I think the HAICA proposal looks promising and that it is worth serious consideration. (My only issue with the proposal is that they have the Covid timeline in Tunisia wrong.) It appears to dovetail with another project supported by the Embassy / GEC on Counter disinformation and propaganda on the Covid-19

pandemic in Tunisia. Our grantee is the Grande Ecole de la Communication (GEC) which is working with the Tunisian Ministry of Health.

Best regards,

Gabrielle

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 3:21 PM
To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hello again,

Hope this finds you in a good health.

Just wanted to kindly remind my inquiry about your thoughts on HAICA from Tunisia as a potential local partner for our training engagement in the country.

I'm sharing two documents that I've received about the organization (via UNDP) and kindly asking your feedback on their status and eligibility to be a good partner for this project.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

On Fri, Sep 25, 2020 at 10:35 AM Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:
Hello everyone,

Just wanted to get a quick feedback on haica.tn and their collaborative initiative <https://tunisiachecknews.com/>

UNDP and Council of Europe seem to be supporting them

I'm aware that HAICA is a constitutional body set up after the revolution and is not a private organization, however, wondering if they are more independent than similar organizations around the world.

Thanks a lot!

Baybars

On Mon, Sep 21, 2020 at 12:42 PM Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org> wrote:

Hi Gabby,

Hope you had a great weekend!

Just wanted to kindly check in since I have not received an invite yet.

I believe we are still confirmed for tomorrow 11am EDT.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

On Fri, Sep 18, 2020 at 9:25 AM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:
Super!

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>

Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 2:22 PM

To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Thibault, Erica (LEO) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Hi Gabby,

Sure thing! Please kindly feel free to send an invite with your preferred method of communication.

Looking forward to it!

Best-

Baybars

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Gabby

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Sent: Friday, September 18, 2020 2:07 PM

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Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy (b)(6)@poynter.org>; Thibault, Erica (LEO) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Fanous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Yes, that works for me.

Looking forward to it!

Baybas

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Tuesday morning (Eastern time) works well for us too. Are you available around 10 am Tampa / 3 PM Tunis?

Thanks,

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Hi Gabby,

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Next week would be very ideal for me!

I'm based in Florida, Eastern Time Zone

My Tuesday morning (EDT) seems flexible. I hope that would work for you given the time difference and your schedule.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

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Baybars

On Thu, Sep 17, 2020 at 12:31 PM Price, Gabrielle M (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Dear Baybars,

It is a pleasure to meet you. Perhaps we can meet next week over Zoom. Please let me know where you are based so that we can work out a date and time. I would like to include our incoming PAO, Erica Thibault, and our new press officer, Mary Fanous in the call.

Best regards,

Gabby

From: Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 3:52 PM
To: Price, Gabrielle M (Tunisia) <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Vonda Wolcott <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ferdi Ozsoy <(b)(6)@poynter.org>
Subject: Fwd: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis

Dear Gabby Price and all,

Hope this email finds you well.

Thanks a lot for this introduction, Nick! Happy to be connected.

Gaby, we are lacking a trainee organization in Tunisia to kick off the trainings. Dogruluk Payi from Turkey will be our regional partner in those trainings, therefore will be providing guidance and support throughout the implementation of the engagement.

We like to hear your thoughts and guidance on identifying a Tunisian newsroom and/or non-profit organization to engage with and train them to be eligible for the International Fact-Checking Network's Code of Principles.

I'll be more than happy to connect with the colleagues at the embassy to seek help in our search for a partner in the country.

Available for a call at your convenience.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best-

Baybars

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Date: Wed, Sep 16, 2020 at 5:35 PM
Subject: Update on Poynter and Tunisia -- Connecting with U.S. Embassy Tunis
To: (b)(6)@poynter.org <(b)(6)@poynter.org>

Cc: Vonda Wolcott <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>, Alan Davis <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>, (b)(6)@state.gov>

Baybars,

I hope you are doing well! I'm touching base with you regarding the Tunisia portion of your IFCN program. I understand from your recent amendment that Poynter still seeks a local Tunisian organization with whom to partner.

May you provide our public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Tunis with an update on where things stand regarding Tunisia **by open of business tomorrow (Thursday)**? Her name is Gabby Price and her email is (b)(6)@state.gov. She is already aware that you and IWPR will reach out with an update and to begin coordinating on potential local implementers. The embassy likely can assist you in your search.

Please cc myself, Vonda, Alan, and (b)(6)@state.gov from our Near Eastern Affairs Bureau on your email. I ask with urgency because Gabby is leaving her position within the next several days. She would like to brief her successor on all pending projects to avoid any disconnect or confusion that the transition may cause. It would also be useful for you to mention that you've identified Doğruluk Payı -- the Turkish fact-checking organization -- as the one who will be connected with the Tunisian organization TBD.

Thank you again, and I do hope you and your family are remaining healthy these days.

Kindly,

(b)(6)

Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
(b)(6)@state.gov

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[Baybars Örsek](#)

Director | International Fact-Checking Network
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Director | International Fact-Checking Network
[@baybarsorsek](#) / [@factchecknet](#)

Sender: "Thibault, Erica (Tunis)" (b)(6)@state.gov>

Baybars Orsek <(b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Ferdi Ozsoy <(b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Alan Davis <(b)(6)@iwpr.net>;

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>;

Famous, Mary K (Tunis) (b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>;

Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
To: Steven Lee Myers (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
CC: GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Response for interview request with State Department's Global Engagement Center
Date: Fri, 26 Aug 2022 17:18:20 +0000

Good afternoon Mr. Myers,
Thanks for getting back to us.
Could you do a Microsoft Teams call?

(b)(6)

From: Steven Lee Myers (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Sent: Friday, August 26, 2022 12:46 PM
To: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Response for interview request with State Department's Global Engagement Center

Thank you very much. I am free today (on Pacific coast time) at (b)(6).
Best

Steve
The New York Times
Twitter: @stevenleemyers
Facebook: StevenLeeMyersNYT
WhatsApp and Signal, (b)(6)

On Fri, Aug 26, 2022 at 6:44 AM GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov> wrote:
Good morning Mr. Myers,
I'm reaching out from the State Department's Global Engagement Center. We received notice that you would like to speak to an official at the Department regarding Russian disinformation operations.
I believe that your deadline is 5:00pm today. We have someone available to speak with you between 1:30 and 5 today - please let us know if this works for you.
We ask that the interview be on background and attributed to a State Department official.
Thank you,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
All Native Group Contractor



Sender: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Recipient: Steven Lee Myers [\[REDACTED\]](#)@nytimes.com>;
GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Subject: Re: Re:
Date: Tue, 9 Nov 2021 15:43:07 +0000

Anytime from 2-6 pm is good. Agree there is lots to discuss; very interesting topic. You may have seen already Doug Selvage's very interesting article, Operation "Denver": The East German Ministry of State Security and the KGB's AIDS Disinformation Campaign, 1985–1986 (Part 1) [attached for reference]. Search for Shively to see discussion of origins of AIDS disinfo story -- I have more to add on this. See also p. 12-23 in 1988 report I wrote, found at <http://insidethecoldwar.org/sites/default/files/documents/Soviet%20Active%20Measures%20in%20the%20Era%20of%20Glasnot%20March%201988.pdf>, which discusses SOV "Ethnic Weapons" disinfo, which apparently was picked up by Shively and others, per Doug's article. (Doug told me you are speaking with him tomorrow). This is likely a mashup of SOV disinfo plus delusions/conspiracy theories of local fringe elements, including fellow travelers and useful idiots. Can explain more. See also original article in US Army's Military Review, which led to "ethnic weapons" disinfo; two versions attached. All for now.

(b)(6)

From: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 9, 2021 10:28 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Re:

Hi (b)(6)

Looking forward to speaking today -- so much to discuss, and I really appreciate getting some of your time.

Just making sure -- 4:30/1630 est ok time to call?

Thanks again, Jim

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 3:02 PM Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com> wrote:
Ok great advice thanks! Catch you tomorrow and thanks on all

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 2:56 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Tomorrow from 1430-1800 is good.

There was an excellent article in the WSJ in September about COVID safety when flying. The most dangerous time is when you (and others) take your mask off to eat. They recommend turning up the forced air in the controls above your seat and pointing the nozzle at your face when your mask is off to scatter any COVID particles away.

I got permission to speak you on the terms we discussed. Will send you a couple of articles later today.

Best,

(b)(6)

From: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 2:40 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Re:

Thanks (b)(6) sounds good

I'm boarding a plane and don't land till around 6/6:30

Is there an ok time tomorrow to try you?

Thanks again much obliged

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 2:37 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Jim:

Let's just discuss between you and me and I'll fill the others in as needed. I'll give you a call.

My cell is (b)(6) Home landline: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 11:55 AM

To: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Subject: Re: Re:

Jim:

checking with my colleagues on when is a good time. Any times good or not good for you today or tomorrow?

Thanks.

(b)(6)

From: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Sent: Monday, November 8, 2021 11:46 AM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Re:

Sure, let me know if there's a good time to connect and I can fill you and whoever else is interested in on the arc of the book

On Mon, Nov 8, 2021 at 10:04 AM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Jim:

Yes, I think if we had a better sense of what you are trying to address and accomplish in the book, that would help a lot.

Thanks.

(b)(6)

P.S. - (b)(6)

From: Jim Rutenberg <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Sent: Friday, November 5, 2021 6:29 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re:

Thanks (b)(6) and thanks, all.

(b)(6) came highly recommended and would be a great help. I'm happy to fill you all in more on the general sweep of the book if you would like.

Thanks and all the best, Jim

On Fri, Nov 5, 2021 at 6:11 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

John/Scott:

Please let me know if you need any more information to make a decision on this request for what would likely be several discussions/interviews on the phone and via email with NYT reporter Jim Rutenberg, who, per his email below, is writing "a narrative history book ... about information warfare at home and abroad, from roughly 1970 to now." He is particularly interested in speaking with me about "the successful Soviet operation to plant false stories that AIDS was invented in the US Laboratory at Fort Detrick ... [and] how that story got picked up and elaborated upon in the publications of fringe political movements here in the US."

Jim:

Please call me (b)(6) I already feel old enough w/o being addressed as Mister.

I'd be glad to help on your very interesting project provided my bosses in the Global Engagement Center and Public Affairs agree. I'm looping in my immediate supervisor and the GEC person who handles media requests to start this process.

If my bosses and PA agree, I think it would be best to talk and share information with you on a background or deep background basis meaning that you are free to use the material but without attributing it to the Department of State, with some exceptions in which I would be glad to go on the record or be described as a State Department expert on disinformation, in particular when we are speaking about established Soviet and Russian disinformation and propaganda practices. I think it's best to do that on a case-by-case basis provided my bosses at GEC and Public Affairs agree.

I am certainly willing to discuss other topics than the AIDS disinformation campaign, if I get permission to speak with you, but I strongly prefer to stick to topics that I know well. From 1987 to 1996, I followed rumors of child organ trafficking very closely, which the Soviets repeated and which also circulated on their own as an urban legend, and paid attention to prominent Soviet disinformation claims (prior to 1992), often helping U.S. Information Agency (USIA) posts overseas respond to Soviet disinformation claims in the local media in their countries. I was at USIA from 1987 to 1996, before it was absorbed into State in 1999 and have been at State since 2003, working to counter misinformation and disinformation most of that time.

Also, many thanks for attaching your excellent 2017 NYT Magazine article, which I had missed. It is an excellent treatment of this topic, enlivened by interviews with Simonyan, Peskov, and other key actors. I will read it carefully.

Many thanks for your inquiry.

Best,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Senior Counter-Disinformation Adviser
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Contractor: Accenture/Datastrong

(b)(6)@state.gov

From: Jim Rutenberg (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Sent: Friday, November 5, 2021 5:15 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject:

Hello (b)(6)

My name is Jim Rutenberg and I'm a reporter at the New York Times.

I'm doing some research for a narrative history book I'm writing about information warfare at home and abroad, from roughly 1970 to now. I was wondering whether I could check in with you about the work you did on the Active Measures team in the Reagan years. I am looking into the successful Soviet operation to plant false stories that AIDS was invented in the US Laboratory at Fort Detrick. While this is now a fairly well-told tale, I am particularly interested in how that story got picked up and elaborated upon in the publications of fringe political movements here in the US. That labor intensive and onerous work on behalf of the Soviet disinfo agents of the 1980s will stand in contrast to later portions of the book, when their successors will have a much easier time penetrating the American information stream of the social media and cable tv era. Also, I was interested to see in one of your team's reports an assessment that Russian disinformation would be far more effective if they ever figured out how to produce better television, which, of course, they would later go on to do

(see <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/magazine/rt-sputnik-and-russias-new-theory-of-war.html>), so I'd also want to range a little bit beyond the AIDS operation if you're game.

I am writing the book for Penguin Press and am not yet sure of the publication date (I would expect it to go to market in roughly a year and a half). It is possible that some of what I learn will feed my reporting for The Times, but there are no such plans as of now. If you are amenable then we can discuss the terms of our discussion, but please know that I am comfortable doing this on a background and deep background basis. Of course, I would always be happy to have anything on the record that you are willing to bring onto the record.

Thanks and all best, Jim

Jim Rutenberg
Writer at Large
The New York Times

(b)(6)

Sender: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Recipient: Jim Rutenberg (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

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Operation “Denver”: The East German Ministry of State Security and the KGB's AIDS Disinformation Campaign, 1985–1986 (Part 1)

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Abstract

There has been much debate in recent years about the role of the East German Ministry for State Security (Stasi) in the disinformation campaign launched in the early 1980s by the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) regarding the origin and nature of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). The KGB's operation, codenamed “Denver” by the Stasi (not “Infektion,” as many online sources now erroneously assert), claimed that AIDS was deliberately devised by U.S. biological warfare specialists for the U.S. government to spread in minority communities in the United States. Based on the available evidence, the Stasi's role in the AIDS disinformation campaign was limited in 1985–1986 to (1) keeping watch over Soviet-East German scientist Jakob Segal, who propagated a variant of the KGB's thesis; (2) helping to arrange for the publication and distribution of a brochure with Segal's thesis at the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Harare in 1986; and (3) facilitating Segal's interviews with certain journalists. Just as important for the ongoing formulation and spread of the KGB's AIDS disinformation was a cycle of misinformation and disinformation that arose between U.S.-based conspiracy theorists—especially Lyndon LaRouche and his followers—and authors and publications espousing Moscow's preferred theses regarding AIDS.

On 21 October 1985, Czechoslovakia's foreign intelligence stations in Washington, DC, and New York received a directive from Prague regarding active measures—that is, covert psychological warfare.¹ They were to promote the new Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's “peace offensive” in the run-up to his first summit meeting

with U.S. President Ronald Reagan in Geneva in November 1985. At the same time, they were to discredit the Reagan administration's "aggressive and militaristic" policies and in this way create a public contrast between Reagan and Gorbachev. The intelligence stations were to focus in particular on discrediting Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI)—that is, his planned "Star Wars" defensive shield against incoming Soviet ballistic missiles.² The elimination of SDI was Gorbachev's top foreign policy priority during his first two years in power. The Soviet leader worried that if SDI came to fruition, it would unleash another round of the U.S.-Soviet arms race—something that Moscow could ill afford.³

The instructions from Prague would not have come as a surprise to the Czechoslovak security service's great-power patron, the Soviet State Security Committee (KGB). The KGB's foreign intelligence division, the First Chief Directorate (FCD), and the latter's division for active measures, Service "A," had previously communicated these priorities to all the other Soviet-bloc intelligence services except for the Romanian.⁴ At the same time, the KGB had launched an initiative to augment the quality and quantity of active measures by its East European allies in early 1985.⁵ These efforts marked the KGB's response to several Soviet-bloc foreign and covert policy failures in 1983–1984, including the approval granted by Washington's West European allies for the stationing of U.S. long-range theater nuclear forces or "Euromissiles" on their territory and Reagan's reelection in a landslide in November 1984. This had happened despite the best diplomatic and propaganda efforts of the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the various organs of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). The active measures of the KGB and its allies, especially in covert support of peace movements in the West, had also failed to have the desired effect.⁶ As Moscow struggled with the escalating costs of the nuclear arms race with the United States, along with the expense of its commitments overseas, the KGB threw itself and its allied services behind Gorbachev's various initiatives for arms control and redoubled its efforts to discredit and vilify the Reagan administration and its policies. To this end, the KGB and its allies should "expose" alleged U.S. efforts "to launch a nuclear war" and "to conduct chemical and biological warfare"—requirements mentioned in the missive from Prague to its stations in Washington and New York.⁷

In the context of "discrediting" U.S. biological warfare, the missive from Prague in October 1985 contained a cryptic reference to a new disease: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).⁸ The KGB had recently launched an initiative that became one of its most successful propaganda efforts during the Cold War: its

AIDS disinformation campaign. Evgenii Primakov, the head of the post-Soviet Russian successor agency to the KGB, confessed in 1992 that the KGB had initiated the campaign in the second half of the 1980s and then worked to spread the thesis internationally that the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which causes AIDS, had originated in U.S. government experiments to develop a new biological weapon.⁹ According to this thesis, the AIDS virus had been created for deployment in a future war or against various unwanted groups and minorities inside and outside the United States. This HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon conspiracy theory stands as one of the most tenacious conspiracy theories to have arisen in the twentieth century, and it continues to spread today, especially throughout the Internet.¹⁰

In current public discussions, both the fabricated thesis and its global proliferation are often attributed solely to Moscow and the KGB.¹¹ This suggests, incorrectly, that the Soviet Union must bear lone responsibility for the myth's pernicious consequences. Nicoli Nattrass, director of the AIDS and Society Research Group at the University of Cape Town in South Africa, writes, "A growing body of research shows that AIDS conspiracy beliefs in the U.S. and South Africa are associated with risky sex, with not adhering to antiretroviral treatment, and with not testing for HIV"—all behaviors associated with higher HIV infection rates and thus a greater death toll.¹²

However, other groups, organizations, and individuals were also involved in spreading the conspiracy theory. Various actors around the world spread the conspiracy theory in the 1980s and beyond, whether under the influence of Soviet-bloc intelligence agencies; out of confusion or true conviction; in pursuit of personal, professional, or political gain; or because of a combination of such factors. Some of these individuals are discussed in this article. However, the article's main focus is on the KGB and the assistance provided to it by the East German Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, MfS or Stasi) and its Main Directorate for Intelligence (*Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung*, HVA). During the period under discussion in this article, 1985–1986, the HVA mainly played a supporting role to the KGB. By 1987, as a second article will show, the HVA began to play an increasingly independent or even leading role in the disinformation campaign.

The analysis here of the HVA's role in the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign, a campaign that even now continues to impede AIDS prevention and treatment,

stands in contrast to the general portrayal of the East German foreign intelligence service in public debates and even scholarly publications in the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).¹³ The focus there has been on the HVA's successes in intelligence and counterintelligence, rather than its failures, and its role in Soviet-bloc active measures has rarely been examined.¹⁴ Some works have arguably helped to contribute to the legend of the HVA's charismatic, long-serving leader, Markus Wolf, who launched his own successful public-relations campaign regarding his agency and its exploits after the collapse of East German Communism in 1989.¹⁵ During a visit to Italy in 1998, Wolf acknowledged that the HVA had played a role in spreading the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis at the behest of the KGB as part of its active measures.¹⁶ His statement came at a time when the dangerous side effects of the disinformation thesis for AIDS prevention and treatment were just becoming clear. Wolf defended the HVA's role: "Just like large sections of the public," he had considered the truthfulness of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis "to be an absolute given."¹⁷ Wolf's successor as head of the HVA in 1986, Werner Großmann, has sought, for his part, to deny or hush up any discussion of the HVA's role in the campaign.¹⁸ However, this article confirms that not only was the disinformation division (Roman numeral "X"—HVA/X) directly involved in the disinformation campaign, as Wolf confessed, but so, too, was its Sector for Science and Technology (*Sektor Wissenschaft und Technik*, HVA/SWT), which thus subordinated scientific truth—at least abroad—to larger covert-policy goals.¹⁹

One advantage that the HVA's former officers have had in influencing research and public discussion of their former activities, in contrast to other divisions of the MfS, was their success in late 1989 and early 1990 in destroying most of their operational files—all told, around 90 percent of all the files regarding their activities, including files potentially related to the AIDS disinformation campaign.²⁰ The HVA first became associated with the disinformation campaign in 1992 only because two former officers from HVA/X, Gunther Bohnsack and Herbert Brehmer, broke with the general code of silence among former HVA officers regarding their former agency's less-edifying activities. They claimed in their memoirs that the HVA, under orders from Moscow, had manipulated Soviet–East German scientist Jakob Segal into preparing a “scientific” study supporting and expanding on Moscow's original AIDS disinformation thesis.²¹ After Bohnsack, whose unit was not directly responsible for the AIDS disinformation campaign, made additional, misleading statements in the early 2000s about the

disinformation campaign that found their way into the scholarly literature, questions arose again regarding what role the HVA had played—if any—in the campaign.²² This prompted biological and chemical weapons expert Erhard Geissler not only to dismiss all of Bohnsack's previous statements as unproven but also to argue that the alleged *absence of evidence* in the Stasi archives regarding the HVA's role constituted *evidence of the HVA's absence* from the AIDS disinformation campaign in any meaningful way—a classic logical fallacy, an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*.²³ Geissler held to this argument despite knowing that the HVA's files had been almost totally destroyed—which could plausibly explain the absence of relevant files in Berlin—and even when confronted by new evidence of the HVA's involvement that came to light in the 2010s.²⁴

This evidence emerged via the opening of archives of the former state security organs in the other former Warsaw Pact countries. The HVA had destroyed most of its own files, but its “fraternal organs” in Prague and Sofia—and to some extent, Warsaw—had preserved records of their dealings with the HVA. In the secret-police archives in Bulgaria, the historian Christopher Nehring found correspondence and records of meetings of the Bulgarian active-measures division with the KGB's Service “A” and HVA/X that discussed their respective roles in the AIDS disinformation campaign.²⁵ Nehring's findings in Sofia, along with a closer examination of records from other Stasi units and the HVA's databases at the Stasi Records Archives, enabled me to locate new materials in Berlin regarding the role of the HVA (and the MfS in general) in the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign. In 2014, the results of this research were published in a German-language study.²⁶

The present article summarizes and updates, for an English-speaking audience, several of the conclusions reached in the earlier study regarding the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign and the Stasi's involvement in it during the years 1985–1986. It also provides new insights into the origins, evolution, and popularity of the disinformation campaign's underlying conspiracy theory that the U.S. government originally developed HIV/AIDS as a bioweapon. Although some authors have overstated the role of the Stasi (and even the KGB) in explaining the origins and staying power of the conspiracy theory, documentary evidence from the Bulgarian, Czechoslovak, and East German State Security archives conclusively shows that the HVA and Stasi took part in the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign in 1985–1986, if only in a supporting role.

Origins of the AIDS Disinformation Campaign: The KGB and U.S. Conspiracy Theories

On 7 September 1985, the KGB informed its “comrades” in Bulgarian foreign intelligence of a new, major disinformation campaign:

We are carrying out a complex of [active] measures in connection with the appearance in recent years of a new dangerous disease in the USA, “Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome—AIDS”... and its subsequent, rampant spread to other countries, including Western Europe. The goal of the measures is to create a favorable opinion for us abroad—namely, that this disease is the result of secret experiments by the USA's secret services and the Pentagon with new types of biological weapons that have spun out of control.²⁷

The apparent public launch of the KGB's campaign came on 30 October 1985, when the Soviet newspaper *Literaturnaya gazeta* (Literary Gazette, LG), a known outlet for KGB disinformation, published an article titled “Panic in the West, or What Is Hiding behind the Sensation Surrounding AIDS?” The author of the article, Valentin Vasilevich Zapevalov, extensively cited a July 1983 article from the Indian newspaper *Patriot*, another known outlet of KGB disinformation. Under the headline “AIDS May Invade India: Mystery Disease Caused by U.S. Experiments,” the *Patriot* had published an alleged letter from an anonymous yet “well-known American scientist and anthropologist” in New York claiming that the Pentagon had developed the AIDS virus in collaboration with the U.S. government's Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as part of its biological weapons program.²⁸

Based on the *Patriot* article, the KGB has been credited as the originator of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis, but in fact the assertions in *Patriot* in 1983 and *LG* in 1985 did not go much beyond conspiracy theories already circulating within the gay community in the United States at the time.²⁹ For example, on 9 July 1983, the Boston *Gay Community News* published an article by Charlie Shively, a radical gay-rights activist and one of the newspaper's founders and editors, that placed responsibility for the AIDS epidemic squarely on the U.S. government.³⁰ In the article, Shively cited a theory from another leading gay newspaper, the New York *Native*, that the AIDS virus had originated in the African Swine Fever Virus (ASFV). The *Native* had also reported allegations that the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had brought the African virus into the Western Hemisphere for biological warfare against Cuba. The U.S. government, Shively

wrote, had hoped the ASFV would remain isolated in Cuba, but the virus had then spread to Haiti and the United States. Because of the high cost to the U.S. government of combatting the resulting swine fever epidemic—an \$18 million indemnity for the slaughter of pigs in Haiti alone—Shively posed the question, “Would it be possible that---given \$100 million—the doctors would just decide to kill all the queers, Haitians, and IV [intravenous] drug users exposed to AIDS?”³¹

The “doctors” in this case were the medical researchers at the CDC, whom Shively blamed (incorrectly) for the infamous Tuskegee syphilis study in which the U.S. Public Health Service had observed the long-term effects of syphilis on infected African-American sharecroppers for four decades, from 1932 to 1972, without providing them with effective medical treatment.³² Shively also insinuated that AIDS might be an “ethnic weapon” developed by the Pentagon. He based this accusation on a somewhat distorted version of the 1969 testimony of a Defense Department official, Donald MacArthur, before the U.S. Congress. MacArthur had asserted that “within a period of 5 to 10 years, it would be possible to produce a synthetic biological agent, an agent that does not naturally exist and for which no natural immunity could have been acquired.”³³ Nearly all AIDS conspiracy theorists, both then and today, as well as the KGB and Stasi in their disinformation, have cited MacArthur's 1969 testimony as “proof” of a U.S. government conspiracy to construct the AIDS virus.

Why did Shively and others within the gay community at this time spread such lurid conspiracy theories about the alleged role of the U.S. government in spreading the AIDS epidemic? Given the rapid spread of the AIDS virus, the hesitant reaction of the Reagan administration in combatting it, and the openly homophobic proclamations of many of the administration's members and supporters, it was hardly surprising that the gay community would question the U.S. government's motivations and policies with regard to AIDS.³⁴ Illogical or not, it was a small step from arguing that the administration was not doing enough to combat AIDS to arguing that it somehow stood behind the AIDS epidemic or sought to fuel it. Moreover, like most conspiracy theories, the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis was based on an element of truth, or at least “truthiness.” The AIDS pandemic, the ensuing conspiracy theories regarding its origins, and the KGB's disinformation campaign arose at a time when the U.S. government was facing increased criticism at home and abroad. This was due not only to the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal but also to revelations in the 1970s of illegal (or at least legally questionable) activities in fighting the Cold War both

domestically and internationally. In the mid-1970s the Church Committee had revealed disconcerting information about the CIA's covert operations, including its experiments with lysergic acid diethylamide (better known as LSD) on individuals without their consent as part of Project MK Ultra.³⁵ Also revealed were various assassination attempts, including the plan to assassinate Congolese President Patrice Lumumba with a toxin delivered to Congo by the CIA.³⁶ The revelation of these real conspiracies by the "national security state," previously hidden from public view, helped inspire speculation about other, still-hidden conspiracies within the U.S. government. This was especially the case among marginalized groups in U.S. society that had been victims of government repression.

Shively saw the gay community and its sexuality under attack by the U.S. government and sought to rally the community to defend itself. He wrote at the end of his article, "Instead of checking out the CIA, the CDC or the medical-pharmacological establishment, too many gay people readily surrender to the lie that our sexuality is crippling us. They say our sex is adolescent, compulsive, retarded, irresponsible, sinful and dreadful."³⁷ Shively's article confirms that the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon conspiracy theory was already spreading within the gay community in the United States before the *Patriot* article and the KGB's apparent adoption of it. The popularity of the theory among some community members is in keeping with a major school of explanations of how conspiracy theories originate and how they spread. Anthropologist Alexander Rödlach writes, "Conspiracy theories are prevalent in groups that have endured harmful assaults from outsiders. Experiencing discrimination, disempowerment, and other demeaning conditions helps to explain the formulation and acceptance of conspiracy theories."³⁸ That is, among oppressed and marginalized groups in a given society, the purveying of conspiracy theories serves as a type of self-defense against discrimination and perceived outside attack. In such cases, conspiracy theories represent a type of misinformation; the propagators generally believe the false information is in fact true.

The KGB, however, was pursuing other goals, as its telegram to Sofia makes clear. The agency's main strategic goal in the longer term was to discredit the United States internationally, and in the shorter term it sought to raise questions about the (ostensibly defensive) U.S. biological weapons program.³⁹ This conforms to another major school of explanation for the origins and spread of conspiracy theories, which stresses how political extremists of the Left and Right create conspiracy theories or instrumentalize existing ones to demonize real or perceived

ideological opponents by creating “images of the enemy” (*Feindbilder*) that justify radical political action or even violence against the group or state in question. Most often—as with the KGB in this case—the propagators of conspiracy theories know that the information is false, although their theories can also gradually become part of a larger system of ideological beliefs held by the given political extremists.⁴⁰

Although the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis was not a KGB creation, the articles in *Patriot* and *LG* added a new twist to the various conspiracy theories already spreading in the United States by specifying the location at which the virus or viruses causing AIDS had supposedly been weaponized: the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) at Fort Detrick, Maryland. Zapevalov's article—in keeping with the KGB's guidelines in its telegram to the Bulgarian DS—claimed that the virus resulting from the Pentagon's experiments was inflicted on an unsuspecting world after it had been tested on unwitting individuals—drug addicts, homosexuals, the homeless, and people from the U.S. “satellite country” of Haiti.⁴¹ Whereas the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis had arisen “naturally” within the gay community in the United States, the Fort Detrick thesis—that HIV had been weaponized at USAMRIID—apparently came from Moscow and the KGB.

Why did the KGB wait until 1985 to launch its disinformation campaign? The publication in *Patriot* had apparently served in 1983 as a lone active measure, designed by Moscow to fuel existing tensions between the United States and Pakistan on the one side and India on the other.⁴² In 1985, the KGB decided to redeploy the *Patriot* article to a new, broader front on the basis of new developments. In February 1985, a U.S. government report had accused the Soviet Union of producing biological weapons in violation of the Geneva Conventions.⁴³ In October 1985, the magazine of the perennial crackpot presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche, *Executive Intelligence Review*, declared that the Soviet Union was exploiting AIDS as an offensive bioweapon by somehow contributing to its spread in the West.⁴⁴ Zapevalov referred to the article in *Executive Intelligence Review* and accused the LaRouche organization—without any evidence—of cooperation with the CIA.⁴⁵ There was also broader pressure within the KGB to strike back after the failures of its active-measures campaigns to stop the stationing of U.S. “Euromissiles” or to prevent Reagan's reelection.

The KGB had apparently hoped that the Zapevalov article would provoke a reaction from the West, especially from the Western press. This was one of the

goals of Soviet-bloc active measures. Even negative publicity or government denials were considered useful in the KGB playbook because they gave the original active measure or disinformation thesis more publicity. For some contrarians, a denial by the U.S. government was construed as confirmation for the original active-measure thesis.⁴⁶ The KGB's attitude toward active measures was similar to that of many entertainers and reality stars nowadays to scandals and accusations, preferring to be in the news rather than ignored.

In East Berlin, KGB liaison officer Vitalii Lyamin, responsible for coordinating operations with the Stasi's divisions for foreign disinformation (HVA/X) and domestic agitation and propaganda, requested on 12 November 1985 that the latter provide him with all known reactions in the Western press to Zapevalov's article.⁴⁷ The Western press, he said, might decide to "hush up" (*totschweigen*) the existence of the article and its thesis. Lyamin was also interested in alternative explanations regarding the origin of AIDS that "the Yankees [*Amis*] might have spread or may be spreading" in the Western press.⁴⁸ The Stasi complied with Lyamin's request and provided him with relevant (yet unspecified) materials.⁴⁹

The KGB "Center" in Moscow was growing frustrated with the lack of response to its Fort Detrick thesis in the United States. In a follow-up article on 13 November 1985 titled "Why the USA Press Is Silent," *LG* wrote:

It has been well-known for a long time, and it has been confirmed repeatedly: Every time that an article is published that brings to light a subversive activity of the CIA or Pentagon, an order for silence goes out in Washington, and the "free American press" follows this order.⁵⁰

Two days later the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, Arthur Hartman, officially protested against the Zapevalov article in a letter to the editors of *LG*, but his letter was not published.⁵¹ The KGB apparently decided that a rebuff to the letter would not suffice to fuel its disinformation campaign.

Co-Evolution: The KGB and LaRouche Versions of the HIV-as-Bioweapon Thesis

More interesting and useful to the KGB was the response of LaRouche and his associates to the Zapevalov article. At this time, a cycle of misinformation and disinformation arose between conspiracy theorists in the United States and those in the United Kingdom—especially individuals associated with LaRouche—and various publications promoted by the KGB or the Soviet government in general.

Two major strains of the HIV-as-bioweapon thesis had, as it were, begun to evolve: a version promoted by LaRouche and his associates and a version promoted by Moscow and the KGB.

In November 1985, LaRouche's *Executive Intelligence Review* reprinted Zapevalov's article in English translation under the title, "Text of Admissions by the Russians."⁵² Warren J. Hamerman, the chair of LaRouche's "Biological Holocaust Task Force," claimed that the article marked Moscow's response to LaRouche's earlier accusations.⁵³ According to Hamerman, Moscow had confirmed with its article "the possibility that the AIDS virus could have been 'bioengineered' and worked up into a weapon in a military laboratory."⁵⁴ However, Hamerman turned Moscow's accusation on its head. He now wrote of "overwhelming circumstantial evidence" of "direct Soviet involvement in spreading AIDS in the West."⁵⁵ That is, Moscow had somehow arranged for the bioengineering or weaponization of the AIDS virus and then spread it throughout the United States and Western Europe. Hamerman insinuated that the World Health Organization (WHO), allegedly dominated by the Soviet Union, had played a key role.⁵⁶

London venereologist John Seale, whom Hamerman had previously interviewed in support of his contention that the AIDS epidemic was providing Moscow with a strategic advantage over the West, spoke more specifically in December 1985 about the alleged "bioengineering" of the AIDS virus.⁵⁷ He claimed that HIV had been genetically engineered by adding a gene to the visna virus, a microbe that attacks sheep. However, in contrast to Hamerman and Zapevalov, he initially left open the question of whether the Soviet Union or the United States had genetically engineered the virus.⁵⁸ Seale's claim was quickly picked up by Radio Moscow's World Service on 26 December, which declared it to be proof of the Fort Detrick thesis.⁵⁹ More importantly, Seale had unintentionally added a new element to the Soviet thesis. Whereas Soviet propaganda until then had simply spoken of a "mixing" of viruses and their weaponization at Fort Detrick, the KGB now added the element of genetic engineering to its thesis. This addition attracted a potential new audience to the KGB thesis: opponents of the new technology of genetic engineering, some of whom saw in the AIDS-origin thesis proof of their fears.⁶⁰

Seale inspired the KGB in the further development of its enhanced conspiracy theory, and he also inspired a California doctor, Robert Strecker, who, along with his brother Theodore, developed an alternative HIV-as-bioweapon conspiracy

theory: According to the Streckers, HIV had been genetically engineered by recombining the visna virus with the bovine leukemia virus.⁶¹ Moreover, although the genetic engineering had taken place at Fort Detrick, it had not occurred under the auspices of the Pentagon; instead, the U.S. National Institutes for Health (NIH) and National Cancer Institute (NCI), infiltrated by Soviet agents via the WHO, had overseen the operation. The WHO and the NIH, the Streckers claimed, had spread the virus, in accordance with Soviet plans, to “unknowing Africans” through inoculations, to hemophiliacs through contaminated blood transfusions, and to the poor in the U.S. South through “free shots.”⁶² The Streckers’ thesis had more influence in the United States, especially with subsequent conspiracy theorists, than either Seale’s ideas or the subsequent version of the HIV-as-bioweapon conspiracy theory developed by Jakob Segal and his wife, Lilli Segal, which the KGB and Stasi sought to promote internationally.⁶³

Seale’s more important contribution, at least for the purposes of LaRouche (and many U.S. conservatives demanding widespread AIDS testing of individuals), was his casual-contact thesis. The AIDS virus, Seale and then LaRouche argued, could be spread through saliva and insects, not just through sexual contact, and this finding had supposedly been covered up by scientists and the medical profession—that is, it was yet another conspiracy theory.⁶⁴ Seale rallied to support LaRouche’s 1986 ballot initiative in California, Proposition 64, which would have required the testing of all 27 million Californians for HIV, removed HIV-positive individuals from the workplace, and confined them in quarantine.⁶⁵ The ballot initiative was defeated by a margin of two to one.⁶⁶ Still, it was a sign of the panic surrounding the AIDS epidemic at the time that nearly one-third of California’s voters supported such extreme measures in combatting AIDS.⁶⁷ The campaign itself was yet another example of how political extremists can harness and instrumentalize conspiracy theories to win new supporters for their political goals. Implicit in LaRouche’s propagation of the HIV-as-bioweapon thesis was the need to combat homosexuality, which allegedly threatened to weaken the United States in the face of the Cold War with the Soviet Union. Strecker’s variant of the HIV-as-bioweapon thesis warned against the dangers of U.S. government bureaucrats, their counterparts at the United Nations (UN), and the dangers of a Communist fifth column. Such mobilizations were hardy perennials of far-right discourse in the United States and the United Kingdom during the Cold War, especially during the Red and Lavender Scares of the late 1940s and 1950s.⁶⁸

Thus, by 1986, two major strains of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon conspiracy theory had coevolved: a KGB-preferred version and a version (or versions) preferred by LaRouche and his followers. Figure 1 demonstrates this coevolution. The KGB built on the original, general conspiracy theory that had begun circulating in the gay community in the United States in 1983 that the government had somehow weaponized the virus causing AIDS—that is, the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis—by specifying the location at which the biomedical engineering allegedly place: Fort Detrick, Maryland. Influenced by the Soviet claims, Seale suggested that HIV was created by applying the new technology of genetic engineering to the visna virus in sheep. (Seale initially left open, however, where the genetic engineering had taken place; he later suggested that the Soviet Union, not the United States, was the guilty party.)⁶⁹ The Streckers built on the claims of Seale and, indirectly, the KGB but revised the conspiracy theory to turn it against the Soviet Union and an alleged fifth column in the United States; they blamed the allegedly Soviet-infiltrated NIH and WHO. They made their version of the conspiracy theory sound more scientific by naming a second virus that had allegedly been crossed with visna: the bovine leukemia virus. As Figure 1 shows, the KGB came to promote an enhanced, slightly revised, and more detailed version of its original conspiracy theory beginning in 1986. The new version originated with East Berlin scientists Jakob and Lilli Segal. The Segals suggested, as the KGB had before, that the virus had been constructed at Fort Detrick. In keeping with Seale, they argued that the AIDS virus had been genetically engineered from visna, but, in contrast to Strecker, they suggested that visna had been crossed with a third virus, human T-cell lymphotropic virus type 1 (HTLV-1), to construct a potential bioweapon that became HIV.⁷⁰

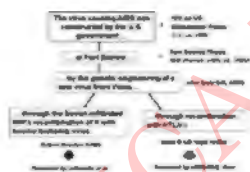


Figure 1. Coevolution of the Two Major Strains of the HIV-as-U.S.-Bioweapon Conspiracy Theory, 1983–1985

The Cycle of Misinformation and Disinformation: U.S. Conspiracy Theorists and the KGB

The cycle of misinformation and disinformation regarding HIV as a bioweapon was not limited to the two major strains promoted by LaRouche and the KGB. In May 1986, *LG* published a follow-up article titled “AIDS: More Questions Than

Answers,” which cited not only Seale, as Radio Moscow had in December 1985, but also Nathaniel S. Lehrman, a psychiatrist and former clinical director at Brooklyn State Hospital.⁷¹

In November 1985, the New York *Amsterdam News*, an African-American newspaper, had run an article based on an interview with Lehrman. He had allegedly told the newspaper's reporter that the spread of the AIDS epidemic in various parts of Africa was a result of bacteriological and chemical experiments by the CIA; that similar experiments had been carried out openly on gays, drug addicts, and African Americans in the United States; and that the CIA and CDC, which was responsible for combatting the AIDS epidemic, were part of the conspiracy.⁷² In a letter to the editor of the *Amsterdam News*, Lehrman later denied he had made these specific assertions. He still left open the possibility, however, that the “spread of AIDS in Africa was the result of activities by the U.S. government, including the CIA.” He also still “suspected” that the U.S. government had carried out experiments relating to AIDS on unwitting subjects, and he insinuated that the U.S. government might seek to use the AIDS virus to eliminate unwanted leaders in Africa.⁷³ LG quoted selectively from the interview and Lehrman's ensuing letter in support of Moscow's Fort Detrick thesis.⁷⁴ Clearly, the KGB and its allied services were closely reading the U.S. press, including the alternative and community press, in search of “confirmation” for their own baseless thesis.⁷⁵

Although the grounds for Moscow's citation of Lehrman's views were clear, why had the *Amsterdam News* provided the U.S. psychiatrist with a platform? At the end of 1983, as government statistics began to show that African Americans were disproportionately affected by the disease, the alleged potential role of the U.S. government in the origins of HIV became one of the major themes in the black press's coverage of the AIDS epidemic.⁷⁶ Until that point, the traditional black press, just like the mainstream news media in the United States, had insinuated that AIDS was a “gay” disease that—with the exception of another marginalized group, intravenous drug users—spread only occasionally to otherwise “innocent” victims, such as hemophiliacs who had received HIV-infected blood or children born to parents with HIV.⁷⁷ Against this backdrop, the publication of conspiracy theories in the black press served for their promoters as means to defend the African-American community against perceived outside attack from the U.S. government and to keep the community from potential identification with homosexuality. For the first years of the epidemic, as the mainstream media associated AIDS with

gays, mainstream African-American newspapers generally did not report on the topic at all. The underlying assumption was simple: blacks were not gay; or, to the extent they were, they were either unrepresentative of the African-American community or an embarrassment to it. By the mid-1980s, as the epidemic was increasingly (if incompletely) acknowledged within the African-American community, conspiracy theorizing helped maintain this ideological boundary between the community and homosexuality. It also served to maintain a boundary, at least for some conspiracy theorists, between ostensibly white gays suffering from AIDS and other, “innocent” victims of the disease, who were the only victims within the black community, with the possible exception of intravenous drug users.⁷⁸

Lehrman had avoided any explicit condemnations of gays in his commentaries about alleged U.S. government involvement in the origin of AIDS. But he argued that not only a virus but also chemical toxins could cause AIDS, and he implied that African Americans, in contrast to other high-risk groups such as gays and intravenous drug users, could have developed AIDS from exposure to such toxins.⁷⁹ This could explain at least in part the apparent interest of the *Amsterdam News* in his theories. With regard to the gay community in general, Lehrman had already laid out his views in *New York Jewish Week* in 1984. He had declared “homosexuality” to be “a dangerous political cult, which seeks deliberately, if often surreptitiously, to spread sexual promiscuity.”⁸⁰

Given *LG*’s citation of Lehrman’s alleged views, the question arises whether Lehrman was working for the KGB. The available evidence does not indicate that he was involved with Soviet officials, let alone the KGB. In the days before the publication of the article in *LG*, Major General Vladimir Petrovich Ivanov, the director of the KGB’s Service “A,” responsible for active measures, told his Bulgarian colleagues that the KGB’s AIDS disinformation thesis had “attracted many renowned scientists” and that the KGB was “working on a broad front to expose the USA” as the source of AIDS.⁸¹ The “renowned scientists” in the *LG* article, including Lehrman, were in fact relatively unknown medical doctors, and there is no evidence that the KGB had influenced them directly.

Nevertheless, the KGB may have influenced Lehrman’s views covertly and indirectly. In Lehrman’s subsequent letter to the editor of *Amsterdam News*, in which he challenged the reporting of his earlier statements, he cited as a source for his assertions regarding the CIA the Washington-based *Covert Action Information*

Bulletin (CAIB), established by CIA defector Philip Agee.⁸² Based on the notes of former KGB archivist Vasiliy Mitrokhin, the KGB facilitated the bulletin's establishment; Agee had already long served as Agent "PONT" for the KGB; and the members of *CAIB*'s editorial board, who apparently did not know about the KGB's involvement in their magazine, received the cryptonym "RUPOR." The KGB fed the magazine with secret information, especially the names of alleged CIA agents, but it could not provide enough material for an entire magazine. Therefore, the journalists and disgruntled former CIA employees on the publication's staff sought out publicly available information to discredit the CIA and other U.S. government agencies.⁸³

Although Lehrman unknowingly cited an outlet for KGB disinformation, he became aware that the Soviet Union was citing him—a fact he acknowledged in his own article for *CAIB* in the summer of 1987. In the article, "Is AIDS Non-Infectious? The Possibility and Its CBW [Chemical and Biological Warfare] Implications," he insinuated, just like *LG* before, that AIDS was the planned or unplanned product of U.S. chemical and biological warfare research.⁸⁴ He also cited the pseudoscientific theories of Jakob Segal, who was closely associated at this time with the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign.⁸⁵ Published in two parts in the summer 1987 and winter 1988 issues of *CAIB* was a long essay by editorial board member Robert Lederer, who presented "alternative theories" for the origin of AIDS, many of which had been associated with Soviet and Cuban propaganda. To Lederer's credit, he did critique each of the theories, including Lehrman's contribution.⁸⁶

In hinting at a possible U.S. government conspiracy, Lehrman was by no means alone. In October 1987, Shively returned to his conspiracy theorizing in a new article for *Gay Community News*. Once again, he sought to defend his community against perceived outside attack from the CDC, which "would have us believe that AIDS was first spread in this country by homosexual and junkie behaviors."⁸⁷ In the article, he cited various conspiracy theories regarding the origins and spread of the AIDS virus, including those popular with the Streckers regarding the alleged role of vaccination programs and Lederer's contributions to *CAIB* regarding alternative explanations for the origins of AIDS and the KGB's Fort Detrick thesis as presented by Segal.⁸⁸

The cycle of misinformation and disinformation between U.S. conspiracy theorists and the KGB did not begin and end with Lehrman, Shively, or LaRouche and his

associates. For example, at the end of October 1988, the KGB's disinformation specialists in Service "A" told their Bulgarian colleagues: "In the USA there is an Islamic sect that is blaming Jewish-American doctors of intentionally infecting Muslims and especially children with AIDS. This can be exploited with regard to the export of American blood."⁸⁹ The accusation in question came from Steve Cokely, the "health minister" of Louis Farrakhan's Nation of Islam and then adviser to Chicago Mayor Eugene Sawyer. For many years thereafter, Farrakhan's organization continued to spread the allegation that Jewish doctors were intentionally infecting African-American children. "Professor Griff" from the rap group Public Enemy gave further popularity to Farrakhan's anti-Semitic version of the thesis.⁹⁰

The Green-Monkey Hypothesis, the Segals, and the Harare Brochure

The May 1986 article in *LG* had reported on the speculations of Seale and Lehrman and on a conflict at the international symposium "AIDS in Africa" in Brussels in December 1985. After several Western scientists had presented the thesis of a natural origin of AIDS in Africa, a group of African researchers at the event had published a declaration that none of the papers presented at the conference had provided "concrete evidence" of an African origin of AIDS. The issue of an African origin of AIDS had then been stricken from the symposium's agenda because, as *LG* reported, the thesis "smacked strongly of racism."⁹¹ Several African governments had canceled the appearance of their scientists at the gathering or had forbidden their participation altogether. They feared a potential negative impact on tourism if their countries became associated with "AIDS in Africa." They also rejected the theory of an African origin of AIDS as racist.⁹²

The offending statements by Western scientists at the symposium had been based in part on an "informal hypothesis" that virologist Myron "Max" Essex from the Harvard School of Public Health had presented to the press—namely, that HIV had spread from green monkeys to human beings in Africa.⁹³ From a skewed ideological perspective, the KGB viewed the green-monkey hypothesis not as an attempt by a scientist to explain a complex study in simple terms to the public or as an effort to gain publicity for his work but as an attempt by the U.S. government to counter the Soviet thesis and limit the ensuing damage to its reputation.⁹⁴ Ivanov, for example, had informed his Bulgarian "comrades" in May 1986 that the KGB was "controlling everything being published" on the origins of HIV/AIDS in the USSR and would not permit the publication of alternate theories "favorable to the

USA (such as that regarding the monkey origins of the disease).⁹⁵ The reactions of African politicians and scientists before and during the Brussels symposium also made it clear to Moscow that a propaganda offensive against the green-monkey hypothesis and an African origin of HIV would help strengthen Soviet foreign propaganda and influence in Africa.

The KGB thus counted it as a major international breakthrough for its disinformation campaign when a photocopied brochure with the title, *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil, NOT out of AFRICA* was distributed immediately before and during the summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in Harare, Zimbabwe in August-September 1986.⁹⁶ The brochure expanded on the KGB's Fort Detrick thesis and also contained a "scientific study" attacking the "legend of the green monkey."⁹⁷ The authors of this section of the brochure, Jakob and Lilli Segal, wrote that Essex had spread his "legend" in the mass media as concerns about the development of biological weapons and AIDS were creating a "tense situation" in U.S. public opinion.⁹⁸ The Segals asserted: "His legend was an attempt to misinform the general public, feeling threatened by the spreading of AIDS; the attempt was successful."⁹⁹ The Segals had indeed discovered an error in Essex's "informal hypothesis." Although he and his co-researchers had written only about a close relationship between a retrovirus in green monkeys and HIV, Essex had publicly presented a much more specific conclusion: that the virus in green monkeys was the direct predecessor to HIV and that the monkey virus had become HIV after its communication to human beings.¹⁰⁰ The brochure containing the Segals' study received a positive welcome from the local press. The Zimbabwean journal *Social Change and Development* printed a positive review and summary of the pamphlet, and the Harare *Sunday Mail* cited the study, written by the "French [*sic*] scientists" Jakob and Lilli Segal in a front-page article: "Allegations that AIDS has its roots in Africa are a gigantic and racist deception operation the United States is running to divert attention from real facts."¹⁰¹ They represented an attempt "to sweep the latest filth of the white man before the black man's door."¹⁰²

Who were Jakob and Lilli Segal? Although both Segals were often identified as "French scientists," as in Harare's *Sunday Mail*, they were in fact Soviet citizens living in Communist East Berlin. However, both Segals did have a connection to France: as members of the German Communist Party and as Jews, they had fled Nazi Germany in 1934 to France, where they attained French citizenship and later fought in the anti-Nazi Resistance. During the war, both had received Soviet citizenship via Moscow's embassy in France based on Jakob Segal's birth in

Soviet-annexed Lithuania. On the orders of the same embassy, they had emigrated to the GDR in 1953, where Jakob Segal established the Department of Biology at Humboldt University in Berlin. In the 1950s, both had willingly provided information to the Stasi, although only Jakob was designated a “contact person,” and for a short period the KGB took over the contact with the Segals. From 1959 to 1962, Jakob was returned to the Stasi, which registered him as an unofficial collaborator. The Stasi broke off contact in 1962 because Jakob, although still a loyal and convinced Communist, had proven too independent and had refused to follow the Stasi's orders. The Segals taught in Cuba after the revolution there before returning to the German Democratic Republic (GDR).¹⁰³

Nevertheless, despite these earlier experiences with the KGB and Stasi, it is unclear what connection, if any, the Segals had to either secret service at the time the KGB initiated its AIDS disinformation campaign in 1985. The evidence currently available suggests that Segal began his research on his own in the summer of 1985, although he may have been prompted directly or covertly by the KGB.¹⁰⁴ His work was influenced at least indirectly by the KGB through the articles in *Patriot* (1983) and *LG* (1985) espousing the Fort Detrick thesis.¹⁰⁵

Was the Stasi somehow involved with the Segals or their research at this point, as Bohnsack later suggested?¹⁰⁶ The KGB asserted to its Bulgarian “comrades” that the Stasi had become involved in the disinformation campaign in 1985.¹⁰⁷ Because of the wholesale destruction of the HVA's records, it cannot be ascertained exactly how and when in 1985 the HVA became involved in the campaign. According to the registers for incoming messages from the KGB and the HVA's database for incoming and outgoing information, the KGB forwarded its first and only missive regarding AIDS for the year 1985 to the MfS in the first half of June 1985.¹⁰⁸ Apparently, the MfS, in contrast to the Bulgarians, did not receive a message about the AIDS disinformation campaign in October 1985. The Stasi may have been informed about the disinformation campaign in the KGB's dispatch from June, and, at the very latest, the Stasi's division for foreign disinformation and active measures, HVA/X, would have learned about the KGB's disinformation campaign in mid-October 1985, when its leaders met with representatives of the KGB's Service “A” in Berlin.¹⁰⁹ By this point, the KGB had informed the Bulgarian “comrades” about the AIDS disinformation campaign and requested their assistance and had also contacted Czechoslovak foreign intelligence, which had ordered its stations in Washington and New York to devise relevant active measures.¹¹⁰

At the very latest, HVA/X was activated for the AIDS disinformation campaign in November 1985, when KGB liaison officer Lyamin secured the assistance of the Stasi's division for domestic propaganda in gathering reactions in the Western press to Zapevalov's article and Moscow's Fort Detrick thesis.¹¹¹ Given that the KGB "Center" in Moscow had ordered its station in Karlsruh to have Lyamin track Western reactions to AIDS disinformation, he likely would have informed not only the Stasi's domestic propaganda division but also HVA/X, with whom he mainly coordinated, about his requirements. By the end of the year, the Stasi, prompted by Lyamin, was also seeking East German scientists who might come out in support of Moscow's Fort Detrick thesis.¹¹²

Wolfgang Mutz, the deputy director of HVA/X, later suggested to his colleagues in Bulgaria's Durzhavna Sigurnost (State Security) organs that the HVA had taken steps to "attract" GDR scientists to the AIDS disinformation campaign and that one of them—clearly, Jakob Segal—had "prepared a study that proves that AIDS was the by-product of a biological weapon of the USA."¹¹³ Mutz also credited the "operational division" of the HVA, with which HVA/X had been cooperating, for successfully obtaining "a great work with scientific value"—that is, Segal's study—for the AIDS disinformation campaign.¹¹⁴

The operational division of the HVA to which Lyamin and the HVA/X turned when seeking open-source intelligence, such as newspaper accounts regarding the origins of AIDS or, for that matter, information about East German scientists working in the fields of AIDS, biotechnology, and genetic engineering, was the office responsible for foreign intelligence in the latter three fields—namely, Department (*Referat*) 5 in Division XIII of the HVA's Sector for Science and Technology (*Sektor Wissenschaft und Technik*, SWT), abbreviated HVA/SWT/XIII/5.¹¹⁵ At the beginning of September 1985, its officer Dieter van de Sand registered a "security dossier" (*Sicherungsvorgang*, SVG), "Wind," apparently regarding the protection of East German scientists in the areas of AIDS research, genetic engineering, and biotechnology from outside "attacks" in the form of espionage or manipulation by foreign agents.¹¹⁶ At some point between the registration of "Wind" in September 1985 and May 1986, when van de Sand ordered the monitoring of the Segals' mail, both Segals were added to the dossier and thus to van de Sand's security responsibilities.¹¹⁷ Thus, the "operational division" of the HVA, which Mutz later associated with Segal's study; the office in the HVA that gathered relevant intelligence about AIDS, genetic engineering, and biotechnology that could be used in the AIDS disinformation campaign; and the

office responsible for “securing” the Segals on behalf of the Stasi were one and the same: HVA/SWT/XIII/5.

Beyond the registration of the Segals under “Wind,” another likely indicator of the interest of HVA/SWT—or, alternatively, the KGB—in the Segals in connection with the AIDS disinformation campaign is Jakob Segal's early knowledge of Lehrman's publications in New York. On 19 March 1986 (i.e., before *LG* published its May 1986 article referring to the publications), Segal had written to a colleague about Lehrman's findings and their publication in an “obscure club newspaper”—apparently Segal's (incorrect) understanding of *Amsterdam News*.¹¹⁸ This occurred about one month after Lehrman had published a press release including copies of the articles from *Amsterdam News* and his letters to the editor. He added typewritten comments regarding the publications and hinted at alleged attempts at intervention in the same by the CIA.¹¹⁹ Segal cited the alleged accusations by Lehrman regarding repression by the CIA in his March letter.¹²⁰ How did Segal, living in Communist East Berlin, learn so quickly about Lehrman's articles in the “obscure” *Amsterdam News* in New York?

At some point HVA/SWT obtained Lehrman's press release, a copy of which can still be found in the Stasi files, but whether this was before or after Segal's letter is unclear.¹²¹ Even though one cannot rule out that HVA/SWT received its information about Lehrman from Jakob or Lilli Segal, the question of how Jakob Segal heard of Lehrman would need to be explained. A more likely possibility is that Segal learned about Lehrman from HVA/SWT. This is far more plausible than the other way around, given HVA/SWT's access to foreign intelligence, including open-source intelligence from the HVA's station in New York. Another plausible scenario is that Segal and HVA/SWT learned about Lehrman's activities from a common source—possibly the KGB, which was monitoring the U.S. press closely for materials related to the HIV-as-US-bioweapon thesis.

Whatever role the KGB or HVA might or might not have played in the Segals' research, Jakob Segal began in mid-March 1986 to send his study to editors and academics abroad for potential publication in scientific journals and also in newspapers and popular magazines—that is, for propaganda purposes.¹²² With regard to his activities, Segal claimed privately to have the backing of the international secretary of East Germany's ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED), Hermann Axen.¹²³ Segal may have been exaggerating or lying when it came to Axen—perhaps he had simply informed the latter about his own planned

research—but Axen did oversee the party's foreign propaganda, including campaigns in which the Stasi's active measures played a role.¹²⁴ He certainly had the authority to give Segal the green light for publishing abroad and may have even commissioned Segal's study for use in foreign propaganda at Soviet request.¹²⁵

Whether Segal decided on his own to begin his research in the summer of 1985 (as he claimed) or was prompted by the KGB, the Stasi, or someone else, HVA/SWT became aware of Segal's research at the very latest in the spring of 1986.¹²⁶ On 7 May 1986, the HVA/SWT's van de Sand, the Stasi officer associated with “securing” the Segals, ordered the surveillance of their mail.¹²⁷ Perhaps the HVA—and Moscow—wanted to know about Segal's contacts for potential use in their disinformation campaign; at the very least, HVA/SWT wanted to prevent the Segals from being approached by Western agents who might seek to contact them.¹²⁸

The month of July 1986 marked a turning point for the HVA with regard to both the Segals and the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign. By this point HVA/SWT had been in touch with Segal to provide him with at least one piece of advice regarding his study.¹²⁹ Whether he took the advice or ignored it remains unclear, but by this time he would have learned—if he did not know long before—about HVA's interest in his research. In the same month, HVA/SWT received its first piece of intelligence information from a contact person, “Diagnosis”—the apparent codename for one or both of the Segals.¹³⁰ The nominal coauthor of the Segals' study, Ronald Dehmlow (IM “Nils”), also received his first secret assignment from HVA/SWT at the beginning of July 1986 regarding the Segals and their research.¹³¹ At the end of July 1986, Dehmlow's control officer noted that the Segals were preparing their AIDS study not only for Axen, as Jakob Segal was claiming privately, but also for HVA/SWT.¹³² Although the Stasi officer had likely learned of Axen's alleged role from Dehmlow (and thus indirectly from Segal), the information regarding HVA/SWT's role could have come only from within the Stasi itself.¹³³

If Jakob Segal had been asked in July 1986, he might have disputed HVA/SWT's claim that he was preparing his AIDS study for the MfS as well as for Axen. After 1989, Segal denied publicly and privately that the Stasi had played any role in his publications.¹³⁴ Still, the fact that HVA/SWT—“the security,” as Segal called them—had given him advice would have undoubtedly prompted him to ask, if he did not already know, why the MfS was interested in his research.¹³⁵ He would

have learned from HVA/SWT—or, given his earlier dealings with the KGB and Stasi, been able to guess—that they were interested in using his AIDS study for their own ends.

Operation “Denver”: The Stasi and the Harare Brochure

Given the intensification of HVA/SWT interest in the Segals and their AIDS study in July 1986, it is not surprising that in the same month HVA/X officially registered an Operation “Denver”—not Operation “INFEKTION” as Bohnsack claimed in the 2000s—in the HVA's files.¹³⁶ In a memorandum to Bulgarian DS officials dated 3 September 1986, HVA/X defined “Denver” as follows:

With the goal of exposing the dangers to mankind arising from the research, production, and use of biological weapons, and also in order to strengthen anti-American sentiments in the world and to spark domestic political controversies in the USA, the GDR side will present you with a scientific study and other materials that prove that AIDS originated in the USA, not in Africa, and that AIDS is a product of the USA's bioweapons research.¹³⁷

Given the registration of Operation “Denver” in July 1986, Wolf's claim that the KGB first requested HVA/X's assistance in the disinformation campaign in the fall of 1986 rings untrue.¹³⁸

The comments of Deputy Director Mutz of HVA/X regarding “Denver” in a meeting with his Bulgarian “comrades” in mid-September 1986 also suggest earlier involvement by the HVA in the KGB's efforts. A representative of the Bulgarian active-measures division summarized Mutz's comments:

The German comrades informed us that for the realization of this active measure, scientists from the GDR were attracted to the topic, and one of them has prepared a study that proves that AIDS was the by-product of a biological weapon of the USA. The study has been and is being used by them in various alternative media around the world.¹³⁹

From the context, HVA/X was clearly referring to “AIDS: Its Nature and Origin” by Jakob and Lilli Segal, which had been photocopied and distributed with *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil, NOT out of AFRICA* during the NAM summit in Harare.¹⁴⁰ The Segals' study, HVA/X claimed to the Bulgarians, was its “active measure.”¹⁴¹ Thus, it was not a mere coincidence, as Wolf suggested in 1998, that the HVA obtained a copy of the Segals' study around the same time that the KGB asked HVA/X to help spread the Fort Detrick thesis internationally.¹⁴²

What exactly did it mean for Mutz to declare the Segals' published—actually, photocopied—study to be its active measure?

What it certainly did not mean—contrary to what Geissler and Sprinkle have implied—was that HVA/X was claiming control over Segal and his research, let alone authorship of Segal's study.¹⁴³ The officers of HVA/X never made such a claim regarding Segal or his research in their annual meetings with their Bulgarian “comrades” in the years 1986–1989. Indeed, HVA/X generally did not draft larger publications itself, as opposed to forged letters or the occasional newspaper article to be placed in publications outside the Soviet bloc.¹⁴⁴ In many cases, HVA/X would request that an author draft a manuscript based on the organization's requirements for a given active measure.¹⁴⁵ The author might be an unofficial collaborator of the HVA or the MfS in general—not necessarily HVA/X—and thus someone who knew that the Stasi stood behind the request. Alternatively, the author might have been a contact in the GDR who might or might not have known he or she was dealing with the Stasi; a contact in the West who did not know—at least officially—about the involvement of the Stasi; or a selected expert from East Germany who had simply agreed to draft the manuscript on a one-time (or case-by-case) basis.¹⁴⁶ For other active measures, HVA/X simply made use of existing manuscripts or studies about which it had learned and over which the MfS apparently had had no influence but whose arguments seemed to support HVA/X's desired disinformation or propaganda thesis.¹⁴⁷ That is, given the shared understanding of the term “active measures” between the East German and Bulgarian intelligence officers, HVA/X was not exaggerating or lying when it proclaimed a published version of the Segal study—for example, the Harare brochure—to be the HVA's active measure, even if the Segals had drafted the study contained in the brochure on their own with no, or little, help or urging from the HVA (or, in this case, HVA/SWT).

That HVA/X proclaimed the finished Segal study to be its “active measure” was more likely to suggest that the HVA had played or was playing a role in its publication and distribution. In the case of other manuscripts that HVA/X dubbed to be “its” active measures, it had obtained, or sought to obtain, the manuscript's publication outside the Soviet bloc under the actual author's name, anonymously, or under the name of a selected contact person or unofficial collaborator living outside the Soviet bloc.¹⁴⁸ Especially trusted agents outside the Soviet bloc who regularly provided such assistance were dubbed “channels” by the Soviet-bloc intelligence services. The various East-bloc countries' disinformation divisions

assisted one another in finding appropriate “channels” for manuscripts associated with their active measures, depending on the desired language(s) and place(s) of publication for a given work. Some “channels” also assumed responsibility for the translation of a given publication into the target language.¹⁴⁹ In other cases, the original or designated author of the given study, whatever his or her relationship to the HVA might have been, took the initiative in arranging publication outside the Soviet bloc, with the HVA or the “fraternal organs” assisting, if at all, only covertly.¹⁵⁰

Did HVA/X—or the HVA more broadly, as was often the case—play a role in the publication and distribution of the Segals’ study as part of the Harare brochure?

The destruction of the most relevant HVA records—the most important being the files regarding Operation “Denver”—means that the most important and substantive documentation of the potential involvement of HVA/X in the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure, at least until the general opening of the former KGB archives, has been destroyed. Nevertheless, there is no reason to disbelieve a priori Mutz’s claims to the Bulgarians based on the irrelevance or absence of “German sources” in the Stasi archives.¹⁵¹ Mutz had no reason to lie to his Bulgarian “comrades” about the HVA’s unspecified role in the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure. The goal of such bilateral discussions between the divisions for active measures of the East European security services was to secure technical support for the further popularization of each side’s active measures. This was especially the case for disinformation campaigns led by the KGB, which expected a substantive effort from the other Soviet-bloc services.¹⁵² The KGB had already made clear to the Bulgarians its expectations regarding the AIDS disinformation campaign.¹⁵³ False information about technical aspects of an active measure could create difficulties in obtaining effective assistance from the other security services in the future. Moreover, in other bilateral meetings regarding active measures, HVA/X had openly stated or implied that an author of a given manuscript had secured publication on his or her own, without assistance from the HVA.¹⁵⁴ Why Mutz would suddenly have lied in the case of Segal’s study’s appearance in the Harare brochure is unclear.

Geissler has made much of the fact that Mutz did not bring a copy of Segal’s study or the Harare brochure with him to the meeting in Sofia in September 1986. Instead, Mutz promised to send the Bulgarians a copy after his return to East Berlin. Geissler writes, “One must conclude from this that no one in Division 10

[HVA/X] yet had a copy of Segal's manuscript, neither from the Segals themselves nor from another division of the MfS."¹⁵⁵ Once again, absence of evidence allegedly serves as evidence of absence.

Although the divisions for active measures exchanged manuscripts and publications, along with supporting information, associated with their larger disinformation campaigns at such bilateral meetings, they also frequently promised to send a given publication—including ones that had already been distributed or were even publicly available—to their Soviet-bloc partner only in the weeks or months following the meeting.¹⁵⁶ Why this was the case remains unclear. Perhaps the disinformation specialists wanted to gauge whether the other side was interested before providing it with a given publication; perhaps the division had encountered logistical problems in obtaining the desired number of copies; or perhaps there was an exaggerated sense of secrecy regarding such publications based on the need-to-know principle. Whatever the reason may be, the frequent delays by the disinformation divisions in exchanging such publications suggest that Geissler's conclusion that HVA/X did not yet possess a copy of the publication, based on its failure to provide a copy to the Bulgarian "comrades" in September 1986, is without merit.

Moreover, newly released evidence from the Bulgarian archives confirms that HVA/X fulfilled its promise to its colleagues in Sofia. By the beginning of January 1987 at the latest, Bulgarian foreign intelligence had received a copy of the Harare brochure from HVA/X for use in its own active measures in support of the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign—Bulgarian codeword "Pandem" or pandemic.¹⁵⁷ Thus, HVA/X not only called the Harare brochure their active measure; they also provided the Bulgarians with a copy, despite Mutz's failure to bring one with him to Sofia in mid-September 1986 and the brochure's apparent absence in the Stasi files following the destruction of most of the HVA's records.¹⁵⁸

Still, despite HVA/X's secret, official assertions to its Bulgarian counterparts, Geissler and Sprinkle insist on offering an alternative explanation that precludes a Stasi role in the origins and distribution of the Harare brochure. They argue that a certain professor in Cameroon, to whom Segal had sent a copy of his study in June 1986, had subsequently handed it off to "African journalists" who had then arranged both for its publication as a brochure and for its subsequent distribution during the NAM summit in Harare.¹⁵⁹ Segal later wrote with regard to the brochure that unnamed "African journalists" had put it together and arranged for its

publication.¹⁶⁰ The Harare brochure, Geissler and Sprinkle conclude, had resulted exclusively from the efforts of the Cameroonian professor, unknown “African journalists,” and Segal himself. The implication they draw is that HVA/X need not have played—and, given the absence of evidence in the Stasi archives, did not play—any role.¹⁶¹

This alternative explanation has egregious problems. The only evidence of the Cameroonian professor's role is that Segal provided him with a copy of his study and requested that the professor make it known to scientists in his country.¹⁶² There is no evidence that the professor fulfilled Segal's request, provided “African journalists” with a copy of it, or otherwise arranged for publication of what became the Harare brochure. Nor is there any evidence that the professor even responded to Segal's letter; at least, Geissler and Sprinkle do not cite such a response.

Furthermore, even if the not-further-specified “African journalists” or the Cameroonian professor had arranged for the brochure's publication or distribution, this need not have excluded a role for the HVA.¹⁶³ After, all, one of the central activities of HVA/X and its equivalents in the other Soviet-bloc security services was bringing manuscripts to the attention of journalists and publishers outside the Soviet bloc, whether the latter had any formal relation to the MfS or not. With regard to the brochure's publication and distribution during the Harare summit, the HVA, which had its own residency in Harare—that is, not just HVA/X, on which Geissler and Sprinkle unjustifiably focus exclusively—had the motive, means, and opportunity to popularize the Segals' study and effectively confessed to having done so in top-secret exchanges with its Bulgarian colleagues.¹⁶⁴ Such evidence is lacking with regard to the Cameroonian professor.

Newly uncovered evidence suggests the KGB, too, played a role in arranging for the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure—a fact that conforms to the general claims of both the KGB and the HVA regarding their cooperation on the AIDS disinformation campaign.¹⁶⁵ In a 1992 letter, Lilli Segal named a specific African journalist resident in West Germany in 1986 as the “publisher” of the brochure distributed in Harare in 1986.¹⁶⁶ The journalist in question worked for an African magazine published in the FRG. The magazine, at least according to the papers of former KGB archivist Mitrokhin, was subsidized by the KGB, and its publisher, who also worked as a correspondent for a Nigerian and a Ugandan newspaper, had allegedly been recruited as KGB agent “Borisov.”¹⁶⁷ The journalist whom Lilli Segal named as the “publisher” of the Harare brochure had also

authored articles in African newspapers denouncing theories of a natural, African origin of AIDS as “racist,” and he had been cited to this effect in the U.S. and West European press.¹⁶⁸ Whether and to what extent his activities were influenced or controlled by the KGB remains an open question, and one should not assume that his various publications did not reflect his true beliefs—as is also very likely the case with the Segals.

The Segals’ Study, the Fort Detrick Thesis, and the KGB’s Disinformation Campaign

Whatever role the Stasi or the KGB may or may not have played in the origins and distribution of the Harare brochure, the Segals’ argumentation in their study helped bolster the KGB’s AIDS disinformation campaign. The Harare brochure and especially the review by *Social Change and Development* were subsequently distributed throughout Africa and cited in the local press.¹⁶⁹ The KGB, which referred to the Segals’ thesis in talks with its Bulgarian “comrades,” wrote that the argument had “found overwhelming resonance in the African countries” and that, by “demonstrating the defeat of the ‘African version’” of HIV’s origins, “we can whip up anti-American sentiments throughout the states of the continent.”¹⁷⁰

The Segals’ study not only proved useful for the KGB’s propaganda campaign in Africa, but also helped lend the Fort Detrick thesis a scientific cachet in general with its extensive citations of scientific literature. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Kathleen Bailey, responsible for combatting Soviet active measures, called the Segal report an “impressive addition” to Moscow’s AIDS disinformation campaign. Although it contained “numerous factual errors and faulty conclusions,” it was “full of technical jargon,” and “to anyone inclined to believe the disinformation, it appears convincing.”¹⁷¹ Specifically, the Segals had argued, like the KGB before, that what became the AIDS virus had resulted from the weaponization of previously existing viruses at Fort Detrick. Like Seale, they argued that the visna virus had been genetically manipulated, but not through the removal of a gene; instead, it had been recombined with HTLV-1.¹⁷² Jakob Segal claimed that he had discerned the genetic engineering of the visna virus independently of Seale.¹⁷³ However, their choice of HTLV-1 as the alleged virus recombined with visna turned out to be more malignant. The leading AIDS researcher in the United States, Robert Gallo, had assumed incorrectly that HIV belonged to the HTLV family, which he had discovered. In the United States, Shively quickly grasped what the Segals merely insinuated. Based on the alleged

genetic engineering that had taken place, Gallo, the discoverer of HTLV-1, was the scientist best placed to have genetically engineered what became HIV.¹⁷⁴ Only later did Jakob Segal openly accuse Gallo of having created HIV, but this demonization of the eminent U.S. scientist as the “father of AIDS” became part of many subsequent HIV-as-bioweapon conspiracy theories.¹⁷⁵

The Segals’ manuscript also enhanced the KGB’s Fort Detrick thesis by resolving certain contradictions in the original version. For example, why would the Pentagon develop a virus with such a long incubation period that it would be useless on the battlefield? The Segals’ study also provided important new details about how the virus was allegedly constructed at Fort Detrick, had escaped from the laboratory, and had then infected U.S. citizens. The Segals argued that the AIDS virus had been developed at Fort Detrick by recombining parts from two other viruses: visna and HTLV-1. The artificially constructed virus, they claimed, was then tested on incarcerated criminals in a prison near Fort Detrick. The prisoners agreed to participate in the experiment in return for early release. Because of the genetically engineered virus’s long incubation period, which the scientists had not foreseen, the responsible persons at Fort Detrick had decided it would be ineffective as a bioweapon. Thus, the test subjects were found to be healthy and released after a period of 12–18 months, before they exhibited any symptoms of AIDS.¹⁷⁶

The Segals wrote that, at this point,

Criminals who had engaged in homosexual practices during the long time of their imprisonment obviously concentrated in the nearest big city after their release. It is therefore logical that, after the end of the incubation period, that is, about 1979, the first AIDS cases should have been registered in New York, to begin with exclusively among homosexual men.¹⁷⁷

AIDS then spread, per the Segals, from the gay community in New York throughout the United States, then to Western Europe, and then throughout the world.¹⁷⁸

The Harare manuscript and the ensuing publications of the Segals contained several factual errors. The gene technology necessary to recombine parts of two viruses to construct a third did not exist in 1977.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, blood samples had already been found from the year 1959 that contained HIV antibodies, which means that the virus had clearly existed for at least twenty years before its alleged construction. Furthermore, New York was not the nearest major city to Fort

Detrick; both Baltimore and Washington were much closer. More importantly, neither the Segals nor their supporters could ever present—or even presumably sought to find—any evidence of the alleged test subjects or any agreement for their early release. Nevertheless, Segal claimed an “unbroken chain of indices.”¹⁸⁰

The Segals’ thesis also displayed characteristics typical of conspiracy theories; mainly, errors in logic. First, they attributed to certain actors extraordinary capabilities. In this case, the U.S. government had allegedly developed—much earlier than the rest of the world—exceptional knowledge and abilities in the realm of gene technology, which it had successfully employed before such knowledge became public.¹⁸¹ Second, an exceptionally large number of individuals—in this case, not only employees of the U.S. Defense Department but also scientists at Fort Detrick; the prisoners who had been used as test subjects; the guards and employees at the nearby prison, including those who had approved the prisoners’ early release; and the doctors who had likely treated the subjects after their release—were involved in or allegedly knew of the alleged conspiracy, and all had maintained the necessary secrecy.¹⁸² The Segals went even further in their study by declaring that the entire mass media of the United States had failed to report on the human experiments and that leading AIDS researchers were abetting the conspiracy (or at least its coverup).¹⁸³ This assertion was by no means original; it echoed the accusations of *LG* in November 1985 regarding the U.S. press’s alleged coverup of Moscow’s Fort Detrick thesis.¹⁸⁴

Third, although Essex retracted his hypothesis within a year, the Segals, despite noting the retraction, continued to cite his green-monkey hypothesis and to equate it with the broader theory of a natural origin of HIV in Africa.¹⁸⁵ They exploited Essex’s hypothesis for a straw man argument. If one did not accept the green-monkey hypothesis, the only alternative, they implied, was their thesis of the artificial origin of HIV at Fort Detrick. They further equated all other hypotheses and studies that referred to a natural, African origin of HIV with the green-monkey hypothesis and denounced them as alleged inventions to mislead the public about the laboratory origins of HIV in Fort Detrick.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the scientific work based on an African origin of HIV proved itself to be a “progressive research program,” in the sense defined by the philosopher of science Imre Lakatos: the thesis of a natural origin in Africa helped explain more and more about the epidemiology of AIDS.¹⁸⁷ New findings with regard to retroviruses in primates and people in and outside Africa served as further confirmation of the natural origins of HIV. The Segals’ thesis, in contrast, turned out to be a “degenerative research

program”; that is, one in which the supporters of a thesis seek to defend it in its original form despite that form's inability to explain new developments and new findings—another typical characteristic of conspiracy theories.¹⁸⁸

Most scientists could and did identify serious problems with the Segals' study—and not only in the West. The KGB and Stasi searched in vain for Soviet and East German scientists who would lend their voices in support of the Segals and their work; in the end, none volunteered.¹⁸⁹ Most Soviet and East German scientists believed in a natural origin of HIV, even if they considered the African hypothesis unproven, and in East Berlin, where the Segals lived and worked, they received a dressing-down in a private symposium with molecular biologists and leading AIDS researchers in the GDR.¹⁹⁰ After the head of the AIDS Advisory Group of the GDR Health Ministry, Niels Sönnichsen, suggested in an interview with the West German press that the Segals' "hypothesis" was incorrect, Jakob Segal, supported behind the scenes by the Stasi, obtained a ban on his East German detractors offering any further commentaries or publications in the West regarding the origins of AIDS. Nonetheless, after 1989, Segal claimed a dissident status for himself in the GDR by citing the government's refusal to permit the publication of his thesis inside the GDR. This was at best a half-truth. Publications regarding the origins of HIV had been banned inside the GDR—a ban apparently imposed by East German leader Erich Honecker personally. Thus, Segal actually had a special status. He could at least publish on the origins of HIV in the West, whereas East German scientists opposed to his thesis faced a ban on such publications both at home and abroad.¹⁹¹ Still, a few East German scientists violated the ban, and one, molecular biologist Geissler, even denounced the Segals' thesis as an "unsavory political thriller" and "complete nonsense" in an interview with a journalist at the congress of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in San Francisco in 1989.¹⁹² Nevertheless, the ban against the Segals' detractors remained officially in place until the collapse of the GDR's Communist regime in 1989, and Segal was never held accountable by the East German government.¹⁹³

Witting and Unwitting Multipliers: The International Press and the Segals

The tactical goal of Soviet-bloc disinformation campaigns—in service of the longer-term strategic goal of discrediting "enemies" such as the United States—was to create and further contribute to a situation in which its disinformation would begin to spread on its own to target audiences through the international press, in the mass media, and by word-of-mouth. The aim was to have the false thesis

spread from witting multipliers—including Soviet-bloc intelligence officers, agents (“unofficial collaborators”), and selected contacts who knew about the hidden support of the KGB or its allies for the thesis—to unwitting multipliers; namely, contacts who did not know they were dealing with an intelligence service, along with other individuals (e.g., intellectuals, journalists, or politicians), who simply came to believe in the thesis on its own merits after their exposure to it. In the fall of 1986, the KGB's Fort Detrick thesis, especially in the new, improved, and more scientific form espoused by the Segals, began to take off and spread on its own. The Soviet press and Moscow's Novosti press agency helped to nudge the thesis along, but so did individuals with known or suspected ties to the HVA. A combination of witting and unwitting multipliers helped to give the thesis momentum internationally.

Although the Harare brochure—and perhaps even more the book review in *Social Change and Development*—sparked a wave of publicity for the Segals' Fort Detrick thesis throughout Africa, their most important international breakthrough came on 26 October 1986, when London's *Sunday Express*, a conservative tabloid, ran an article titled “AIDS ‘Made in Lab’ Shock.” The reporter, Alfred Lee, had interviewed the Segals, Seale, and Robert Strecker for the article.¹⁹⁴ As the U.S. State Department noted, the article was cited and reprinted by newspapers worldwide, “from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic to the Pacific.”¹⁹⁵ The article reflected the screaming-headline approach that many British tabloids adopted in reporting on the AIDS epidemic; homophobia often played a role as well.¹⁹⁶ Although the State Department suggested the KGB might have played a role in the genesis of the article, the KGB privately denied any involvement to its Bulgarian colleagues.¹⁹⁷ KGB officers did, however, regard the article as a major stroke of luck for their AIDS disinformation campaign.¹⁹⁸ On 27 October, the day after the publication of the *Sunday Express* article, Hans Pfeifer, whose department in HVA/X was responsible for the “Denver” disinformation campaign, flew to Moscow with Lyamin's replacement as KGB liaison officer to HVA/X, Evgenii Nikolaevich Ditschenko, for a previously scheduled “working meeting.”¹⁹⁹ The unexpected breakthrough was undoubtedly a topic of conversation.

In the wake of the article in the *Sunday Express*, Lilli Segal wrote to a friend regarding the aftermath: “Journalists have been literally pounding on our door for the last 14 days.”²⁰⁰ Among the journalists who contacted the Segals and sought to report on or even promote their thesis internationally were Erich Friedländer,

Kunanhandnan Nair, and Heimo Claßen—all of whom were apparently known quantities to the HVA and thus, at least potentially, witting multipliers of Soviet-bloc disinformation.

“Comrade” Friedländer had been working undercover as “Hugo Lang” for the HVA in Tanzania.²⁰¹ As of October 1986, he was officially serving as a “lecturer/trainer” and photographer on behalf of the East German Journalists’ Union (*Verein der Journalisten*) at a school for African journalists in Dar-es-Salaam.²⁰² In the fall of 1986, he reported in a letter to the Segals about his success in arranging the publication of a letter to the editor defending their thesis in Tanzania’s *Sunday News*. He also had plans to have his African students at the journalism school assist in securing the publication of similar articles throughout Africa. He thought the newsmagazine *African Events*, similar to *Newsweek*, would be a good possibility. It was financed, he claimed, by “pro-Iranian Shiites, and they have something against the Yankees [*Amis*].”²⁰³

Nair had worked as East Berlin correspondent for the Indian newspapers *Blitz* and *Patriot*, both known publication outlets for KGB disinformation.²⁰⁴ Before the summit of the NAM in Harare, HVA/X had arranged for the drafting of a book manuscript criticizing alleged CIA attacks against the NAM and the developing world in general. Allegedly, Nair had merely presented himself as the author of the finished book, published as *The Devil and His Dart: How the CIA Is Plotting against the Third World*, which HVA/X sought to distribute during the summit in Harare. Nair, for his part, met with Segal and published an interview in *Blitz* in July 1987 under the title, “AIDS—A U.S. Military Monster: Yankee Business, Not Monkey Business.” The interview, the U.S. government claimed, had already been published, without naming Nair as its author, in the Nairobi *Sunday Times* and then reprinted in the Senegalese *Le Devoir*. In 1989, an English version of the Segals’ study was published along with Nair’s interview in book form in India.²⁰⁵

Claßen was a West German freelance journalist living in Brussels who contacted Jakob Segal at the end of 1986.²⁰⁶ In 1963, the HVA had created a dossier for unofficial collaborator “Joachim” and registered Claßen under the file. Since 1983, Pfeifer, whose department in HVA/X oversaw “Denver,” had taken over “Joachim’s” file.²⁰⁷ Claßen tried to arrange for the publication of Segal’s study in the West German science journal *Wechselwirkung* and in a planned anthology to be titled *AIDS from the Gene Lab?* Claßen did not succeed in his efforts, most

likely because other individuals, especially in the West German press, rushed in and did what he had been planning. In any event, Claßen has denied any involvement with the HVA or the Stasi in general.²⁰⁸

This type of arrangement, in which journalists or publishers allegedly known to the HVA just happened to contact an author or interview partner whose statements would serve the KGB's or HVA/X's disinformation goals was typical of Soviet-bloc active measures. The desire to protect sources and methods, which had induced the Soviet-bloc security services to compartmentalize information internally, also meant that neither publisher nor author, neither interviewer nor interviewee, would know about the potential involvement of the other with the Soviet-bloc security services.

Those who cited or reprinted the *Sunday Express* story also included individuals and publications without real or alleged connections to the HVA. U.S. psychological warfare expert Roy Godson wrote at the time:

Within hours, newspapers, radio, and television stations from the Baltic to the Mediterranean and from the Atlantic to the Pacific gave considerable coverage to the story. The *Canberra Times* headlined "AIDS Made by U.S. Scientists." Italian dailies such as *La Stampa* carried the report on page one. The second largest Greek daily *Ethnos* reprinted the *Sunday Express* story in its entirety and Greece's popular radio morning show highlighted it. The media in Brazil, Sweden, Spain and many other countries also carried versions.²⁰⁹

Given the newfound, widespread publicity in the Western mass media for the Fort Detrick thesis, the Soviet press could now join the attack and claim it was merely citing the Western press—the normal modus operandi for Soviet active-measures campaigns.²¹⁰ For example, *Pravda* weighed in on 26 October 1986 with an article that cited Segal's views based on an article in the Irish press.²¹¹ The wave of publicity following the *Sunday Express* article also served as an occasion for the publication of an iconic image associated with the disinformation campaign in *Pravda* on 31 October (see Figure 2): an editorial cartoon in which a U.S. scientist hands over a vial with HIV in the form of little swastikas to an officer from the U.S. military, who pays off the scientist with a stack of U.S. dollars; around the two Americans lie dead bodies, apparently killed by the virus. The caption reads, "The AIDS virus. A grave illness, for which no means of treatment have yet been found. According to Western scientists, it was created in the laboratories of the Pentagon. (From newspapers.)"



Figure 2. “Pentagonovskie SPIDtsialistii,” wordplay in Russian combining the word “specialists” with the Russian abbreviation for AIDS (“SPID”). Drawing by D. Agaev.

Conclusion

The HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis did not originate with the Stasi and KGB, as some authors have suggested. The conspiracy theory was already circulating within the gay community in the United States in the first half of 1983. The KGB, without the assistance or participation of the Stasi, apparently picked up on the conspiracy theory and revised it to its own ends by specifying the location at which the alleged weaponization of HIV had taken place: the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases in Fort Detrick, Maryland. The Fort Detrick thesis of the origin of AIDS first appeared in the Indian newspaper *Patriot*, a purveyor of KGB disinformation, in July 1983. It reappeared in *LG*, the Soviet newspaper known to be a front for KGB disinformation, on 30 October 1985, after the KGB had decided to launch a worldwide disinformation campaign based on the Fort Detrick thesis.

The KGB's Fort Detrick variant of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis would not have taken off after 1985—and would likely not continue to circulate today—if not for the operational environment of the time. This included ongoing scientific disputes about the origins of AIDS, the lack of effective medications to combat the disease, the rapid spread of the pandemic and the ensuing panic, the lagging response of the Reagan administration to the AIDS crisis, and various revelations in the 1970s about U.S. government misdeeds (e.g., the Tuskegee syphilis study, the CIA's experimentation with LSD, and CIA preparation of various toxins for assassination attempts). All these factors contributed to individuals' willingness to accept and believe in such conspiracy theories.

Just as important, individuals in the United States, many of whom had already been spreading the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis, picked up on the KGB's Fort Detrick variant and began to spread it as well. A cycle of misinformation and

disinformation arose between conspiracy theorists in the United States and the United Kingdom, on the one hand, and publications associated with KGB disinformation, on the other, as they began to cite one another. Particularly important in this regard were individuals associated with Lyndon LaRouche. Two variants of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon thesis even “coevolved” between LaRouche's associates and the KGB, as each apparently borrowed elements for their own, evolving conspiracy theories from the other. The full-blown version of the conspiracy theory associated with LaRouche, authored and propounded by Robert and Theodore Strecker, endorsed Moscow's proposed location for HIV's weaponization at Fort Detrick but gave it an anti-Soviet twist by blaming the allegedly Communist-infiltrated NIH and the UN's WHO for the engineering of HIV and its subsequent spread. Moscow, for its part, quoted various assertions from individuals associated with LaRouche to “prove” various aspects of its Fort Detrick thesis. The public, ongoing debate between Moscow and LaRouche's associates over HIV's origins helped to popularize the Fort Detrick thesis and to publicize both sides' accusations against the U.S. government. By propagating the Fort Detrick thesis, the KGB not only strengthened the attacks of crackpot conspiracy theorists against the U.S. government but also lent support to individual conspiracy theorists on the far left and in the gay and African-American communities who blamed the U.S. government for the creation of HIV/AIDS. The various references to Fort Detrick and the Segals' thesis in the Washington-based *CAIB*, which often purveyed Soviet disinformation, and in the alternative press at the time suggest at least indirect KGB influencing of left-of-center conspiracy theorists in the United States.

A turning point for the KGB's Fort Detrick thesis internationally came in August–September 1986 with the copying and distribution of the brochure *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil, NOT out of AFRICA* before and during the summit conference of the NAM in Harare, Zimbabwe. First, the Segals' study, contained in the brochure, resolved certain internal contradictions in the original Fort Detrick thesis, partly by revising it, and lent the KGB's thesis of HIV's origins a certain scientific respectability. Second, the study, its distribution during the NAM summit, and the ensuing review of it in Zimbabwe's *Social Change and Development* helped to popularize the Fort Detrick thesis among journalists and politicians in the developing world, who contributed to its further spread. The Fort Detrick thesis as presented by the Segals was especially popular in Africa, where it served as an alternative to the hypothesis, increasingly accepted among Western scientists, of a

natural origin of HIV in the form of a predecessor virus among non-human primates in Africa. Many African scientists and politicians considered the hypothesis of an African origin of HIV to be racist, especially given the limited understanding of HIV at the time. The Segals' version of the Fort Detrick thesis received an even stronger boost with the publication of the article "AIDS Sensation" in the London *Sunday Express* at the end of October 1986. As was often the case during the AIDS disinformation campaign, journalists and others in the West stepped in and unwittingly did the KGB's, or the Stasi's, work for them.

The extent to which the Segals worked for the KGB or Stasi—or were manipulated by one or both of them into beginning their research and reaching Moscow's desired conclusion—has been a matter of contention among scholars. The Segals' relationship to the KGB in the 1980s, if any, remains unclear. We know only that Jakob Segal was influenced in his research by the articles in *Patriot* and *LG* that the KGB sought to popularize and that the available archival evidence in Sofia and East Berlin does not confirm the assertion, based on Bohnsack's claims, that Segal was a mere "dupe" of the Stasi, manipulated by the HVA into publishing what it wanted.²¹²

Segal claimed to have begun his research on his own, without any influence from the Stasi, in the summer of 1985.²¹³ The only evidence that contradicts this is the single assertion by the HVA/X deputy chief Mutz to his Bulgarian counterparts in September 1986 that the HVA had somehow "attracted" Segal to his research. The HVA/SWT apparently gave Segal at least one piece of advice regarding his research (no later than July 1986), but this is far from proof of ongoing manipulation of Segal or his research. Segal clearly built on the Fort Detrick thesis of HIV's origins espoused by the KGB, but he went about proving it—or at least recasting it—in a "scientific" fashion. There is no reason to doubt that the final product of his research was the result of his own intellectual exertions in cooperation with his wife, Lilli. To dub him a manipulated "dupe" or "useful idiot" for the MfS not only goes beyond the existing evidence; it also disregards Segal's agency as a willing propagandist against Western "imperialism" and downplays his personal role and responsibility in propagating the Fort Detrick myth until his death in 1995.²¹⁴

At the same time, in light of Mutz's subsequent, documented claim and HVA/SWT's apparent advice to Segal on at least one occasion, the HVA may have played some role in Segal's decision to begin his research and might have sought to

influence or support him with some form of covert research assistance behind the scenes. Pace Geissler and Sprinkle, the absence of relevant records in the Stasi archives, given that some 90 percent of the HVA materials were destroyed, does not disprove (“disconfirm”) a Stasi role.²¹⁵ Based on the best evidence available to date, Segal began his research with little or, more likely, no prompting from the Stasi; received only one piece of advice from HVA/SWT, which he may well have ignored; and produced his AIDS study largely or completely on his own with the assistance of his wife, Lilli. Given HVA/SWT's advice to him regarding his research, Segal likely knew or could have surmised that the Stasi was interested in his research for its own purposes, including propaganda abroad.

This brings us back to HVA/X's claim that the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure was “their” active measure, carried out as part of their Operation “Denver.” HVA/X had the motives, means, and opportunity to arrange for the copying and distribution of the brochure in Harare, and Mutz effectively confessed HVA/X's role in his discussions with his Bulgarian counterparts. New evidence suggests that the KGB likely also played a role in the brochure's production. Given the KGB's subsequent crediting of the HVA for its role in the disinformation campaign in the years 1985–1986, Mutz's assertion rings true, even if HVA/X made use of a KGB “channel” in West Germany, “Borisov,” for the brochure's production. There is no reason to ignore the evidence in the Bulgarian archives regarding HVA/X's role in the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure; the evidence present in Sofia outweighs the alleged absence of evidence in the Stasi archives cited by Geissler and Sprinkle.

Nevertheless, the HVA clearly played only a supporting role in the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign in the years 1985–1986—for example, by “securing” the Segals and keeping watch over their ongoing research; gathering relevant information for the KGB regarding Western reactions to Moscow's AIDS disinformation; arranging for the publication and distribution of the Harare brochure in cooperation with the KGB; and apparently bringing certain journalists together with the Segals for interviews after the *Sunday Express* article. The HVA and the Stasi in general played a more engaged, active role in the KGB's AIDS disinformation campaign in the years 1987–1989, as a follow-up article will demonstrate.

Notes

1. The Soviet State Security Committee (KGB) and the East German State Security Ministry (MfS or Stasi) often used the terms “active measures” and “disinformation” interchangeably, although their official definitions of “active measures” encompassed a broader range of covert activities, mainly in the realm of psychological warfare. For the KGB definitions of “active measures” and “disinformation,” see Vasilii Mitrokhin, *KGB Lexicon: The Soviet Intelligence Officer's Handbook* (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 13, 30. For the Stasi definition of “active measures,” see MfS, “IM-Richtline 2/79,” 8 December 1979, in Helmut Müller-Enbergs, ed., *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit*, Vol. 2, *Anleitungen für die Arbeit mit Agenten, Kundschaftern und Spionen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1998), p. 476. For the Stasi definition of “disinformation,” see Siegfried Suckut, ed., *Das Wörterbuch der Staatssicherheit: Definitionen zur “politisch-operativen Arbeit”* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 1996), p. 88. As used in this article, “disinformation” refers to the deliberate spread of wholly or completely untrue information, especially by the Soviet-bloc security services, whereas “misinformation” leaves open the question of intent. Most conspiracy theorists in the United States, for example, tended to repeat unproven or disproved assertions regarding the origins of AIDS—that is, misinformation. They also tended to believe that the assertions they were spreading were true, in contrast to the KGB and the MfS.

2. Message for the Residencies in New York and Washington, 21 October 1985, in Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), Prague, a. č. 90083/106, pp. 53–55. Regarding Gorbachev's “peace offensive,” see Vladislav Zubok, “Why Did the Cold War End in 1989? Explanations of ‘The Turn,’” in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Reviewing the Cold War: Approaches, Interpretations, Theory* (London: F. Cass, 2000), pp. 349–350; and Vladislav Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), p. 296.

3. Zubok, “Why Did the Cold War End in 1989?,” p. 349.

4. See, for example, Colonel Dimo Stankov, Head of Division 8 of the First Chief Directorate (FCD) of Bulgarian State Security (Durzhavna Sigurnost, DS) and Service “A” of the FCD of the KGB on the Active Measures (AM) Line, 9 December 1985, in Committee for Disclosing the Documents and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services

of the Bulgarian National Army (COMDOS), Fond (F.) 9, Opis (Op.) 4, A.E. 663, pp. 266, 271. Despite the document's date, the talks took place in August 1985.

5. Christopher Nehring, "Die Zusammenarbeit der DDR-Auslandsaufklärung mit der Aufklärung der Volksrepublik Bulgarien: Regionalfilialen des KGB?" Ph.D. Diss., University of Heidelberg, 2016, p. 163.

6. Regarding the failed efforts of Soviet leaders in 1983–1984, including the KGB's active measures, see Douglas Selvage and Walter Süß, *Staatssicherheit und KSZE-Prozess: MfS zwischen SED und KGB (1972–1989)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019), pp. 435–447, 450–455.

7. Message for the Residencies in New York and Washington, 21 October 1985, pp. 53–55.

8. Ibid., p. 55.

9. "KGB Planted Story Tying US to AIDS, Russian Says," *The Boston Globe*, 19 March 1992, p. 1.

10. The term "conspiracy theory" is used in this article in accordance with the popular understanding of the term—that is, it has a negative connotation and at least a hint of paranoia and irrationality. I do not deny that real conspiracies exist, but a conspiracy theory, according to my use, purports the existence of a conspiracy that did or does not exist. For a more detailed definition and analysis, see Jeffrey M. Bale, "Political Paranoia v. Political Realism: On Distinguishing between Bogus Conspiracy Theories and Genuine Conspiratorial Politics," *Patterns of Prejudice*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (2007), pp. 50–53. The HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon conspiracy theory regularly finds its way into contemporary listings of the most popular conspiracy theories. See, for example, "History's Greatest Conspiracy Theories," *The Telegraph*, 30 April 2018, p. 9; and "Die 21 besten Verschwörungstheorien," *Tageszeitung (taz)*, 12 October 1998, p. 24. See also Nicoli Nattrass, *The AIDS Conspiracy: Science Fights Back* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 2.

11. See, for example, Adam B. Ellick, Adam Westbrook, and Jonah M. Kessel, "'Operation InfeKtion: Meet the KGB Spies Who Invented Fake News,'" special TimesVideo posted online by *The New York Times*, 12 November 2018, at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/12/opinion/russia-meddling-disinformation-fake-news-elections.html>.

12. Nattrass, *AIDS Conspiracy*, p. 1. See also Laura M. Bogart and Sheryl Thorburn Bird, "Exploring the Relationship of Conspiracy Beliefs about HIV/AIDS to Sexual Behaviors and Attitudes among African-American Adults," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, Vol. 95, No. 11 (2003), pp. 1057–1065; Laura M. Bogart and Sheryl Thorburn Bird, "Are HIV/AIDS Conspiracy Beliefs a Barrier to HIV Prevention among African Americans?," *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes (JAIDS)*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (2005), pp. 213–218; M. Ross, J. Essien, and I. Torres, "Conspiracy Beliefs about the Origin of HIV/AIDS in Four Racial Groups," *JAIDS*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2006), pp. 342–344; E. Grebe and N. Nattrass, "AIDS Conspiracy Beliefs and Unsafe Sex in Cape Town," *AIDS and Behavior*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (2012), pp. 761–763; L. Bogart et al., "Conspiracy Beliefs about HIV are Related to Antiretroviral Treatment Non-adherence among African-American Men with HIV," *JAIDS*, Vol. 53, No. 5 (2010), pp. 648–655; and A. S. Bohnert and C. A. Latkin, "HIV Testing and Conspiracy Beliefs Regarding the Origins of HIV among African Americans," *AIDS Patient Care and STDs*, Vol. 23, No. 9 (2009), pp. 759–763.

13. As Uwe Spiekermann notes, there has been an unwarranted tendency to treat the HVA separately from the MfS, to which it belonged, and to downplay its contributions to domestic repression. See Uwe Spiekermann, "Introduction: The Stasi and the HVA Contemporary Research and Contemporary Resonance," *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, Supplement 9 (2014), pp. 20–21.

14. See, for example, the contributions regarding the HVA in Thomas Wegener Friis, Kristie Macrakis, and Helmut Müller-Enbergs, eds., *East German Foreign Intelligence: Myth, Reality, and Controversy* (New York: Routledge, 2010), especially the introduction by the editors on p. 4. An exception that looks at HVA failures is George Herbstritt, "Aspects of Crisis and Decline of East German Foreign Intelligence in the 1980s," in Uwe Spiekermann, ed., *The Stasi at Home and Abroad*, pp. 139–150. Exceptions that look at the Stasi's role in Soviet-bloc active measures include Michael F. Scholz, "Active Measures and Disinformation as Part of East Germany's Propaganda War, 1953–1972," in Friis, Macrakis, and Müller-Enbergs, eds., *East German Foreign Intelligence*, pp. 113–133; Peter Busch, "The 'Vietnam Legion': West German Psychological Warfare against East German Propaganda in the 1960s," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer 2014), pp. 164–189; Douglas Selvage "Operation Synonym: Soviet-Bloc

Active Measures and the Helsinki Process, 1976–1983,” in Władysław Bułhak and Thomas Wegener Friis, eds., *Need to Know: Eastern and Western Perspectives* (Odense: University of Southern Denmark Press, 2014), pp. 81–96; and Nehring, “Die Zusammenarbeit der DDR-Auslandsaufklärung,” pp. 148–304.

15. See, for example, Kristie Macrakis, “Markus Wolf: From the Shadows to the Limelight,” in Paul Maddrell et al., eds., *Spy Chiefs, Volume 2: Intelligence Leaders in Europe, the Middle East, and Asia* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2018), ch. 7. Perhaps the most important part of Wolf’s public relations campaign was his autobiography: Markus Wolf, *Man without a Face: The Autobiography of Communism’s Greatest Spymaster* (New York: Times Books, 1997).

16. Wolf declared in a public lecture: “Around the time that I was about to leave the service in the fall of 1986, the division for ‘active measures’ [i.e., HVA/X] received from its partner in the Soviet intelligence service [some] material with the indication to help contribute to its spread in the West. It purported that the HIV-virus had been developed in a secret laboratory for gene technology in the USA, its effectiveness had been tested on prisoners, and in this way, it had first been spread outside and into the rest of the world.” Markus Wolf, “L’arte della simulazione: Thesen für ein Podiumsgespräch der Accademia KOS in Mailand, März 1998,” in Markus Wolf and Günther Drommer, eds., *Die Kunst der Verstellung: Dokumente, Gespräche, Interviews* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1998), p. 12. The German publication does not indicate that this was not the complete version of Wolf’s lecture. Missing passages can be found in the Italian translation of his lecture: “Io, magnifico bugiardo: L’Arte della simulazione,” *Venerdì di Repubblica*, No. 860 (May 1998), pp. 55–61. Although Wolf in his public lecture arguably left open whether HVA/X had done what the Soviet “friends” had wanted, he was much more forthright in an interview with an Italian newspaper during his visit, stating: “In the case of the AIDS epidemic: initially, we spread the rumor that a virus had escaped from secret American laboratories.” See “Il vangelo delle spie secondo Markus,” *La Repubblica* (Rome), 1 April 1998, p. 42. My thanks to Enrico Speranza of the Italian Committee for Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal and Pseudoscience for bringing these articles to my attention.

17. Wolf, “L’arte della simulazione,” p. 12.

18. Werner Großmann and Wolfgang Schwanitz, eds., *Fragen an das MfS: Auskünfte über eine Behörde* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 2010), pp. 254–255; and Erhard

Geissler and Robert Hunt Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared: Was the HIV-from-Fort-Detrick Myth a Stasi Success?," *Politics and the Life Sciences*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Fall 2013), p. 24.

19. HVA/SWT was thus engaged in more, at least in this case, than "stealing scientific and technical secrets" in the West and producing "James Bond-like technology to support espionage and security." See Kristie Macrakis, *Seduced by Secrets: Inside the Stasi's Spy-Tech World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. I.

20. On the destruction of the HVA's files, see Hubertus Knabe, *West-Arbeit des MfS: Das Zusammenspiel von "Aufklärung" und "Abwehr"* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1999), p. 133.

21. Günter Bohnsack and Herbert Brehmer, *Auftrag: Irreführung: Wie die Stasi Politik im Westen machte* (Hamburg: Carlsen, 1992), pp. 219–220.

22. Geissler debunks two such claims from Bohnsack that CIA historian Thomas Boghardt repeats in his article on the AIDS disinformation campaign: (1) that SED leaders were "delighted" to see Segal's thesis included in the final conference report of the NAM summit meeting; and (2) that HVA officers posing as U.S. diplomats—actually as undercover Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents—visited Segal so he would "conclude that his theory had struck a nerve in Washington." See Thomas Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION: Soviet Bloc Intelligence and Its AIDS Disinformation Campaign," *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 53, No. 4 (2009), pp. 9, 12. Geissler notes that no mention of Segal's thesis, let alone AIDS, is included in the NAM meeting's final report. Moreover, two U.S. diplomats serving in the East Berlin embassy, whom Segal had dubbed CIA agents, had indeed visited the Segals to learn more about their views—that is, Segal's visitors were not HVA officers in disguise. See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 44–51; and Erhard Geissler, "The AIDS Disinformation Campaign Continues and Bears Rotten Fruit: Part II," *The ASA [Applied Science and Analysis] Newsletter*, No. 2 (2010), pp. 16–19. The AIDS disinformation campaign ("Denver") fell under the aegis of Hans Pfeifer's division, HVA/X/1. See Objekt-Vorgang (OVO) "Denver," Reg.-Nr. XV 3429/86, in Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), AR 2, MfS, RoHo, F22. Since 1978, Bohnsack had been the Director of Division 7 of HVA/X (HVA/X/7), responsible for influencing the foreign trade policy of West Germany or,

alternatively, undermining the FRG's economy and trade through active measures. See Helmut Müller-Enbergs, "Hauptverwaltung A (HV A): Aufgaben—Strukturen—Quellen," in *MfS-Handbuch* (Berlin: BStU, 2011), p. 179.

23. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 77–78. Regarding "arguments from ignorance" (*argumenta ad ignorantiam*), see Douglas Walton, "Nonfallacious Arguments from Ignorance," *American Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (October 1992), pp. 381–387. Walton argues that such arguments need not be fallacious if one can assume that the knowledge base for the given argument is complete (p. 381). Given the destruction of the vast majority of the relevant "knowledge base" in this case—that is, the HVA's files—an "argument from ignorance" still constitutes a logical fallacy.

24. Geissler and Sprinkle write, "Many HVA documents, maybe most, were intentionally destroyed after the peaceful revolution in East Germany in 1990. ... Documents related to any HIV campaign might have been included in the cull." See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 78. They seek to downplay the significance of this destruction of evidence by claiming that "many putatively missing HVA filings would have been filed also by HA II [Hauptabteilung or Main Division II, responsible for domestic counterintelligence] or other department which either received messages from, or sent messages to, HVA/X" (p. 78). This ignores the well-known principle of compartmentalization in intelligence services. Some secret information was shared within the MfS—as within the KGB, the CIA, and so on—strictly on a need-to-know basis. See James J. Wirth, "The American Approach to Intelligence Studies," in Loch K. Johnson, ed., *Handbook of Intelligence Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 33. For Geissler's response to the information that emerged in the 2010s, see Erhard Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung des MfS mit den Segals," *Zeitschrift des Forschungsverbundes SED-Staat*, Vol. 37 (2015), pp. 94–121.

25. Nehring consulted the COMDOS archives in Sofia.

26. Douglas Selvage and Christopher Nehring, *AIDS-Verschwörung: Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit und die AIDS-Desinformationskampagne des KGB* ((Berlin: BStU, 2014).

27. KGB, Information Nr. 2955 (Russian), 7 September 1985, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 663, p. 208.

28. "AIDS May Invade India: Mystery Disease Caused by US Experiments," *Patriot* (New Delhi), 17 July 1983, p. 1. The CDC, originally known as the Center for Disease Control until 1980, was renamed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1992.
29. Nattrass, *AIDS Conspiracy*, pp. 34, 69.
30. Regarding Shively, see Dudley Clendinen and Adam Nagourney, *Out for Good: The Struggle to Build a Gay Rights Movement in America* (New York: Touchstone, 1999), pp. 313–314.
31. Charley Shively, "Speaking Out: The CDC-CIA-AIDS Political Alliance," *Gay Community News* (Boston), 9 July 1983, p. 5.
32. For more on Tuskegee, see James H. Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*, rev. and expanded ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1993). Although the *New York Native* had indeed reported in 1983 about a potential connection between HIV and AFSV, along with Cuba's accusations against the CIA, it had not concluded that there was a hidden "alliance" or conspiracy. Shively had apparently reached his own conclusions. See James E. D'Eramo, "African Swine Fever Virus, Part II," *New York Native*, 6–19 June 1983, pp. 18–19.
33. U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on the Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Appropriations for 1970, Part 5: Research, Development, Test and Evaluation*, 91st Cong., 1st sess., 1969, p. 129.
34. Randy Shilts, *And the Band Played On: Politics, People and the AIDS Epidemic*, 20th anniversary ed. (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2007), pp. 324–329, 359–360, 363–364, 397–399, 466–468, 492–495, 502–503, 525–527, 585–590.
35. U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Foreign and Military Intelligence: Final Report, Book 1*, 94th Cong., 2nd Sess., 1976), pp. 389–403.
36. U.S. Congress, Senate, Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, *Interim Report: Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders*, 94th Cong., 1st sess. 1975, pp. 19–30. In the report, Gottlieb is called by his birth name, Joseph Scheider.
37. Shively, "Speaking Out."

38. Alexander Rödlach, *Witches, Westerners and HIV: AIDS and Cultures of Blame in Africa* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2006), p. 114.
39. KGB, Information Nr. 2955, 7 September 1985.
40. Eckhard Jesse, "Feindbilder im Extremismus," in Uwe Backes, Alexander Gallus, and Eckhard Jesse, eds., *Jahrbuch Extremismus und Demokratie*, Vol. 23 (Berlin: BfV, 2011), pp. 13–36; and Uwe Backes and Eckhard Jesse, *Politischer Extremismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 4th ed. (Bonn: Propyläen Verlag, 1996), p. 257.
41. "AIDS May Invade India," p. 1.
42. Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 5; and "Pentagon Said Pursuing CBW Research in Lahore," Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in English, 13 December 1986, in Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), *Daily Report, Soviet Union*, FBIS-SOV-86-246, 23 December 1986, p. A3. The Pentagon, the *Patriot* article had claimed, would soon move its experiments from the United States to neighboring Pakistan, where they would pose a threat to India. See "AIDS May Invade India," p. 1.
43. Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 6.
44. See Warren J. Hamerman, "AIDS Epidemic Explodes: What Is the Russian Angle?," *Executive Intelligence Review (EIR)*, Vol. 12, No. 41 (18 October 1985), pp. 52–54.
45. Valentin Zapevalov, "Panika na zapade, ili shto skrivaets'a za sensatsei vokrug AIDS," *Literaturnaya gazeta (LG)* (Moscow), 30 October 1985, p. 14. There is no evidence that the link posited by Zapevalov actually existed.
46. See Douglas Selvage, "Operation Synonym: Soviet-Bloc Active Measures and the Helsinki Process, 1976–1983," in Władysław Bułhak and Thomas Wegener Friis, eds., *Need to Know: Eastern and Western Perspectives* (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2014), pp. 92–93.
47. See Handwritten Notes (apparently from an officer from ZAIG/6), 12 November 1985, in BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 14413, p. 47. Lyamin's request came in response to a direct order from the KGB Center in Moscow. See [KGB], Telegram 1666/85, n.d., in BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 14413, p. 48. Regarding Lyamin's role in general, see the note from Colonel Miermeister, ZAIG/6 to the Director of the ZAIG, 14 May 1985, in BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 14413, p. 67. "ZAIG/6" refers to

Section 6 of the *Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe* (Central Evaluation and Information Group, ZAIG) of the MfS. In 1985, the former Division for Agitation (*Abteilung Agitation*) of the MfS had been integrated into ZAIG as Section 6. See Roger Engelmann und Frank Joestel, "Die Zentrale Auswertungs- und Informationsgruppe," in *MfS-Handbuch* (Berlin: BStU, 2009), p. 84. Lyamin had a storied history as a KGB officer. In the early 1950s, he had worked as an illegal in the United States under the codename "DIM" or "DIMA," and from the end of the 1970s until his appointment to the KGB mission to the GDR in Karlshorst he had served as director of Division 3 of Service "S," where he had prepared KGB reservists for work as illegals in the West. See Christopher Andrew and Vasili Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield: The Mitrokhin Archive and the Secret History of the KGB* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 157; and Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge University, Vasilii Mitrokhin Papers, MITN 1/5, p. 196.

48. See Handwritten Notes, 12 November 1985, p. 47.

49. See Handwritten Notes (apparently from an officer in ZAIG/6), 29 November 1985, in BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 14413, p. 47.

50. "Pochemu mlochit pressa SShA," *LG*, 13 November 1985, p. 2.

51. U.S. Department of State (U.S. DOS), *Soviet Influence Activities: A Report on Active Measures and Propaganda, 1986–1987* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), pp. 48–49.

52. "Text of Admissions by the Russians," *EIR*, Vol. 12, No. 46 (22 November 1985), pp. 8–9.

53. Christopher R. Tourney, *Conjuring Science: Scientific Symbols and Cultural Meanings in American Life* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. 91.

54. Warren J. Hamerman, "Soviets Attack LaRouche for Exposé of AIDS Cover-Up," *EIR*, Vol. 12, No. 46 (22 November 1985), p. 6.

55. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

57. "Interview: Dr. John Seale—AIDS and the Security of the West," *EIR*, Vol. 12, No. 41 (18 October 1985), pp. 54–57; and Hamerman, "AIDS Epidemic Explodes," pp. 52–54.

58. Andrew Veitch, "Germ of Doubt: Is AIDS a Test-Tube Baby?," *Guardian* (London), 20 December 1985, p. 15; and "Interview: Dr. John Seale," pp. 54–57. That Seale and subsequent proponents of the HIV-as-bioweapon thesis pointed to Visna is not surprising. Both HIV and Visna are retroviruses, and Visna was the first virus discovered in the family of lentiviruses (slow-progressing viruses), to which HIV was later found to belong. Because of this, early AIDS research focused on the potential relationship between Visna and HIV—a fact published in AIDS research at the time. See, for example, Luc Montagnier, *Virus: The Co-Discoverer of HIV Tracks Its Rampage and Charts the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000), pp. 59, 77–78; and Mirko Dražen Grmek, *History of AIDS: Emergence and Origin of a Modern Pandemic* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 77.

59. Zhores Medvedev, "AIDS Virus Infection: A Soviet View of Its Origin," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine (JRSM)*, Vol. 79 (August 1986), p. 494.

60. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 8.

61. Robert B. Strecker, "Letter to the Editor: Aids Virus Infection," *JRSM*, Vol. 79 (September 1986), pp. 559–560. Strecker hinted in an interview with another AIDS conspiracy theorist, Leonard Horowitz, that he had been influenced by Seale's "research." See Leonard G. Horowitz, *Emerging Viruses: AIDS & Ebola: Nature, Accident or Intentional?* (Rockport, MA: Tetrahedon, 1996), p. 104.

62. Theodore A. Strecker, "This Is a Bio-Attack Alert," *The Strecker Memorandum*, 28 March 1986, available online at <http://www.streckermemorandum.com/bio-attack-alert.htm>.

63. For example, Nattrass concluded, based on her exchanges with David Gilbert, a former "Weatherman," convicted bank robber, and prison peer counselor for HIV/AIDS, that the Segals' disinformation thesis especially influenced African-American prison inmates through the writings of rightwing militia leader William Campbell Douglass, who promoted his own version of the HIV-as-U.S.-bioweapon conspiracy theory. Gilbert remembered the Segals' thesis from leftwing publications he had read in the 1980s. See Nattrass, *AIDS Conspiracy*, pp. 4, 28–

29. In fact, Douglass cited Strecker, not the Segals, in his own published version of the conspiracy theory. He, like Strecker, also specified Fort Detrick as the location at which the Communist-dominated WHO, in collaboration with NIH, had constructed the virus. Thus, the KGB's Fort Detrick thesis had influenced Douglass via Strecker, who had proposed his thesis before Segal's publications became known in the United States. See William Campbell Douglass, "W.H.O. Murdered Africa," Monrovia, CA, September 1987, available online at The Bible Believers [website], <http://www.biblebelievers.org.au/who.htm>. On the Streckers' influence on subsequent conspiracy theorists, see, for example, Horowitz, *Emerging Viruses*, p. 104.

64. Michael Fumento, "The Political Uses of an Epidemic," *The New Republic*, Vol. 199, No. 6/7 (8 and 15 August 1988), p. 22.

65. "Seale Warns AIDS Could Wipe Out Man," *EIR*, Vol. 13, No. 41 (17 October 1986), p. 29; and David L. Kirp, "LaRouche Turns to AIDS politics," *The New York Times*, 11 September 1986, p. 27.

66. Kevin Roderick, "THE STATE ELECTION: LaRouche Trounced on All Fronts but Vows to Keep Trying," *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 1986, p. 4.

67. LaRouche named the group behind the ballot initiative the "Prevent AIDS Now Initiative Committee" (PANIC).

68. See, for example, David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (New York: Little, Brown, 1998). Recent revelations about extensive Soviet espionage in the United States during the Stalin era and Moscow's contacts with individuals who were later considered to be victims of McCarthyism have led to a reassessment of the boundaries between conspiracy theory and real conspiracy. See, for example, K. A. Cuordileone, "The Torment of Secrecy: Reckoning with Communism and Anti-Communism after Venona," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (September 2019), pp. 615–642, as well as numerous works by John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr.

69. See John Seale, "Origins of the AIDS Viruses, HIV-1 and HIV-2: Fact or Fiction? Discussion Paper," *JRSM*, Vol. 81 (September 1988), p. 539.

70. Jakob Segal and Lilli Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin," p. 13. The study was printed in the brochure *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil, NOT out of AFRICA*,

2nd rev. ed. (n.p.: n.pub., 1986). The brochure identifies neither its year nor place of publication, but it does provide the following information: "published on the occasion of the VIII Non-Aligned Summit in Harare (Zimbabwe) in 1986." A copy of the brochure is in my possession.

71. "SPID: Voprosov bol'she, chem otvetov," *LG*, 17 May 1986, p. 15.

72. J. Zamgba Browne, "Link AIDS to CIA Warfare," *Amsterdam News* (New York), 30 November 1985, p. 12. On *Amsterdam News* and its reporting on the epidemic in general, see Cathy J. Cohen, *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), pp. 196–223.

73. Nathaniel Lehrman, "Some Minor Inaccuracies," *Amsterdam News*, 28 December 1985, p. 12.

74. "SPID: Voprosov bol'she, chem otvetov."

75. Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 5; and Alvin A. Snyder, *Warriors of Disinformation: How Charles Wick, the USIA, and Videotape Won the Cold War* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1995), pp. 113f.

76. Cohen, *Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 197, 202–203. See also Rockell A. Brown, "Ethnic News Media and Marginalization: African-American Newspaper Coverage of the AIDS Crisis," in Christopher P. Campbell et al., eds., *Race and News: Critical Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 124.

77. Cohen, *Boundaries of Blackness*, pp. 169–176, 197, 201–204.

78. Ibid., pp. 197–199, 341–342. See also, for example, Abiola Sinclair, "Did the CIA Create AIDS?" *Amsterdam News*, 9 November 1985, p. 24.

79. Nathaniel S. Lehrman, "A 'Natural' Epidemic?" *Amsterdam News*, 18 January 1986, p. 13.

80. Lehrman, "Homosexuality Seen as 'Political Cult,'" *New York Jewish Week*, 27 April 1984, p. 26.

81. L. Nikolov, Information Regarding the Meeting Held with the Soviet Comrades during the International Meeting on AM in Hungary (11–17.5.1986), n.d., in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E 669, p. 221.

82. Lehrman, "Some Minor Inaccuracies."

83. Andrew and Mitrokhin, *The Sword and the Shield*, pp. 206, 232–233.
84. Nathaniel S. Lehrman, “Is AIDS Non-infectious? The Possibility and Its CBW Implications,” *CAIB*, Vol. 28 (Summer 1987), p. 62.
85. *Ibid.*, pp. 61–62.
86. Robert Lederer, “Origin and Spread of AIDS (I): Is the West Responsible?,” *CAIB*, Vol. 28 (Summer 1987), pp. 43–54. Among the theories Lederer cites is indirect exposure to dioxin (similar to “Agent Orange” in Vietnam; pp. 47–48) or coinfection with the viruses for maguari and dengue fever, for whose spread in Cuba the United States was allegedly responsible (pp. 49–53). In a follow-up article he cited other speculations about the origins of AIDS, including infection with the African swine fever virus, for whose spread in Cuba the United States had allegedly also been responsible. See Robert Lederer, “Origin and Spread of AIDS (II): Is the West Responsible (Conclusion)?,” *CAIB*, Vol. 29 (Winter 1988), pp. 52–55. For the accusation that the United States was responsible for the spread of maguari and dengue fever in Cuba, see Bill Schaap, “U.S. Biological Warfare: The 1981 Cuba Dengue Epidemic,” *CAIB*, Vol. 17 (Summer 1982), pp. 28–31. Regarding the apparent role of Soviet and Cuban propaganda in at least some of the accusations, see Memorandum from [sanitized], Chief, Foreign Subversion and Instability Center, Office of Global Issues, Directorate of Intelligence, CIA, “Soviet Disinformation: Allegations of US Misdeeds,” 28 March 1986, in CIA Freedom of Information Act Reading Room, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP86T01017R000100620001-1.pdf>.
87. Charley Shively, “AIDS and Genes (Part I of III): On the Sidewalks of Washington, DC, Someone Painted ‘AIDS/Gay Genocide’: Filling in Some of the Glaring Gaps in Public Information about the Disease Leaves a Frightening and Still Puzzling Picture,” *Gay Community News*, 4 October 1987, p. 3.
88. *Ibid.*
89. Stankov, “Memorandum Regarding the Conversations Held with Service ‘A’ of the FCD of the KGB in Moscow from 25–30 October 1988 Regarding Cooperation, 28 November 1988,” in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 681, p. 118.
90. Cheryl Lynn Greenberg, *Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 243–234.

91. The article cited V. P. Sergiev, Director of the Chief Administration for Diseases Requiring Quarantine at the Soviet Ministry of Health, with regard to the conference in Brussels. See "SPID: Voprosy bol'she, chem otvetov," p. 15. Also see Colin Norman, "Politics and Science Clash on African AIDS," in Loren K. Clarke and Malcolm Potts, eds., *AIDS Reader*, Vol. 1 (Wellesley, MA: Branden Books, 1988), pp. 288–291.

92. See, for example, Reiner Klingholz, "Tödliches Puzzle am Äquator," *Die Zeit*, 28 February 1986, p. 41; Harry Nelson, "African Nations Shun AIDS Research Reports," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 December 1985, pt. 4, p. 3; Paul Kocheleff, "AIDS in Burundi and South Africa: A Day-to-Day Experience," in Phillipe Denis and Charles Becker, eds., *The HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa in a Historical Perspective* (Lewes, DE: Distant Production House University, October 2006), online ed., p. 146, at http://www.dphu.org/uploads/attachements/books/books_1448_0.pdf; "Africans Resent Blame for AIDS," *St. Petersburg Times* (Florida), 6 December 1987, p. 1D; and Alfred J. Fortin, "The Politics of AIDS in Kenya," in Clarke and Potts, eds., *AIDS Reader*, Vol. 1, pp. 292–298.

93. See L. Nikolov, "Information Regarding the Meeting Held with the Soviet Friends during the International Conference on AM in Hungary, 11–17 May 1986," in COMDOS, F. 9 Op. 4, A.E. 669, p. 221. In a phone conversation with me, Essex said he had presented the press with an "informal hypothesis" that "HIV arose in Africa among sub-human primates." The press, he noted, "made too much out of the word 'green.'" Myron Essex, telephone interview, 20 December 2013. Nevertheless, the press cited him directly at the time with regard to the potential origin of HIV in a virus among green monkeys. See, for example, Daniel Q. Haney, Associated Press (AP), "Discovery of Monkey AIDS Virus May Speed Vaccine Development," 14 April 1985, available online at AP News Archive, <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1985/Discovery-Of-Monkey-AIDS-Virus-May-Speed-Vaccine-Development/id-d7f5a8979677d791edb3b04db2395c77>.

94. Nikolov, "Information"; and Lehrman, "Is AIDS Non-infectious?"

95. Nikolov, "Information." In this case, Ivanov overstated or overestimated the KGB's power. Soviet scientists did publish articles and make statements that contradicted Segal. See U.S. Department of State, *Soviet Influence Activities, 1986–87*, p. 37.

96. *AIDS: USA Home-Made Evil*.

97. Segal and Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin," pp. 18–21.

98. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

99. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

100. P. J. Kanki, J. Alroy, and M. Essex, "Isolation of T-lymphotropic Retrovirus Related to HTLV-III/LAV from Wild-Caught African Green Monkeys," *Science*, Vol. 230 (1985), pp. 951–954; Essex, telephone interview; and Haney, "Discovery of Monkey AIDS."

101. "Book Review: 'AIDS—USA—Home Made Evil, Not Imported from Africa,'" *Social Change and Development*, Vol. 14 (1986), pp. 34–37; and "US Germ Warfare Blunder Started Aids, Say Scientists," *Sunday Mail* (Harare), 24 August 1986, p. 1.

102. *Ibid.*

103. For a more complete biography of the Segals, see Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 13–14.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 2; and Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 51.

105. Jakob Segal to West German Geneticist Benno Müller-Hill, 2 December 1985, in Archiv der Berlin-Brandenburgischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (ABBAW), Nachlass (NL) Benno Müller-Hill, Nr. 66.

106. German journalist Klaus Behling cited Bohnsack to this effect, and Boghardt later cited Behling. See Klaus Behling, *Kundschafter a. D.: Das Ende der DDR-Spionage* (Stuttgart: Hohenheim Verlag, 2003), pp. 252–254; and Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 9. Bohnsack did not make this claim in his earlier, generally more accurate memoirs; there he asserted only that the HVA had followed KGB orders in initiating its role in the disinformation campaign and that Segal and others had later picked up on the thesis favored by the HVA. He and his coauthor, Herbert Brehmer, concluded: "Who among the participants [in spreading the AIDS disinformation] knowingly contributed to spreading the dirty story and who allowed themselves to be misled and misused remains an open question." Bohnsack und Brehmer, *Auftrag*, pp. 219–220. Regarding the relative accuracy of the Bohnsack-Bremer book, at least as far as memoirs go, see, Christopher Nehring, "Eine etwas andere Rezension: Die Erinnerungen zweier Stasi-Offiziere

im Lichte neuer Archivalien,” *Journal for Intelligence, Propaganda and Security Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (2017), pp. 170–171.

107. Information No. 2742, n.d., in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 675, p. 157.

108. For the incoming KGB information regarding AIDS, 7 June 1985, see BStU, MfS, SdM 557, Entry 508, p. 86. The HVA apparently received the same information on 14 June. See BStU, MfS, HV A/MD/6, SIRA-TDB 12, SE8531191.

109. Memorandum from the Director of HVA/X, Wagenbreth, to the Director of Division X of the MfS, Damm, 30 July 1985, in BStU, MfS, Abt. X, Nr. 312, p. 185.

110. Message for the Residencies in New York and Washington, 21 October 1985.

111. Handwritten Notes, 12 November 1985; Handwritten Notes, 29 November 1985; and Telegram 1666/85, n.d.

112. See Handwritten Note, from an officer of ZAIG/6 regarding a meeting with “Vitalii” [i.e., Lyamin] on 30 December 1985, in BStU, MfS, ZAIG, Nr. 14413, p. 46.

113. L. Nikolov, Director of Department in Division 8 of the KGB's First Chief Directorate, Information regarding the Working Consultations Held with the German Comrades from 16 to 19 September in Sofia, 7 October 1986, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 670, p. 104.

114. Lieutenant D. Stankov, Information (Short Report) regarding the Talks with Comrade Wolfgang Mutz, Deputy Head of the Division for AM in the Hauptverwaltung Aufklärung of the MfS of the GDR during His Visit to Bulgaria from 16–19.9.1986, 22 November 1986, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 670, pp. 123–124.

115. Müller-Enbergs, “Hauptverwaltung A,” p. 212.

116. SVG “Wind” was officially registered by van de Sand on 6 September 1985. See BStU, AR 2, RoHo F22, Reg.-Nr. XV 3824/85. Also see BStU, MfS, HV A/MD/6, SIRA-TDB 21, ZV8200503. On security dossiers (*Sicherungsvorgänge*) and their meaning, see Roland Lucht, *Das Archiv der Stasi: Begriffe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 204.

117. See Jakob and Lilli Segal, in BStU, AR 2, M/01-Bln-Ost. This disproves Geissler's assertion that Jakob Segal, given his status as "Soviet citizen and decommissioned IM [unofficial collaborator]," would not have been subject to Stasi spying on his mail or telephone calls in the 1980s. See Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 102. Regarding the registration of Jakob and Lilli Segal in SVG Wind, see Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 61–68. Geissler and Sprinkle claim, in "Disinformation Squared," p. 34, without evidence, "This registration [of the Segals with HVA/SWT] was of long standing and could not have related to AIDS." Even after the publication of additional details, Geissler held to his unfounded claim of a "long-standing" registration (since the 1960s or 1970s) of the Segals by HVA/SWT. See Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 97. In fact, the Segals were registered under SVG "Wind," which van de Sand had officially established only on 6 September 1985. Van de Sand himself had begun his work as a regular employee of HVA/SWT/XIII/5 only on 1 January 1985. From March 1983 until that point, he had worked as a paid, full-time, unofficial collaborator (*hauptamtlich inoffizieller Mitarbeiter*, HIM) for HVA/SWT/XIII under the codename "Behrend." See "van de Sand, Dieter," in BStU, AR 2, HA KuSch/AKG-KA-HM. He is registered under his birth name, Dieter Bahr, in RoHo, F16 and F22, Reg.-Nr. XV/6331/81.

118. J. Segal to Benno Müller-Hill, 19 March 1986, in ABBAW, NL Müller-Hill, Nr. 67.

119. Nathaniel S. Lehrman, Clinical Director, Retired, Brooklyn State Hospital, "Media Cover-Up of AIDS?" February 1986, in BStU, MfS, HA II, Nr. 22082, pp. 41–45.

120. Segal to Müller-Hill, 19 March 1986.

121. The press release was attached to Report on Being Contacted by Employees of the U.S. Embassy in the GDR, n.d., in BStU, MfS, HA II, Nr. 22082, pp. 39–40. As Geissler and Sprinkle note, the report, clearly based on statements by Lilli Segal, had been forwarded by Hans-Jürgen Oldenburg of the foreign counterintelligence division (IX) of the HVA to an officer in the Stasi's HA II responsible for domestic counterintelligence. See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 47. What they did not know is that this report about the U.S. diplomats, as well as a second report regarding the Segals' contacts with U.S. diplomats, had originated in HVA/SWT/XIII/5, which had forwarded both reports via HVA/IX to HA II on 16–17 October 1986. HVA/SWT/XIII/5 had

attributed the reports to its contact person "Diagnosis," their codename for one or both of the Segals. The origin of the reports, and thus the press release, in HVA/SWT/XIII/5 is evident from the HVA's database of incoming and outgoing information. See BStU, MfS, HV A/MD/5, SIRA-TDB 14, SE8607428 and SE8607429.

122. See, for example, Jakob Segal to a Japanese professor at the University of Hiroshima, 3 December 1986, in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BA), NY 4516 (Nachlass Jakob und Lilli Segal), Karton (K.) 12, Japan; and Jakob Segal to Volkmar Sigusch, Director of the Institute for Sex Research at the Goethe University in Frankfurt, 12 March 1986, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 13. Regarding Segal's acknowledgment that his study would also serve propaganda purposes, see Nagel, HA VII/7, Bericht über durchgeführten Kurztreff mit IMS "Nils," 6 May 1986, in BStU, MfS, AIM 4835/88, Bd. I, p. 73.

123. Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 48–49.

124. Ibid., p. 16. The Segals knew Axen personally through his daughter, who had taken classes from Segal at Humboldt University. See Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 101–102.

125. Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 48–54.

126. See Jakob Segal to an East German geneticist, 17 July 1987, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, vorl. K. 12, AIDS+Nazi-Verbrechen.

127. See "Segal, Jakob, and Segal, Lilli," n.d., in BStU, AR 2, M/01-Bln-Ost.

128. The latter was the sense of SVG "Wind."

129. Theisinger, HA VII/7, "Information zur Person Prof. Dr. Segal, Jakob, erfaßt HVA/SWT/13, Gen. Tiedemann [*sic*, Thielemann]," 31 July 1986, in BStU, MfS, AIM 4835/88, Bd. I, pp. 113–114.

130. See BStU, MfS, HV A/MD/2, SIRA-TDB 11, SE8607838. Regarding the registration of one or both Segals under the codename "Diagnose" (Diagnosis), see Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 61–68.

131. BStU, MfS, AIM 4835/88; and Theisinger, HA VII/7, Treffbericht: IMS "Nils," 7 February 1986, in BStU, MfS, AIM 4835/88, Bd. I, pp. 97–98. Dehmlow

denied he had ever worked as an unofficial collaborator for the Stasi. See Ronald Dehmlow, interview, in Berlin, 31 October 2013.

132. Theisinger, "Information zur Person Prof. Dr. Segal," 31 July 1986. Theisinger also noted that Segal was "registered positively [*positiv erfasst*]" by HVA/SWT/XIII/5. This formulation was used by the MfS to designate someone who was working on its behalf. See Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 55, esp. n. 205. My thanks to Georg Herbstritt for his information and advice regarding this terminology.

133. Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 101. Under the principles of secrecy usually followed by the MfS, unofficial collaborators were not normally informed of the exact unit or office of the MfS for which they were working. At best, they were perhaps informed that they were working for foreign intelligence (HVA), military intelligence, or for internal security. Theisinger's predecessor as Dehmlow's control officer, Major Nagel, had submitted a search inquiry (*Suchauftrag*) regarding Jakob Segal on the official MfS Form F10 on 29 May 1986 to the central registry of the MfS (Division XII). See Nagel, HA VII/7, Bericht über durchgeführten Treff mit IMS "Nils," 29 May 1986, in BStU, MfS, AIM 4835/88, Bd. I, pp. 74–75. This was the normal procedure when a unit of the MfS became interested in a person, either for potential repression or—as in this case—for potential recruitment. Division XII would check whether another unit of the MfS had already registered the person for another reason. If the person was already registered, as was the case with Jakob Segal, both the inquiring division (i.e., Nagel) and the division that had registered him (i.e., HVA/SWT/XIII/5) would have been informed about their common interest in the person. See the entry for "Suchauftrag" in Lucht, ed., *Das Archiv der Stasi*, p. 221, as well as the relevant internal regulation of the MfS: "Dienstanweisung Nr. 2/81 zur einheitlichen Gestaltung der Erfassung und Überprüfung von Personen und Objekten, der Registrierung von Vorgängen und Akten sowie der Archivierung politisch-operativen Schriftgutes in den Abteilungen XII," 1 July 1981, Sections 2 and 2.1, in BStU, MfS, BdL-Dok. Nr. 4210, pp. 1–24. Thus, the officers of HVA/SWT/XIII/5 would have learned of Nagel's interest in Segal, and—as was clearly the case—they then spoke with Nagel (or later Theisinger) about their mutual interest. In this way, HVA/SWT/XIII/5 learned about Dehmlow and used the opportunity to give him assignments related to Segal through his control officer.

134. Jakob Segal, Öffentliche Erklärung, 30 January 1992, in BArch, NY 4516, vorl. K. 7, n.p.

135. Theisinger, "Information zur Person Prof. Dr. Segal," 31 July 1986.

136. OVO "Denver," Reg.-Nr. XV 3429/86. The question of the true codename for the AIDS disinformation campaign may seem trivial, but the name "Infektion" has become indelibly associated with it and even dominates the Internet as a meme. A Google search on 27 January 2019 for "Operation Infektion" and "AIDS" yielded 21,200 results. The name has also served as a title and extended metaphor—that is, disinformation spreads like a viral infection—for a recent, popular documentary film debunking Soviet and Russian disinformation. For those seeking to combat contemporary disinformation, close attention to facts, even such trivial ones, is important. See Ellick, Westbrook, and Kessel, "OPERATION INFEKTION."

137. Plan der gemeinsamen und abgestimmten aktiven Maßnahmen der Aufklärungsorgane des Mdl der VR Bulgarien und des MfS der DDR für 1987 und 1988, Berlin, 3 September 1986, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 670, p. 112.

138. Wolf, "L'arte della simulazione," p. 12.

139. Nikolov, Information, 7 October 1986, p. 104.

140. Segal and Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin."

141. Stankov, Information (Short Report), 22 November 1986, COMDOS, pp. 123–124; and Stankov, Work Plan for 1987 for the Direction USA and NATO for Division 8 of the First Chief Directorate, 6 January 1987, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 673, pp. 20–21.

142. For this particular claim by Wolf, see the (more?) complete Italian version of his speech: "Io, magnifico bugiardo," p. 57. He apparently decided that his mention of the Segals' study in the context of the KGB's active-measures campaign regarding AIDS and the HVA's assistance to the same should remain concealed from the German public. Any mention of the Segals or their study was excised from the published German version of his speech. See Wolf, "L'arte della simulazione," p. 12. Wolf left open whether the Segals had prepared their study for the KGB. He stated in this regard, "Also for me, the question remained and remains open of who knowingly deceived or let themselves be deceived here." Wolf, "L'arte della simulazione," p. 12; and Wolf, "Io, magnifico bugiardo," p. 57.

143. Geissler and Sprinkle write in "Disinformation Squared," p. 141: "Judging from these Bulgarian files, [Mutz] left four impressions: that Segal was a fully compliant Stasi asset, that the Harare venture had been a Stasi initiative, [and] that the myth [Fort Detrick thesis] was under his own department's control.... Drawing on our German sources, we suspect this colonel was boasting abroad." These claims are disingenuous. At no point during the conversation did Mutz claim that "Segal was a fully compliant Stasi asset." The East German scientists, Mutz said, had been "attracted to" or drawn into research on the origins of AIDS; this suggested something other than domination on the part of the MfS and compliance on the part of Segal. Mutz never suggested everything was "under his own department's control"; he suggested to the contrary that the responsible "operational division"—that is, HVA/SWT/XIII/5—had also played an unspecified role in the manuscript's completion and that it was not HVA/X but an East German scientist (i.e., Segal) who had prepared the study that allegedly "proved that AIDS was the by-product of a biological weapon of the USA." See Stankov, Information (Short Report), 22 November 1986, pp. 123–124.

144. I make this assertion based on my reading not only of the transcripts I cite from meetings between officers of HVA/X and their Bulgarian comrades, but also of transcripts from the meetings between HVA/X and the active-measures division of Czechoslovak State Security (Division 36 of the First Chief Directorate of the Czechoslovak Federal Ministry of the Interior) from 1966–1986. For the latter, see ABS, a. č. 81282/103, 81282/107, 81282/111, and 81282/117.

145. For example, the rector of the East German Academy for Government and Law in Potsdam-Babelsberg prepared in 1975 a study at the apparent request of the MfS regarding the illegality of the U.S. broadcast stations Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) in international law. An apparent contact person of HVA/X, Emil Hofmann, published excerpts from the article in Western publications. HVA/X deigned the ensuing publications in Austria and West Germany to be part of its active measure "Spider" against RFE/RL. See Selvage, "SA-CIA-HVA," pp. 131–132.

146. Ibid., pp. 131–134; and ABS, a. č. 81282/103, 107, 111 and 117.

147. See Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 114–115. See also ABS, a. č. 81282/103, 81282/107, 81282/111, and 81282/117.

148. This was allegedly the case with the book *The Devil and His Dart* about the CIA's activities in the developing world. Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 73.

149. Regarding "channels," see Nehring, "Die Zusammenarbeit der DDR-Auslandsaufklärung," pp. 157, 387. See also the records of various discussions between HVA/X and their counterparts in Prague, in ABS, a. č. 81282/103, 81282/107, 81282/111, and 81282/117.

150. For a relevant example, see Selvage, "SA-CIA-HVA," p. 133.

151. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 141

152. Nehring, "Die Zusammenarbeit der DDR-Auslandsaufklärung," pp. 154–266; and Selvage, "Operation Synonym," pp. 81–96.

153. KGB, Information Nr. 2955, 7 September 1985.

154. See, for example, Selvage, "SA-CIA-HVA," p. 133.

155. Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 106.

156. See the records of various discussions between HVA/X and its counterparts in Prague, along with lists of publications that were sent in both directions after the meetings, in ABS, a. č. 81282/103, 81282/107, 81282/111, and 81282/117.

157. Stankov, Work Plan for 1987, 6 January 1987, pp. 477–478.

158. True to form, Geißler has made much of the absence of the Harare brochure in the Stasi archives. Despite the destruction of around 90 percent of the HVA's files, he holds that its absence in the archives should serve as evidence of the HVA's absence in its publication or distribution. See Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 106. Because Geißler could not find a copy of the brochure for many years (absence of evidence), he even began to question the Harare brochure's very existence (evidence of absence). See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 87; and Geissler, "AIDS und seine Erreger," pp. 124, 129. Eventually he did receive a copy of the brochure and conceded its existence in an addendum to his 2014 article with Sprinkle. See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 81–82.

159. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 35, 37.

160. Letter from J. Segal to a Japanese scholar in Tokyo, 2 March 1987, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 12, Japan.

161. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 35, 37, and Table 4 on p. 76.

162. See the letter from Jakob Segal to the professor in Cameroon, 17 June 1986, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 12.

163. The Cameroonian professor had studied at an East German university in the early 1970s, at which time he had been recruited as a "prospective unofficial collaborator" (*Vorlauf-IM*), codename "Herbert," by the Stasi. However, to the annoyance of his Stasi control officer, he had provided only very general information about his fellow students, and the Stasi had eventually broken off contact with him. The final straw had been the control officer's suspicion that "Herbert" had failed to inform him about the successful efforts of another African student to smuggle an East German citizen across the border to the West. See IM-Vorlauf "Herbert," 17 October 1986, in BStU, MfS, AIM 6694/75, Bd. I, esp. pp. 143–144. Still, there is no evidence of a continuing relationship between the future professor and the MfS after he had left the GDR for Cameroon.

164. Stankov, Information (Short Report), 22 November 1986, pp. 123–124. On motive (i.e., the HVA's desire to help the KGB, which had requested such assistance from its "fraternal organs") and opportunity, see Selvae and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 21–22, 35, and pp. 58–60 respectively. The implementation and conduct of active measures was one of the main tasks of all divisions of the HVA, not only HVA/X. See MfS, 1. Kommentar zur Richtlinie 2/79, [May] 1980, in Müller-Enbergs, *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, Vol. 2, p. 522. Each residency of the HVA abroad—whether it was under the direction of HVA/XI (North America), HVA/I or HVA/II (FRG), or HVA/III (everywhere else)—was expected to devote a certain amount of its time and resources to developing and implementing active measures. This was the normal practice among the East European security services, based on the model and practices of the KGB. Moreover, any unit of the MfS could develop active measures, as necessary, for its own operations or in coordination or cooperation with HVA/X. Given HVA/X's limited staff, it regularly depended on the expertise, unofficial collaborators, and contact persons in other divisions of the HVA in preparing and implementing active measures. This division of labor was normally based on the geographic

responsibilities within HVA. In the case of the AIDS disinformation campaign, this expertise clearly came from HVA/SWT/XIII/5.

165. Information Nr. 2742, n.d., p. 157; Record of the Conversations Conducted with the German Comrades from the Line AM, 10 November 1988, in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 691, p. 92; and Record of the Conversations Conducted with the German Comrades from 26–29 September 1989, 10 October 1989, in in COMDOS, F. 9, Op. 4, A.E. 691, p. 189.

166. Lilli Segal to Benno Müller-Hill, 23 August 1991, in ABBAW, NL Müller-Hill, Nr. 88, Segal 20. Jakob Segal had corresponded several times with Müller-Hill, a prominent West German molecular biologist and professor of genetics at the University of Cologne, during research for his AIDS study. Müller-Hill had first privately, and then publicly and quite vocally, criticized the Segals' research and their conclusions. See Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 19; and Benno Müller-Hill, "Möglichkeiten werden durch Fakten bewiesen," in Kuno Kruse, ed., *AIDS: Erreger aus dem Genlabor?* (West Berlin: Simon & Leutner, 1987), pp. 44–46.

167. See Mitrokhin's notes in Churchill Archives Centre, Churchill College, Cambridge University, Mitrokhin Papers, MITN 2/18, p. 22.

168. I acquired this information through an online search of the journalist's name.

169. U.S. DOS, *Soviet Influence Activities, 1986–87*, pp. 13–14, 20.

170. Information Nr. 2742, p. 157.

171. Kathleen Bailey, "Soviets Sponsor Spread of AIDS Disinformation," *Los Angeles Times*, 19 April 1987, p. E2. Bailey was U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state, overseeing the Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

172. Segal and Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin", p. 13.

173. Letter from Jakob Segal to J. M. B. Seale, 29 May 1986, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 13.

174. Shively, "AIDS and Genes (Part I of III)."

175. Jakob Segal's first-known public accusation that Gallo had constructed HIV in the laboratory was published in an interview in the Austrian magazine *BASTA* in December 1988. See "Der AIDS-Krimi," *BASTA*, December 1988. This discovery was made by Geissler. See Geißler, "Es gab keine AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 100.

176. Segal and Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin", pp. 12–13.
177. Ibid., p. 13.
178. Ibid., pp. 14–15.
179. The U.S. State Department responded as follows to the Segals' thesis: "The HTLV-I and VISNA viruses were first cloned in 1983 and sequenced in 1983 and 1985, respectively, several years after Segal claims they were manipulated to 'create' HIV-I." U.S. DOS, *Soviet Influence Activities, 1986–87*, p. 36.
180. Müller-Hill, "Möglichkeiten werden durch Fakten bewiesen," p. 44.
181. Cass R. Sunstein and Adrian Vermeule, "Conspiracy Theories," *University of Chicago Law School Public Law and Legal Theory Research Paper Series*, Vol. 199 (2008), p. 5.
182. Michael Shermer, "Conspiracy Theory Detector," *Scientific American*, Vol. 303, No. 6 (December 2010), p. 102.
183. The Segals wrote: "There was a danger of popular mass protest against the preparation of biological warfare. This explains why the media, which had at first operated with prognoses of approximately 5 million patients, for purposes of sensation mongering, suddenly screwed back their estimates to a mere 2 to 300,000 patients, 'to avoid panic.'" Segal and Segal, "AIDS—Its Nature and Origin, p. 17.
184. "Pochemu mlochit pressa SShA," p. 2.
185. Jakob Segal and Lilli Segal, "AIDS—Natur und Ursprung," in Kruse, ed., *AIDS: Erreger aus dem Genlabor?*, p. 103.
186. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 103–106.
187. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 126.
188. Steven Clarke, "Conspiracy Theories and Conspiracy Theorizing," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (2002), pp. 136–137.
189. Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," p. 95.
190. Ibid., p. 84.

191. Ibid., pp. 84–89.
192. Report from Deutsche Presseagentur, 17 January 1989, reprinted in Erhard Geißler, *Anthrax und das Versagen der Geheimdienste* (Berlin: kai-homilius-verlag, 2003), pp. 249–250.
193. Ibid., p. 250.
194. Alfred Lee, “AIDS ‘Made in Lab’ Shock,” *Sunday Express* (London), 26 October 1986, pp. 1–2.
195. Roy Godson, “Outlook,” *Washington Post*, 25 January 1987, p. B1.
196. Steven Epstein, *Impure Science: AIDS, Activism, and the Politics of Knowledge* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 117.
197. Philip Williams (UPI), “Soviet Disinformation on AIDS Alarms U.S.,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 20 December 1986, p. B16.
198. Information Nr. 2742, n.d., p. 157. Jakob Segal credited Seale for inspiring Lee to write the article. See Letter from Jakob Segal to J. M. B. Seale, 26 October 1986, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 13.
199. “Pfeifer, Hans,” in BStU, AR 2, HA KuSch/AKG-KA HM; “Pfeifer, Hans,” MA-Karte, in BStU, MfS, RoHo, F16; and Note from Colonel Wagenbreth, Director of HV A/X, to the Director of Division X of the MfS, Major General Willi Damm, 18 August 1986, in BStU, MfS, Abt. X, Nr. 1123, p. 8. As the deputy director of HVA/X/1, Pfeifer was the immediate supervisor of Ingo Dams, under whom “Denver” was registered. See OVO “Denver,” Reg.-Nr. XV 3429/86. Regarding Ditschenko, see his file in BStU, MfS, ZAIG 14413, pp. 38–39. Ditschenko had served from 1971 to 1977 as the deputy head of the KGB station in Bonn and from then until the assumption of his duties in East Berlin in March 1986 as director of Division 3 of the FCD in Moscow, responsible for the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Scandinavia. Churchill College Archives, Cambridge University, Mitrokhin Papers, MITN 2/9/2, p. 233, Entry 620.
200. Lilli Segal to Erich Friedländer, n.d., in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, vorl. K. 12, AIDS+Nazi-Verbrechen, DDR, n.p.
201. At the time, Friedländer was working as “candidate unofficial collaborator” (*Kandidat—Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter* or *Kandidat-IM*) “Hugo Lang” for the HVA (registration number XV/3791/83). See Friedländer’s “declaration of commitment”

(*Verpflichtungserklärung*) in BStU, MfS, AIM 2886/91, Bl. 233. On “unofficial collaborators,” see Jens Gieseke, *The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police, 1945–1990* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), pp. 77–95.

202. Hauptabteilung VIII/13, MfS, “Auskunftsbericht: Friedländer, Erich,” 1 December 1988, in BStU, MfS, AIM 2886/91, Bd. 1, p. 30.

203. See Friedländer to the Segals, n.d., in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 12, “AIDS+Nazi-Verbrechen”; and Friedländer to the Segals, 24 November 1986, in SAPMO-BA, NY 4516, K. 12, “AIDS+Nazi-Verbrechen.” On 2 November, *Sunday News* had published an article based on the *Sunday Express* article citing the Segal thesis. See “AIDS Virus Is Man-Made, Says Paper,” *Sunday News—Tanzania*, 2 November 1986, p. 1. USIA officer Michael Braxton had responded with a letter to the editor denying the allegations in the article—a “pretty dumb response,” Friedländer wrote the Segals. See: Michael Braxton, “Report on U.S. Role in AIDS Untrue,” *Sunday News—Tanzania*, 9 November 1986, p. 4. Friedländer claimed to have published a response to Braxton's letter. In his letter to the Segals of 24 November, he wrote, “It cost me almost no effort (except for writing it), to place this letter to the editor.” Unfortunately, the article enclosed for the Segals was not in the archival file. The earliest response to the USIA's intervention I could find in the *Sunday News* was published later. See Ben G. Lyagile, “US Created AIDS,” *Sunday News—Tanzania*, 30 November 1986, p. 4.

204. On *Blitz* and *Patriot*, see U.S. DOS, *Soviet Influence Activities, 1986–87*, pp. 43–44.

205. Selvage and Nehring, “AIDS-Verschwörung,” pp. 73–74.

206. Geissler and Sprinkle, “Disinformation Squared,” p. 74.

207. “Pfeifer, Hans,” in BStU; “Pfeifer, Hans,” MA-Karte, in BStU; and OVO “Denver,” Reg.-Nr. XV 3429/86. See also items in BStU, MfS, HV A/MD/6, SIRA-TDB 21, ZV8237870; BStU, AR 2, RoHo, F16, F22; and Statistikbogen, Reg.-Nr. XV 4735/63.

208. Geissler and Sprinkle, “Disinformation Squared,” pp. 74–75.

209. Roy Godson, “Commie Bigs Say AIDS Is U.S. Plot for Control,” *The Washington Post*, 25 January 1987, pp. B1, B4.

210. Ibid.

211. "Virus SPID sozdal Pentagon?" *Pravda*, 28 October 1986, p. 5.
 212. See Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 9.
 213. See Segal to an East German geneticist, 17 July 1987.
 214. Boghardt, "Operation INFEKTION," p. 12; Selvage and Nehring, "AIDS-Verschwörung," pp. 46–54, 117–125; Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," pp. 13–14; and Geissler, "'Lieber AIDS,'" pp. 96–97.
 215. Geissler and Sprinkle, "Disinformation Squared," p. 76, Table 4.
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Ethnic Weapons

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Carl A. Larson

A new generation of chemical weapons seem to be growing out of information collected and interpreted in research centers in both East and West. So far, chemical agents have been considered effective mainly against tactical targets of limited area. Even if this view may still be maintained, a new edge can be honed to an already formidable weapon. Forthcoming chemical agents with selective manstopping power will put into the hands of an assailant a weapon with which he cannot be attacked.

At the bottom of this new reasoning lies a careful exploration of the reaction of individual soldiers to chemical agents. Tactical consequences of the wide variation of such reactions involve both target analysis and the selection of personnel for special missions.

With or without exposure to toxic products, most molecules of the human organism keep to their ordinary tasks of maintaining structure. A fairly great number of molecules are held in reserve against predicted needs, but a fatal chaos would result if too many molecules were ready to react with each other. Our energy requirements are satisfied by the transformation of molecules, capable of releasing energy, into other molecules with a less energy content. But every transformation, whether it takes place in a gun chamber or in a muscle, calls for the supply of activation energy.

High pressure and temperature are not compatible with vital functions. As in all other living organisms, our molecules are kept arrayed until particular trigger mechanisms lower the activation energies of chemical reactions. These carefully safeguarded procedures for alerting molecules are extremely selective, and they depend on the activities of enzymes.

Such catalysts of living organisms have attracted an increasing interest, and new methods for the study of enzymes have accumulated some imposing, and



mostly new, facts. One way to knowledge about the ladders of chemical reactions furthered at each step by a special enzyme is to study what happens when one enzymatic step is blocked. Material for such studies is provided by nature and by artificial inactivation of particular enzymes, intentional and accidental.

Catalase Activity

The immense laboratory of human natural variation provides many instances of sharp differences in the activities of well-defined enzymes. Catalase belongs to this category. Its task is to split hydrogen peroxide, H_2O_2 , setting free oxygen. Today, hydrogen peroxide may be better known as a rocket propellant than as a disinfectant. If used in the latter capacity, diluted peroxide foams when brought into contact with blood or a fresh scratch in the skin. Without catalase, there is no foam. We need the enzyme to inactivate hydrogen peroxide generated by bacteria trying to invade the gum through minute injuries.

In the early fifties, several Japanese families

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were observed in some individuals lacking catalase activity. Their blood produced no gas when in contact with hydrogen peroxide, and they had more or less severe ulceration of the gums with loss of teeth. This enzyme defect is rare, and it follows a simple mode of inheritance, with the parents of patients having a normal or practically normal catalase activity. The changed gene responsible for lack of catalase is not confined to east Asian populations as was once suspected.

Scores of enzyme failures due to gene mutations have now become known. Many of them cause early death or severe mental retardation. Sometimes, a dietary adjustment suffices to overcome the consequences of enzymatic ineptitude. The study of such heritable disturbances has included their prevalence in different geographic regions.

Basic Pattern

Although some outstanding inequalities between widely separated ethnic groups have been registered, detrimental genes are, as a rule, rare all over. Significant is the basic pattern, repeating itself in scores of enzymatic failures, of a changed gene causing a distinct enzyme block. It does so alone or together with its similarly changed partner gene, carrying its false message unaltered from generation to generation.

Besides these experiments by nature, revealing the existence of an enzyme and its determining gene by replacing the gene with an inert imitation, information about enzymes has been obtained from the study of their inhibitors. Chains of vital processes in the human body, concerned with energy provision and material replacement, can be broken at will. For practical purposes, the effect of a specific enzyme inhibitor is a disturbed function that can be seen or measured with special methods. In effect, a supply point has been demolished.

For widely varying purposes, enzyme inhibitors have long been systematically studied. Their principal modes of operation have been traced, and their practical use includes agents with antibacterial and antitumor activity. The systematic search for enzyme inhibitors, useful as insecticides, began in Leverkusen in the Rhine Province in the thirties. Insects have solved their internal supply problems much in the same way as the gardener or farmer who tries to survive his bug fauna,

not as the differences in susceptibility to enzyme inhibitors. In 1937, the Leverkusen laboratories could, however, report a series of organophosphorous compounds that killed the gardener as well as his beetles.

Keeping quiet about these reports, the Wehrmacht began large-scale production in Dyhernfurth in Silesia of what was code-named Trilon. This was in April 1942. By 1945, some 12,000 tons had been produced of tabun or GA. Thus, began the mass production and stockpiling of the so-called nerve gases.

Such highly toxic enzyme inhibitors demonstrate quite convincingly the need for an orderly mobilization of molecules for a given mission—in this case, signal transmission. Too much or too little, too early or too late means chaotic performance by activated molecules.

When the brain orders a muscle to shorten, the signal is dispatched via a nerve which triggers numerous muscle fibers. This is done through the transcription of the nerve signal to a chemical message, acetylcholine being released at the endings of nerve fibers. As long as the flow of impulses travels through the nerve, acetylcholine is discharged and the muscle remains contracted. What happens when the muscle gets word to suspend action is not only that the transmitter substance, acetylcholine, stops being set free, but the chemical signal becomes muted, and acetylcholine is immediately broken up into inactive compounds. This vital task is fulfilled by an esterase, a specialized enzyme.

Without normal activity of this esterase, acetylcholine remains at the nerve fiber endings. The command to cease action does not arrive. The immediate result is a persistent muscular contraction, a state of cramp, followed by paralysis. And this is exactly what happens when the critical esterase, called acetylcholinesterase becomes inhibited by a G-type phosphorous compound. When the block between nerve and muscle affects the limbs, the result is temporary inability of service. But muscles of respiration are also involved, with death following exposure to relatively small quantities. Thus, GA can kill in concentrations of 40 milligrams per cubic meter of air during 10 minutes of exposure through inhalation. However, GB and GD have a lethal concentration of only 10 milligrams under the same conditions.

A further development of the G series of chemical agents is represented by the V anticholinesterases

which the 2003-2003-4-000058617. The G"UNCLASSIFIED" transmission of 28/10/23 nerve impulse agents are also absorbed through unprotected skin, but they evaporate too fast for full effect. A minute droplet of VE or VX passing rapidly through the skin, into the blood circulation, can kill a soldier.

Questions about the limitations of chemical warfare have been raised from time to time. The high toxicity of G and V-type enzyme inhibitors and the possibility of using strategic missiles with chemical warheads carrying well above four tons of payload have raised the discussion to animated altitudes. With existing ordnance employed on a modest scale, and with only a fraction of the GB now in stock, the inhabitants of Paris, Osaka, or Los Angeles could be asphyxiated. But this does not draw the whole picture.

Blocking Agents

By a peculiar coincidence, an inborn variability in the activity of cholinesterases has been observed. For various medicinal purposes, drugs are used to

block the transmission of nerve impulse where it reaches the muscle. One objective is relaxation of the abdominal wall so that surgical manipulations can be carried out without resort to deep anesthesia.

Blocking agents of the same type are also used to decrease muscular spasms in tetanus and to prevent mishaps in the electroshock treatment of psychiatric disorders. One widely used blocking agent derives from curare, the South American arrow poison. Another is suxamethonium which cuts the nerve-muscle signal by interfering with the shifting of electrons at the critical junction.

The therapeutic effect aimed at should vanish with the need for relaxation, but in some patients suxamethonium caused unexpectedly long lam-ing of muscles and dangerous standstill of respi-ration. While curare was, at an earlier stage of its medical use, the carefully guarded secret of tribal witch doctors, nothing in that way entered modern



Enzyme inhibitors could turn these troops into a state of paralysis. (Army News Features)



Face masks provide protection from a variety of agents, but a minute droplet of VE or VX passing rapidly through the skin can be fatal. (Army News Features)

anesthesiology. The relaxant was right; the patient was unfit. The untoward reaction was brought about by a weak or absent cholinesterase activity.

Persons with this potentially fatal weakness are in excellent health as long as they are not exposed to suxamethonium. The deficient enzyme differs in some respects from the cholinesterase handling acetylcholine. It is produced by the directives of a changed gene and the fault appears in consecutive generations.

Human Variations

Such chance findings of heritable differences inevitably attract the attention of people who study the distribution of different genes in human populations. The esterase differences have been studied in detail with the aid of specific enzyme inhibitors. In essence, their inheritance follows well-known Mendelian patterns. A person who has the usual gene on both of two ordinary chromosomes is endowed with a 100-percent esterase activity; the atypical gene on the same site of both chromosomes renders only 50-percent enzyme activity. If two such persons start a

family, their children will each have one usual and one atypical gene, and 75-percent enzyme activity.

Close to four percent of the normal people in Canada and Britain carry the atypical gene with the resulting reduced esterase activity. Similar proportions of 75 percenters have been observed in non-European populations. It is quite possible that the atypical gene, and a third gene causing, in duplicate, zero esterase activity, will finally be found to have about the same distribution in geographically widely separated populations.

But this is only a stray observation fitting into a repeatedly confirmed pattern of human variation. In brief, human populations can be characterized by frequencies of distinct genes. Sometimes, gene frequencies agree fairly well between widely dispersed populations, but more often there are great differences. This view differs from the concept of typification established in physical anthropology until mathematical models and the observation of simply inherited, normal traits made the study of gene frequencies meaningful.

Biochemical Differences

With World War I came the first impetus to the new approach, blood group frequencies in Allied armies being found to vary considerably among personnel of different geographic origin. Next, blood groups were used to map the world population. In central Asia, the B-gene frequency comes near 30 percent; in American Indians, this gene is originally absent. When new blood group systems were discovered, European, Asian, and African populations could be characterized by a number of independently varying gene frequencies.

Widely used in such studies of human populations is the ability to taste diluted solutions of phenylthiourea. Persons who carry a variant of the taster gene on both of the critical chromosomes are nontasters. If somebody were to dissolve a sufficient amount of phenylthiourea in the drinking water in Mahar, India, 54 percent of all water drinkers would complain of the bitter taste. Among Brazilian Indians, an identical experiment would make little more than one percent aware of the admixture.

Several other biochemical differences between human beings have been studied with an increasing awareness that some of these differences may be adaptive. When a simply inherited variant of the red coloring matter of blood, practically absent in Europe, was observed to be common in a broad belt across central Africa, it was brought into relation with the high incidence of malaria in these regions.

Carriers of the changed gene have an increased chance of becoming grandparents in spite of the high mortality among their children where the abnormal gene in the duplex state is a merciless killer. The cause is the greater resistance to malaria granted by a single gene for the deviant pigment. In the Mediterranean region, similar situations include other variants of blood pigment and also an enzyme defect significantly common in old malaria regions.

Enzymatic Reactions

In the present decade, knowledge about enzyme polymorphisms has accumulated. If a deviant gene is too common in a given population to remain prevalent only through new mutations, it has a polymorphic distribution. More often than not, the selective forces balancing such relatively high frequencies of a substandard

gene are simply unknown. The chance observation of a reaction to a certain drug is obviously just the shadow on the wall. The real item has to be searched for among entangled molecular supply lines in the living organism. Clearly a relative advantage in one environment granted carriers of a mutant gene can be entirely void in another environment. But the decisive environmental factors of selection can hardly be such as methonium drugs, sulfonamides, or BZ-type chemical agents.

Careful analyses of enzymatic reaction patterns to a series of drugs are underway, and we may soon have a grid where new observations of this kind can be pinpointed. One set of reference lines in this grid goes from genes necessary for enzyme production. Another set of lines marks substances turning on and off the making of active enzymes which can, but need not, be alerted.

Recently, a series of widely debated observations have revealed an enzyme deficiency in southeastern Asian populations, making them susceptible to a poison to which Caucasoids are largely adapted. In such situations, the sketchy grid just mentioned is of some use. One looks for the possibility of the poison-provoking enzyme production, an individual adaptation observed in several instances.

The poison now at issue is milk. In Europeans, intolerance to lactose, or milk sugar, occurs as a rare recessive trait. Healthy parents, each carrying a single mutant gene, have children approximately one-fourth of whom react to milk ingestion with diarrhea, vomiting, malabsorption, and even death. When reports on milk intolerance in various groups of non-European began to accumulate, it was remembered that malnourished children in east Africa got diarrhea when treated with dried skimmed milk. Then, the enzyme lactase was found to lose its activity in the intestinal mucosa of African infants over the first four years of life.

New reports on milk intolerance in Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians were met with skepticism in that the groups studied might not be representative of their peoples. A study reported from the Chiangmai University in Thailand has, however, revealed a widespread lactose intolerance in adults in northern Thailand, the lactase activity getting lost between the first and fourth years of life. By inference, it has been found likely that Southeast Asians, in general, are deficient in lactase production.



Innate differences in vulnerability to chemical agents between different populations have led to the possible development of ethnic weapons. (Vertol Division - The Boeing Company)

Rapid and Slow Inactivators

Similar observations of geographically distinct enzyme differences are to be expected. Among the obviously inherited differences in enzymatic response to chemical agents, acetylation is marked by a clear separation of people in two groups. Originally, one group was characterized as composed of rapid inactivators of isoniazid, a drug used against tuberculosis. The other group of slow inactivators carries an alternative gene less efficient in converting isoniazid to acetylisoniazid. Europeans, as well as Americans of African descent, have among their numbers about 50 percent slow inactivators. Eskimos and Japanese have approximately 10 percent slow inactivators.

The method of acetylation to inactivate a molecule is not confined to isoniazid. People belonging to the two acetylase classes reveal differences in handling a

number of other drugs, including enzyme inhibitors acting upon the central nervous system. Although the study of drug metabolizing 10 enzymes is only beginning, observed variations in drug response have pointed to the possibility of great innate differences in vulnerability to chemical agents between different populations.

A series of enzyme inhibitors and chemically active substances interfering with signal transmission in the brain and spinal cord have been intensely studied since the early fifties. Many of these substances have a colorful prehistory saturated with tribal sorcery.

The incapacitant known as BZ derives from a drug which before its present renaissance as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) caused epidemic outbursts of Saint Anthony's fire in the Dark Ages. With diuran-like compounds, BZ shares the capacity to produce transient toxic psychosis, sometimes compared to schizophrenia.

Search Continues

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"UNCLASSIFIED" personnel and civilian population

Surrounded with clouds of secrecy, a systematic search for new incapacitating agents is going on in many laboratories. The general idea, as discussed in open literature, was originally that of minimal destruction. Psychochemicals would make it possible to paralyze temporarily entire population centers without damage to homes and other structures. In addition, with the small quantities required for full effect of modern incapacitating agents, logistics problems would be minute. The effective dose of BZ-type agents amounts to micrograms.

It is quite possible to use incapacitating agents over the entire range of offensive operations, from covert activities to mass destruction. One fairly obvious offensive preparation is protection of the country's own personnel by tolerance-building. This is where enzymatic response to psychochemicals enters the scene. Exposure to drugs or to molecules of almost identical composition is known to produce, with varying degrees of accuracy, resistance to the toxic effect at repeated exposure. As this is a known and thoroughly discussed procedure, concealment of large-scale preparations of this type probably would be difficult if not wholly impossible.

Another prospect may tempt an aggressor who knows he can recruit from a population largely tolerant against an incapacitating agent to which the target population is susceptible. An innate immunity would offer concealment of preparations and obvious advantages in many tactical situations. When the proper chemical agent is used against intermingled friendly and enemy units, casualties may occur in proportions one to 10.

Such inferences are barely extrapolations of observed genetic differences between major human populations and of research programs known to be in progress. Widely different opinions have been ventured as to the type of chemical operations likely to be directed

against friendly personnel and civilian population in a future war. There have been some recent tendencies to stress the wide latitude between incapacitating and the lethal action of BZ-type agents. Friendly troops could use them to dampen belligerence. They effectively slow down physical and mental activity, make the poisoned personnel giddy, disoriented, and more or less unable or unwilling to carry out commands.

Friendly forces would discriminatingly use incapacitants in entangled situations to give friend and foe a short period of enforced rest to sort them out. By gentle persuasion, aided by psychochemicals, civilians in enemy cities could be reeducated. The adversary would use incapacitants to spare those whom he could use for slaves. There is little that human biology can contribute to prognoses of that type.

The factual basis of abundant enzyme inhibitors of widely different types can be neglected as little as modern methods for their distribution. They need not be gases in a true sense. Well-studied enzymes represent a small proportion of the total number of catalysts necessary for our vital processes. When new enzyme varieties are discovered, some of them are likely to overstep the prevalence limits so far observed, both high and low, in different populations.

But the production of enzymes in the living cell could not be selectively quenched until details of early signal transmission from the gene became known in 1969. During the first half of that year, several laboratories reported factors engaged in passing over the genic message from DNA, the primary command post, to RNA which relays the chemical signal. The enzymatic process for RNA production has been known for some years, but now the factors have been revealed which regulate the initiation and specificity of enzyme production. Not only the factors have been found, but their inhibitors. Thus, the functions of life lie bare to attack. ■

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3/28/2023



ETHNIC WEAPONS

Carl A. Larson

A NEW generation of chemical weapons seems to be growing out of information collected and interpreted in research centers in both East and West. So far, chemical agents have been considered effective mainly against tactical targets of limited area. Even if this view may still be maintained, a new edge can be honed to an already formidable weapon. Forthcoming chemical agents with selective manstopping power will put into the hands of an assailant a weapon with which he cannot be attacked.

At the bottom of this new reasoning lies a careful exploration of the reaction of individual soldiers to chemical agents. Tactical consequences of the wide variation of such reactions involve both target analysis and the

selection of personnel for special missions.

With or without exposure to toxic products, most molecules of the human organism keep to their ordinary tasks of maintaining structure. A fairly great number of molecules are held in reserve against predicted needs, but a fatal chaos would result if too many molecules were ready to react with each other. Our energy requirements are satisfied by the transformation of molecules, capable of releasing energy, into other molecules with a less energy content. But every transformation, whether it takes place in a gun chamber or in a muscle, calls for the supply of activation energy.

High pressure and temperature are not compatible with vital functions. As in all other living organisms, our

molecules are kept arrayed until particular trigger mechanisms lower the activation energies of chemical reactions. These carefully safeguarded procedures for alerting molecules are extremely selective, and they depend on the activities of enzymes.

Such catalysts of living organisms have attracted an increasing interest, and new methods for the study of enzymes have accumulated some imposing, and mostly new, facts. One way to knowledge about the ladders of chemical reactions furthered at each step by a special enzyme is to study what happens when one enzymatic step is blocked. Material for such studies is provided by nature and by artificial inactivation of particular enzymes, intentional and accidental.

Catalase Activity

The immense laboratory of human natural variation provides many instances of sharp differences in the activities of well-defined enzymes. Catalase belongs to this category. Its task is to split hydrogen peroxide, H_2O_2 , setting free oxygen. Today, hydrogen peroxide may be better known as a rocket propellant than as a disinfectant. If used in the latter capacity, diluted peroxide foams when brought into contact with blood or a fresh scratch in the skin. Without catalase, there is no foam. We need the enzyme to inactivate hydrogen peroxide generated by bacteria trying to invade the gums through minute injuries.

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In the early fifties, several Japanese families were observed where their blood produced no gas when in contact with hydrogen peroxide, and they had more or less severe ulceration of the gums with loss of teeth. This enzyme defect is rare, and it follows a simple mode of inheritance, with the parents of patients having a normal or practically normal catalase activity. The changed gene responsible for lack of catalase is not confined to east Asian populations as was once suspected.

Scores of enzyme failures due to gene mutations have now become known. Many of them cause early death or severe mental retardation. Sometimes, a dietary adjustment suffices to overcome the consequences of enzymatic ineptitude. The study of such heritable disturbances has included their prevalence in different geographic regions.

Basic Pattern

Although some outstanding inequalities between widely separated ethnic groups have been registered, detrimental genes are, as a rule, rare all over. Significant is the basic pattern, repeating itself in scores of enzymatic failures, of a changed gene causing a distinct enzyme block. It does so alone or together with its similarly changed partner gene, carrying its false message unaltered from generation to generation.

Besides these experiments by nature, revealing the existence of an enzyme and its determining gene by replacing the gene with an inert imitation, information about enzymes has been obtained from the study of their inhibitors. Chains of vital processes in the human body, concerned with energy provision and material replace-

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Army News

Enzyme inhibitors could turn these troops into a state of paralysis

ment, can be broken at will. For practical purposes, the effect of a specific enzyme inhibitor is a disturbed function that can be seen or measured with special methods. In effect, a supply point has been demolished.

For widely varying purposes, enzyme inhibitors have long been systematically studied. Their principal modes of operation have been traced, and their practical use includes agents with antibacterial and antitumor activity. The systematic search for enzyme inhibitors, useful as insecticides, began in Leverkusen in the Rhine Province in the thirties. Insects have solved their internal supply problems much in the same way as the gardener or farmer who tries to survive his bug fauna, but there are differences in susceptibility to enzyme inhibitors. In 1937, the Leverkusen lab-

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Keeping quiet about these the Wehrmacht began large-scale production in Dyhernfurth in S what was code-named Trilo was in April 1942. By 194 12,000 tons had been produced, tabun or GA. Thus, began the production and stockpiling of called nerve gases.

Such highly toxic enzyme inhibitors demonstrate quite convincingly the need for an orderly mob of molecules for a given mission. In this case, signal transmission, much or too little, too early or too late means chaotic performance of activated molecules.

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In the early fifties, several Japa- nese families were observed where some members lacked catalase activity. Their blood produced no gas when in contact with hydrogen peroxide, and they had more or less severe ulcera- tion of the gums with loss of teeth. This enzyme defect is rare, and it follows a simple mode of inheritance, with the parents of patients having a normal or practically normal cata- lase activity. The changed gene re- sponsible for lack of catalase is not confined to east Asian populations as was once suspected.

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Keeping quiet about these reports, the Wehrmacht began large-scale pro- duction in Dyhernfurth in Silesia of what was code-named Trilon. This was in April 1942. By 1945, some 12,000 tons had been produced of tabun or GA. Thus, began the mass production and stockpiling of the so- called nerve gases.

Such highly toxic enzyme inhibi- tors demonstrate quite convincingly the need for an orderly mobilization of molecules for a given mission—in this case, signal transmission. Too much or too little, too early or too late means chaotic performance by activated molecules.

When the brain orders a muscle to

shorten, the signal is dispatched via a nerve which triggers numerous muscle fibers. This is done through the transcription of the nerve signal to a chemical message, acetylcholine being released at the endings of nerve fibers. As long as the flow of impulses

mediate result is a persistent muscular contraction, a state of cramp, followed by paralysis. And this is exactly what happens when the critical esterase, called acetylcholinesterase, becomes inhibited by a G-type phosphorous compound. When the block



Army News Features

Face masks provide protection from a variety of agents, but a minute droplet of VE or VX passing rapidly through the skin can be fatal

travels through the nerve, acetylcholine is discharged and the muscle remains contracted. What happens when the muscle gets word to suspend action is not only that the transmitter substance, acetylcholine, stops being set free, but the chemical signal becomes muted, and acetylcholine is immediately broken up into inactive compounds. This vital task is fulfilled by an esterase, a specialized enzyme.

Without normal activity of this esterase, acetylcholine remains at the nerve fiber endings. The command to cease action does not arrive. The im-

between nerve and muscle affects the limbs, the result is temporary inability of service. But muscles of respiration are also involved, with death following exposure to relatively small quantities. Thus, GA can kill in concentrations of 40 milligrams per cubic meter of air during 10 minutes of exposure through inhalation. However, GB and GD have a lethal concentration of only 10 milligrams under the same conditions.

A further development of the G series of chemical agents is represented by the V anticholinesterases

which are active after having passed the skin. The G agents are also absorbed through intact skin, but they evaporate too fast for full effect. A minute droplet of VE or VX passing rapidly through the skin, into the blood circulation, can kill a soldier.

Questions about the limitations of chemical warfare have been raised from time to time. The high toxicity of G and V-type enzyme inhibitors and the possibility of using strategic missiles with chemical warheads carrying well above four tons of payload have raised the discussion to animated altitudes. With existing ordnance employed on a modest scale, and with only a fraction of the GB now in stock, the inhabitants of Paris, Osaka, or Los Angeles could be asphyxiated. But this does not draw the whole picture.

Blocking Agents

By a peculiar coincidence, an inborn variability in the activity of cholinesterases has been observed. For various medicinal purposes, drugs are used to interrupt the transmission of the nerve impulse where it reaches the muscle. One objective is relaxation of the abdominal wall so that surgical manipulations can be carried out without resort to deep anesthesia.

Blocking agents of the same type are also used to decrease muscular spasms in tetanus and to prevent mishaps in the electroshock treatment of psychiatric disorders. One widely used blocking agent derives from curare, the South American arrow poison. Another is suxamethonium which cuts the nerve-muscle signal by interfering with the shifting of electrons at the critical junction.

The therapeutic effect aimed at should vanish with the need for relaxation, but in some patients suxa-

methonium caused unexpected lamming of muscles and standstill of respiration. While was, at an earlier stage of its use, the carefully guarded secretarial witch doctors, nothing in way entered modern anesthesia. The relaxant was right; the was unfit. The untoward reaction brought about by a weak or cholinesterase activity.

Persons with this potentially weakness are in excellent health long as they are not exposed to methonium. The deficient enzyme differs in some respects from the esterase handling acetylcholine produced by the directives changed gene and the fault a in consecutive generations.

Human Variations

Such chance findings of her differences inevitably attract the attention of people who study the distribution of different genes in populations. The esterase difference have been studied in detail with aid of specific enzyme inhibitors. In essence, their inheritance follows known Mendelian patterns. A person who has the usual gene on both two ordinary chromosomes is heterozygous with a 100-percent esterase activity. The atypical gene on the same both chromosomes renders on percent enzyme activity. If two persons start a family, their children will each have one usual and one atypical gene, and 75-percent enzyme activity.

Close to four percent of the population in Canada and Britain have the atypical gene with the reduced esterase activity. Similar proportions of 75 percenters have been observed in non-European populations. It is quite possible that the a

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Persons with this potentially fatal weakness are in excellent health as long as they are not exposed to suxa- methonium. The deficient enzyme dif- fers in some respects from the cholin- esterase handling acetylcholine. It is produced by the directives of a changed gene and the fault appears in consecutive generations.

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Close to four percent of the normal people in Canada and Britain carry the atypical gene with the resulting reduced esterase activity. Similar pro- portions of 75 percenters have been observed in non-European populations. It is quite possible that the atypical

gene, and a third gene causing, in duplicate, zero esterase activity, will finally be found to have about the same distribution in geographically widely separated populations.

But this is only a stray observation fitting into a repeatedly confirmed pattern of human variation. In brief, human populations can be characterized by frequencies of distinct genes. Sometimes, gene frequencies agree fairly well between widely dispersed populations, but more often there are great differences. This view differs from the concept of typification established in physical anthropology until mathematical models and the observation of simply inherited, normal traits made the study of gene frequencies meaningful.

Biochemical Differences

With World War I came the first impetus to the new approach, blood group frequencies in Allied armies being found to vary considerably among personnel of different geographic origin. Next, blood groups were used to map the world population. In central Asia, the B-gene frequency comes near 30 percent; in American Indians, this gene is originally absent. When new blood group systems were discovered, European, Asian, and African populations could be characterized by a number of independently varying gene frequencies.

Widely used in such studies of human populations is the ability to taste diluted solutions of phenylthiourea. Persons who carry a variant of the taster gene on both of the critical chromosomes are nontasters. If somebody were to dissolve a sufficient amount of phenylthiourea in the drinking water in Mahar, India, 54 percent of all water drinkers would complain of the bitter taste. Among

Brazilian Indians, an identical experiment would make little more than one percent aware of the admixture.

Several other biochemical differences between human beings have been studied with an increasing awareness that some of these differences may be adaptive. When a simply inherited variant of the red coloring matter of blood, practically absent in Europe, was observed to be common in a broad belt across central Africa, it was brought into relation with the high incidence of malaria in these regions.

Carriers of the changed gene have an increased chance of becoming grandparents in spite of the high mortality among their children where the abnormal gene in the duplex state is a merciless killer. The cause is the greater resistance to malaria granted by a single gene for the deviant pigment. In the Mediterranean region, similar situations include other variants of blood pigment and also an enzyme defect significantly common in old malaria regions.

Enzymatic Reactions

In the present decade, knowledge about enzyme polymorphisms has accumulated. If a deviant gene is too common in a given population to remain prevalent only through new mutations, it has a polymorphic distribution. More often than not, the selective forces balancing such relatively high frequencies of a standard gene are completely unknown. The chance observation of a reaction to a certain drug is obviously just the shadow on the wall. The real item has to be searched for among entangled molecular supply lines in the living organism. Clearly a relative advantage in one environment granted carriers of a mutant gene can be

entirely void in another environment. But the decisive environmental factors of selection can hardly be suxamethonium drugs, sulfonamides, or BZ-type chemical agents.

Careful analyses of enzymatic reaction patterns to a series of drugs are underway, and we may soon have a grid where new observations of this kind can be pinpointed. One set of reference lines in this grid goes from genes necessary for enzyme production. Another set of lines marks substances turning on and off the making of active enzymes which can, but need not, be alerted.

Recently, a series of widely debated observations have revealed an enzyme deficiency in southeastern Asian populations, making them susceptible to

a poison to which Caucasoids are largely adapted. In such situations the sketchy grid just mentioned of some use. One looks for the ability of the poison-provoking enzyme production, an individual adaptation observed in several instances.

The poison now at issue is milk. Europeans, intolerance to lactose (milk sugar), occurs as a rare recessive trait. Healthy parents, each carrying a single mutant gene, have children approximately one-fourth of whom react to milk ingestion with diarrhea, vomiting, malabsorption, and death. When reports on milk intolerance in various groups of non-Europeans began to accumulate, it was remembered that malnourished children in east Africa got diarrhea



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The poison now at issue is milk. In Europeans, intolerance to lactose, or milk sugar, occurs as a rare recessive trait. Healthy parents, each carrying a single mutant gene, have children approximately one-fourth of whom react to milk ingestion with diarrhea, vomiting, malabsorption, and even death. When reports on milk intolerance in various groups of non-European began to accumulate, it was remembered that malnourished children in east Africa got diarrhea when



Vertol Division
The Boeing Company

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treated with dried skimmed milk. Then, the enzyme lactase was found to lose its activity in the intestinal mucosa of African infants over the first four years of life.

New reports on milk intolerance in Chinese, Filipinos, and Indians were met with skepticism in that the groups studied might not be representative of their peoples. A study reported from the Chiangmai University in Thailand has, however, revealed a widespread lactose intolerance in adults in northern Thailand, the lactase activity getting lost between the first and fourth years of life. By inference, it has been found likely that Southeast Asians, in general, are deficient in lactase production.

Rapid and Slow Inactivators

Similar observations of geographically distinct enzyme differences are to be expected. Among the obviously inherited differences in enzymatic response to chemical agents, acetylation is marked by a clear separation of people in two groups. Originally, one group was characterized as composed of rapid inactivators of isoniazid, a drug used against tuberculosis. The other group of slow inactivators carries an alternative gene less efficient in converting isoniazid to acetylisoniazid. Europeans, as well as Americans of African descent, have among their numbers about 50 percent slow inactivators. Eskimos and Japanese have approximately 10 percent slow inactivators.

The method of acetylation to inactivate a molecule is not confined to isoniazid. People belonging to the two acetylase classes reveal differences in handling a number of other drugs, including enzyme inhibitors acting upon the central nervous system. Although the study of drug metabolizing

enzymes is only beginning, observed variations in drug response have great innate differences in vulnerability to chemical agents between different populations.

A series of enzyme inhibitors and chemically active substances interfering with signal transmission in the brain and spinal cord have been intensely studied since the early fifties. Many of these substances have a colorful prehistory saturated with tribal sorcery.

The incapacitant known as BZ derives from a drug which before its present renaissance as lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) caused epidemic outbursts of Saint Anthony's fire in the Dark Ages. With ditran-like compounds, BZ shares the capacity to produce transient toxic psychosis, sometimes compared to schizophrenia.

Search Continues

Surrounded with clouds of secrecy, a systematic search for new incapacitating agents is going on in many laboratories. The general idea, as discussed in open literature, was originally that of minimal destruction. Psychochemicals would make it possible to paralyze temporarily entire population centers without damage to homes and other structures. In addition, with the small quantities required for full effect of modern incapacitating agents, logistics problems would be minute. The effective dose of BZ-type agents amounts to micrograms.

It is quite possible to use incapacitating agents over the entire range of offensive operations, from covert activities to mass destruction. One fairly obvious offensive preparation is protection of the country's own personnel by tolerance-building. This is where enzymatic response to psycho-

chemicals enters the scene. Exposure to drugs or to molecules of almost identical composition is known to produce, with varying degrees of accuracy, resistance to the toxic effect at repeated exposure. As this is a known and thoroughly discussed procedure, concealment of large-scale preparations of this type probably would be difficult if not wholly impossible.

Another prospect may tempt an aggressor who knows he can recruit from a population largely tolerant against an incapacitating agent to which the target population is susceptible. An innate immunity would offer concealment of preparations and obvious advantages in many tactical situations. When the proper chemical agent is used against intermingled friendly and enemy units, casualties may occur in proportions one to 10.

Such inferences are barely extrapolations of observed genetic differences between major human populations and of research programs known to be in progress. Widely different opinions have been ventured as to the type of chemical operations likely to be directed against military personnel and the civilian population in a future war. There have been some recent tendencies to stress the wide latitude between incapacitating and the lethal action of BZ-type agents. Friendly troops could use them to dampen belligerence. They effectively slow down physical and mental activity, make the poisoned personnel giddy, disoriented, and more or less unable or unwilling to carry out commands.

Friendly forces would discriminatorily use incapacitants in emergency situations to give friend and short period of enforced rest to them out. By gentle persuasion, by psychochemicals, civilians in enemy cities could be reeducated; adversary would use incapacitants spare those whom he could use slaves. There is little that human biology can contribute to prognosis of that type.

The factual basis of abundant enzyme inhibitors of widely different types can be neglected as little modern methods for their distribution. They need not be gases in true sense. Well-studied enzymes represent a small proportion of the number of catalysts necessary for vital processes. When new enzymes are discovered, some of them are likely to overstep the previous limits so far observed, both high and low, in different populations.

But the production of enzymes in the living cell could not be selected until details of early transmission from the gene became known in 1969. During the first of that year, several laboratories reported factors engaged in passing the genic message from DNA to primary command post, to RNA, which relays the chemical signal. The enzymatic process for RNA production has been known for some years now the factors have been revealed which regulate the initiation and specificity of enzyme production. Only the factors have been found their inhibitors. Thus, the functions of life lie bare to attack.

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Fast and Slow Inactivators

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Surrounded with clouds of secrecy, a systematic search for new incapacitating agents is going on in many laboratories. The general idea, as discussed in open literature, was originally that of minimal destruction. Psychochemicals would make it possible to paralyze temporarily entire population centers without damage to homes and other structures. In addition, with the small quantities required for full effect of modern incapacitating agents, logistics problems would be minute. The effective dose of BZ-type agents amounts to micrograms.

It is quite possible to use incapacitating agents over the entire range of offensive operations, from covert activities to mass destruction. One fairly obvious offensive preparation is protection of the country's own personnel by tolerance-building. This is where enzymatic response to psycho-

chemicals enters the scene. Exposure to drugs or to molecules of almost identical composition is known to produce, with varying degrees of accuracy, resistance to the toxic effect at repeated exposure. As this is a known and thoroughly discussed procedure, concealment of large-scale preparations of this type probably would be difficult if not wholly impossible.

Another prospect may tempt an aggressor who knows he can recruit from a population largely tolerant against an incapacitating agent to which the target population is susceptible. An innate immunity would offer concealment of preparations and obvious advantages in many tactical situations. When the proper chemical agent is used against intermingled friendly and enemy units, casualties may occur in proportions one to 10.

Such inferences are barely extrapolations of observed genetic differences between major human populations and of research programs known to be in progress. Widely different opinions have been ventured as to the type of chemical operations likely to be directed against military personnel and the civilian population in a future war. There have been some recent tendencies to stress the wide latitude between incapacitating and the lethal action of BZ-type agents. Friendly troops could use them to dampen belligerence. They effectively slow down physical and mental activity, make the poisoned personnel giddy, disoriented, and more or less unable or unwilling to carry out commands.

Friendly forces would discriminate use incapacitants in entangled situations to give friend and foe a short period of enforced rest to sort them out. By gentle persuasion, aided by psychochemicals, civilians in enemy cities could be reeducated. The adversary would use incapacitants to spare those whom he could use for slaves. There is little that human biology can contribute to prognoses of that type.

The factual basis of abundant enzyme inhibitors of widely different types can be neglected as little as modern methods for their distribution. They need not be gases in a true sense. Well-studied enzymes represent a small proportion of the total number of catalysts necessary for our vital processes. When new enzyme varieties are discovered, some of them are likely to overstep the prevalence limits so far observed, both high and low, in different populations.

But the production of enzymes in the living cell could not be selectively quenched until details of early signal transmission from the gene became known in 1969. During the first half of that year, several laboratories reported factors engaged in passing over the genic message from DNA, the primary command post, to RNA which relays the chemical signal. The enzymatic process for RNA production has been known for some years, but now the factors have been revealed which regulate the initiation and specificity of enzyme production. Not only the factors have been found, but their inhibitors. Thus, the functions of life lie bare to attack.

From: Eliot Higgins <(b)(6)@bellingcat.com>
To: ERONEN Pasi (EEAS) <(b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu>
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Davey Alba <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
LEINONEN Mika-Markus (EEAS-THE HAGUE) <(b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu>
Subject: Re: OPCW Disinformation Panel - Fine Tuning and Dry Run
Date: Tue, 23 Nov 2021 20:02:07 +0000

Hi all, I'm happy with the delay and its no problem if its recorded.
Thanks
Eliot

On Tue, 23 Nov 2021, 19:53 ERONEN Pasi (EEAS), <(b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu> wrote:

Dear all,

Sincerest apologies for my late email reply!

Just to confirm also here, delaying the event with 30 minutes works perfectly well with me.

Also, recording the event works well with me, especially if we also get an access to the recording.

Best regards,

Pasi

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: 19 November 2021 22:15

To: Davey Alba <(b)(6)@nytimes.com>; Eliot Higgins <(b)(6)@bellingcat.com>; ERONEN Pasi (EEAS) <(b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: OPCW Disinformation Panel - Fine Tuning and Dry Run

Dear Davey, Eliot, Pasi and (b)(6)

Apologies for the long email. I figured you'd rather have it all at once instead of than some repeated back and forth.

Most important and time sensitive: Are you Ok pushing back the event 1/2H? The EU and Estonian Delegation have suggested a 7PM start (The Hague time) to give delegate times to grab a bite before the panel. That would make the panel run from 1PM to 2:30PM Eastern Standard Time.

Another thing I will need your green light: Are you comfortable with the event being recorded. While the event will be limited to the OPCW Delegates and some OPCW Staff who will be invited, we are considering editing a shorter video to be for wider sharing. If we record, based on what is said we can of course revisit. We would not make anything public without your consent.

Also we'd like to schedule a dry run early next week to ensure Microsoft Teams works properly for all of you. This is the platform most OPCW delegations are familiar with because the OPCW uses it. Even if you do not have the App/Software installed, the web version works well. We'd appreciate if you could put your availabilities for the dry run in the doodle below with your initials:

https://doodle.com/poll/p4t4ve2a6ag6szcs?utm_source=poll&utm_medium=link

Attached is the draft invitation, let me know if there is anything you'd like tweaked. It says 7PM but again this is only if that works for all of you. In case you don't know each other already, below are the bios we were planning to share with delegates. We welcome your edits

Davey Alba – New York Times

Alba is a technology reporter for The New York Times and covers online disinformation and its global harm. She was previously a senior reporter at BuzzFeed News and wrote about artificial intelligence and tech effects on people and communities.

Pasi Eronen – EUvsDisinfo

Eronen is a policy officer at EUvsDisinfo, the flagship project of the European External Action Service's East StratCom Task Force established in 2015 to better forecast, address, and respond to disinformation campaigns affecting the European Union, its Member States, and countries in the shared neighborhood.

Eliot Higgins – Bellingcat

Higgins is a citizen journalist and founder of Bellingcat the storied open-source investigation website. He has investigated the Syrian Civil War, 2014–15 Russian military intervention in Ukraine, the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, and the poisoning of Sergei and Yulia Skripal.

Below is a proposed agenda for the event. Again your suggestions are welcome. I have attached in a separate document the three themes and some suggested questions that John may use to get the conversation started. I will let him chime in on this as well as he was away this week and has not seen the latest draft. Obviously the elephant in the room will be Russia. We would like to keep things as general as possible and let delegates connect the dots.

- a. Brief introductions (1-2 min.) by three co-hosting ambassadors in alphabetical country name order, mirroring the order of themes discussed by panelists:
 - i. Global scope of state-sponsored disinformation (Estonian Amb. Kuusing)
 - ii. Countering disinformation (EU Amb. Leinonen)
 - iii. CW disinformation (U.S. Amb. Manso, hands over to moderator GEC (b)(6))
- a. Moderator remarks, introducing panelists (2-3 min.)
- b. Panelist remarks (10 min. each)
 - i. Davey Alba (NYT)
 - ii. Pasi Eronen (EEAS)
 - iii. Eliot Higgins (Bellingcat)
- a. Moderated Q&A – questions submitted by chat and selected by moderator (30 min.)
- b. Closing remarks by moderator

Thank you all again for accepting to participate in our panel and in John's case to moderate it. We are looking forward to a successful and very timely panel as we just learned that the Russian delegation is planning to hold its own side event on November 26 an hour before that of the Canada/German on the Impact of CW on Women.

Most respectfully,

(b)(6)

Foreign Affairs Officer

Office of Chemical and Biological Weapons Affairs

Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20520

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

@state.sgov.gov

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Sender: Eliot Higgins (b)(6)@bellingcat.com>
ERONEN Pasi (EEAS) (b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Davey Alba (b)(6)@nytimes.com>;
Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
LEINONEN Mika-Markus (EEAS-THE HAGUE) (b)(6)

(b)(6)@eeas.europa.eu>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: NYT connection to State Dept GEC
Date: Tue, 2 Feb 2021 13:22:21 -0500

Terrific. Just tried you. Try me at your convenience, (b)(6)

Julian E. Barnes
Intelligence, National Security reporter
The New York Times
(b)(6) Mobile/WhatsApp/Signal

On Tue, Feb 2, 2021 at 1:19 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Julian,

Nice to connect. Happy to chat off the record to understand more about your story to see if we have anything to share; or if you have a specific question you can send over email and we can approach it that way.

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 2, 2021 1:07 PM
To: 'Julian Barnes' (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; DL USCYBERCOM_PAO (H3C9)
<DLUSCC_JO_PAO@cybercom.mil>; (b)(6)
Subject: NYT connection to State Dept GEC

Julian-

Connecting you to Emily Zimmerman of the Global Engagement Center-- not sure if they will have something for you on Russian anti-vax disinformation campaign in Spanish, but wanted to make sure you had a good POC for her.

(b)(6)

V/R,

(b)(6)

U.S. Cyber Command, Public Affairs

(b)(6)

Sender: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: "Lin, Liza" (b)(6)@wsj.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Linkedin article
Date: Thu, 14 Oct 2021 23:48:46 +0800

Sure, I'd be happy to! I;m just wrapping up a much longer, more comprehensive take. but here's the first cut we put out. and i'll send you the other later.

On Thu, Oct 14, 2021 at 11:45 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi, Liza,

I saw your article today on Linkedin closing in China. Would you be able to send me the full piece? I don't have my subscriptions set up at my new job yet. If not, no worries.

(b)(6)

Foreign Affairs Officer, China Team

Global Engagement Center

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)



--
Liza Lin
REPORTER



M: tel:+6591215126 O: tel:+6564154158
E: liza.lin@wsj.com Wechat ID: liza83

A:13-02 CapitaGreen, Singapore



Sender: "Lin, Liza" (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Recipient: (b)(6)@state.gov>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/microsoft-abandons-linkedin-in-china-citing-challenging-operating-environment-11634220026>

TECH

Microsoft Folds LinkedIn Social-Media Service in China

LinkedIn cites challenging operating environment, as retreat marks the biggest departure from China by a major tech company in years



LinkedIn said it would replace its Chinese service with a job-board service lacking social-media features.

PHOTO: YICHUAN CAO/SIPA USA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

By [Stu Woo](#) and [Liza Lin](#)

Updated Oct. 14, 2021 10:38 am ET

Microsoft Corp.'s MSFT 1.58% ▲ LinkedIn said it would shut the version of its professional-networking site that operates in China, marking the end of the last major American social-media network operating openly in the country.

LinkedIn, in a statement Thursday, said that it made the decision after “facing a significantly more challenging operating environment and greater compliance requirements in China.”

In March, China's internet regulator told LinkedIn officials to better regulate its content and gave them 30 days to do so, according to people familiar with the matter. In recent months, LinkedIn notified several China-focused human-right activists, academics and

journalists that their profiles were being blocked in China, saying they contained prohibited content.

FL-2023-00013

A-00000598600

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3/28/2023

LinkedIn said it would replace its Chinese service, which restricts some content to comply with local government demands, with a job-board service lacking social-media features, such as the ability to share opinions and news stories.

LinkedIn's exit is the latest chapter in the struggle Western internet companies have faced operating in China, which has some of the world's most stringent censorship rules. Twitter Inc. and Facebook Inc.'s platforms have been blocked since 2009. Alphabet Inc.'s Google left in 2010 after declining to censor results on its search engine. The chat messenger app Signal and audio discussion app Clubhouse were also blocked this year.

Savvy internet users in China can still access these Western services using workarounds such as virtual private networks, or VPNs, but many people don't use them.

LinkedIn entered China in 2014 after making rare concessions to abide by local censorship rules. Microsoft agreed to buy the platform two years later. In 2014, then-LinkedIn boss Jeff Weiner said that while the company supported freedom of expression, offering a localized version of its service in China meant adhering to local censorship requirements—a view the company has since repeated.

In the Thursday statement, LinkedIn said that after seven years of operating in China it had “not found the same level of success in the more social aspects of sharing and staying informed.”

Microsoft has had a difficult relationship with China, where it battled for years against software piracy.

Earlier this year, the software giant said a Chinese hacking group thought to have government backing was targeting previously unknown security flaws in an email product used by businesses. Microsoft's Bing search engine, which is also available in China, drew controversy earlier this year after it blocked the iconic “Tank Man” image linked to the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre not just in China, but also for its U.S. users. The company blamed “accidental human error” and restored the image.

LinkedIn was one of the few bright spots Microsoft had in China, with more than 50 million users in the country. Even so, the platform had come under greater scrutiny from

regulators this year. In May, Microsoft was the only foreign firm among 105 apps called out by China's internet regulator for "improper data collection," with both LinkedIn and Bing named on the list.

Microsoft President Brad Smith told journalists in September that China accounted for less than 2% of the technology company's revenue, and that percentage has been declining for the past few years.

China's Corporate Crackdown

China Blocked Jack Ma's Ant IPO After Investigation Revealed Likely Beneficiaries

China Lays Plans to Tame Tech Giant Alibaba

China's New Power Play: More Control of Tech Companies' Troves of Data

Didi Tried Balancing Pressure From China and Investors. It Satisfied Neither.

Write to Stu Woo at Stu.Woo@wsj.com and Liza Lin at Liza.Lin@wsj.com

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From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>
CC: (b)(6)@poynter.org <(b)(6)@poynter.org>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Invitation: Discussion on FY21 Strategy for Engagement in Europe
Date: Wed, 4 Nov 2020 21:00:59 +0000

Baybars,
Great, glad you'll be joining us. Looking forward to talking tomorrow.
Best,

(b)(6)

From: Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>
Sent: Wednesday, November 4, 2020 3:56 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@poynter.org <(b)(6)@poynter.org>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Invitation: Discussion on FY21 Strategy for Engagement in Europe

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for the reminder!
Yes! Please kindly send the invitation and the agenda.
All the best
Baybars

On Wed, Nov 4, 2020 at 3:31 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Baybars and Ferdi,

I wanted to reach out directly to see if you'll be able to join us tomorrow afternoon 14:00 (DC time) to discuss your work within the broader context of the GEC's efforts in Europe. Please let me know if you'll join and I'll send the calendar invitation and agenda.
Best regards,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, November 3, 2020 3:37 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Tom Baker (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; (b)(6)@cepa.org <(b)(6)@cepa.org>; (b)(6)@cepa.org <(b)(6)@cepa.org>; (b)(6)@freedomhouse.org <(b)(6)@freedomhouse.org>; (b)(6)@ff.cuni.cz <(b)(6)@ff.cuni.cz>; Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>; (b)(6)@poynter.org <(b)(6)@poynter.org>; (b)(6)@ceip.org <(b)(6)@ceip.org>; (b)(6)@ceip.org <(b)(6)@ceip.org>; (b)(6)@aspi.org.au <(b)(6)@aspi.org.au>; (b)(6)@aspi.org.au <(b)(6)@aspi.org.au>; (b)(6)@aspi.org.au <(b)(6)@aspi.org.au>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Invitation: Discussion on FY21 Strategy for Engagement in Europe

Hello, all.

I apologize for the inconvenience, but we are rescheduling this meeting for later in the day November 5 to better accommodate our colleagues in Australia. The new time will be 14:00 EST. We still haven't heard from a few of you about your availability, so please do confirm whether you will be able to join us.

Best regards,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, October 29, 2020 11:51 AM

To: Tom Baker (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Alan Davis (b)(6)@iwpr.net>; Vonda Wolcott (b)(6)@iwpr.net>;

(b)(6)@cepa.org (b)(6)@cepa.org (b)(6)@cepa.org

(b)(6)@cepa.org (b)(6)@freedomhouse.org (b)(6)@freedomhouse.org>;

(b)(6)@ff.cuni.cz (b)(6)@ff.cuni.cz>; Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

(b)(6)@poynter.org (b)(6)@poynter.org>; (b)(6)@ceip.org (b)(6)@ceip.org>;

(b)(6)@ceip.org (b)(6)@ceip.org>; (b)(6)@aspi.org.au (b)(6)@aspi.org.au>;

(b)(6)@aspi.org.au (b)(6)@aspi.org.au>; (b)(6)@aspi.org.au (b)(6)@aspi.org.au>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Invitation: Discussion on FY21 Strategy for Engagement in Europe

Good afternoon,

With a new fiscal year and a full slate of programs in execution globally, the GEC China team invites you to join a discussion as we look ahead to our efforts in Europe in FY21.

We hope this discussion can be candid, informal, and focused on how we can bring our unique capabilities to bear to support our efforts to counter PRC malign influence in Europe. We look forward to hearing your thoughts on where we've made progress, where gaps remains, and things we should keep in mind as put together our programmatic strategy for FY21.

Please confirm participation in a virtual discussion via Microsoft Teams on November 5 at 8:00 EST / 13:00 CET / 22:00 AET to accommodate your participation from Washington, Europe and Canberra.

Best,

(b)(6)

Director, China

Global Engagement Center

US Department of State

--

Baybars Örsek

Director | International Fact-Checking Network

@baybarsorsek / @factchecknet

Sender: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Baybars Orsek (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

Recipient: (b)(6)@poynter.org (b)(6)@poynter.org>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>

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AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

To: (b)(6)@cnn.com <(b)(6)@cnn.com>

CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center phone call request

Date: Thu, 31 Mar 2022 16:03:02 +0000

Hello Ms. Reeve,

Passing along this message from yesterday. Could we schedule a brief off-the-record call to find out more about your request?

We believe that the person best positioned to respond to your request is only available through tomorrow but want to be sure by learning which topics you wish to address.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
All Native Group Contractor

(b)(6)



From: GEC Press

Sent: Wednesday, March 30, 2022 3:49 PM

To: (b)(6)@cnn.com <(b)(6)@cnn.com>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>

Subject: Global Engagement Center phone call request

Good afternoon Ms. Reeve,

We have learned of your request to speak to someone at the State Department's Global Engagement Center regarding Russian disinformation.

Would it be possible to schedule a brief off-the-record phone call to find out more? It would help us identify the right person who can speak with you.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
All Native Group Contractor

(b)(6)



Sender: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Recipient: (b)(6)@cnn.com (b)(6)@cnn.com>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: "Atwood, Kylie" (b)(6)@cnn.com>
To: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>;
CC: GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Hansler, Jennifer (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation
Date: Fri, 6 May 2022 17:31:51 +0000

I will just ring you at that time I literally don't know the number of the phone I am using!! We have a power outage at the CNN offices..... making things complicated.....

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Date: Friday, May 6, 2022 at 1:29 PM
To: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>, Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>, GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>, (b)(6)@state.gov>, (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

Can you call at 1:35 - Mr. Stoltz is delayed in a meeting but is on his way.

From: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Sent: Friday, May 6, 2022 1:12 PM
To: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Hansler, Jennifer (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

Hi – can I actually call you guys? I won't be on my cell I will be on an office line that is not my own (long story!). What number can I call?
Thanks!

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Date: Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 1:19 PM
To: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>, Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>, GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>, (b)(6)@state.gov>, Hansler, Jennifer (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

Great - we will call you at 1:30 tomorrow for the on background call with Mr. Stoltz.

Thanks for your flexibility.

From: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 5, 2022 12:47 PM
To: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Hansler, Jennifer (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

Yes that works tomorrow. How about 1:30 pm tomorrow. Happy to do it over the phone or in person masked. Thanks!

Kylie Atwood
CNN National Security Correspondent
Cell: (b)(6)

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Date: Thursday, May 5, 2022 at 12:21 PM
To: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

GEC Deputy Coordinator, Karl Stoltz, is available to speak with you tomorrow from 1:30-3:30. Are you free during that time frame?

If so, I can call you and conference you in to Mr. Stoltz.

(b)(6)

From: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 5, 2022 9:54 AM
To: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Global Engagement Center conversation

Hi (b)(6) - thanks for reaching out. Yes, these are the topics I would like to cover.
Thanks so much, Kylie

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, May 5, 2022 9:30:10 AM
To: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)@cnn.com>
Cc: Price, Edward C (b)(6)@state.gov>; Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC-Press <GEC-

Press@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Global Engagement Center conversation

EXTERNAL SENDER: Caution opening links or attachments

Good morning Ms. Atwood,

The Global Engagement Center would like to arrange for someone to speak with you on background. To help us identify the best person at GEC to speak with, we would like to confirm that these are still the topics you are looking to discuss:

What is the GEC is doing when it comes to the disinformation that Russia and China have increasingly put out about the Ukraine war?

How is the GEC tracking it?

What kinds of trends have there been?

Is the GEC leading any efforts to directly combat it?

We look forward to hearing from you and arranging a time for the conversation.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State

All Native Group Contractor

(b)(6)



Sender: "Atwood, Kylie" <Kylie.Atwood@cnn.com>

GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>;
Price, Edward C <PriceEC@state.gov>;

Recipient:

Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov>;
GEC-Press <GEC-Press@state.gov>;
Paine, David A <Paineda@state.gov>;
Hansler, Jennifer <jennifer.hansler@cnn.com>

FL-2023-00013

A-00000598654

"UNCLASSIFIED"

3/28/2023

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: "Ice, John T" <IceJT@state.gov>
To: Gordon, Michael <michael.gordon@wsj.com>
CC: Zimmerman, Emily <ZimmermanE@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up
Date: Fri, 12 Feb 2021 16:57:19 +0000

Hey Michael,

As discussed on the phone, we will look forward to hearing from you on Tuesday.
In the meantime, have a nice weekend.

J.T.

From: Gordon, Michael <michael.gordon@wsj.com>
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 11:24 AM
To: Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Can you give me until Tuesday to sort this out within the WSJ?

Michael Gordon

National Security Correspondent

The Wall Street Journal

202-550-5445 (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)

michael.gordon@wsj.com (work email)

MGWSJ@protonmail.com (encrypted email)

Book site: michaeltgordon.com

On Fri, Feb 12, 2021 at 11:22 AM Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov> wrote:

Dear Michael,

I hope this email finds you well and ready for the long weekend.

Just giving you a heads up that at this point we would like to go ahead and pitch this information to another outlet. If you are planning to publish something imminently, please let us know and we can hold.

We sincerely appreciate your interest, and we hope we can work on another project, soon.

Best,

J.T.

John T. Ice

Deputy Spokesperson

United States Department of State

Office: +1.202.647.9986 | Cell: +1.202.735.4760

✉: IceJT@state.gov

From: Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 9:40 AM

To: Gordon, Michael <michael.gordon@wsj.com>
Cc: Zimmerman, Emily <ZimmermanE@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Thanks, Michael! Can you share if you have a time frame in mind?
J.T.

From: Gordon, Michael <michael.gordon@wsj.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 9:03 AM
To: Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Yes. I will be back to you relatively soon. Got tied up with Myanmar, etc.
Michael
National Security Correspondent
The Wall Street Journal
202-550-5445 (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)
michael.gordon@wsj.com (work email)
MGWSJ@protonmail.com (encrypted email)
Book site: michaelrgordon.com

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 8:41 AM Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov> wrote:
Hi Michael,
I hope this email finds you well. Just to follow up on Emily's email, do you think you will do the article?
Happy to help with any questions you might have.
Best,

J.T.

John T. Ice
Deputy Spokesperson
United States Department of State
Office: +1.202.647.9986 | Cell: +1.202.735.4760
✉: IceJT@state.gov
From: Zimmerman, Emily <ZimmermanE@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 4:37 PM
To: michael.gordon@wsj.com <michael.gordon@wsj.com>
Cc: Ice, John T <IceJT@state.gov>; GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>
Subject: re: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,
Hope you are doing well. I wanted circle back with you on this to confirm receipt of the follow on information and to see if you had any other questions.

I'm also copying in our Deputy Spokesperson, J.T. Ice, in case you have any questions for him. Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very best,

Emily

Emily K. Zimmerman

Public Affairs Officer

Global Engagement Center

U.S. Department of State

Accenture Federal Services Contractor

Cell: (202) 615-3162



From: Zimmerman, Emily <ZimmermanE@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 11:50 AM

To: michael.gordon@wsj.com <michael.gordon@wsj.com>

Cc: Brown, Cale <BrownC4@state.gov>; GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Subject: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,

Thank you again for your time last week. Please find some follow-on information both below and attached. In addition, I wanted to see if you had a few minutes to chat quickly by phone today between 1pm-3:30pm, so that our Principal Deputy Coordinator could provide some further context off the record?

Information Provided:

1. GEC's Special Report (**On the Record**)
2. Links to each of the sites discussed (**Provided with No Attribution**).
3. Examples of disinformation spreading (**Provided with No Attribution**).
4. Current and removed social media presences by each of the sites in the matrix attached (**Provided on Deep Background**).

- **Off the Record:** *The GEC is in no way claiming a cause/effect relationship between any GEC exposure effort and the timing of any account removals. All takedowns are the decisions of the companies and based on their own terms of service.*

GEC's Special Report Pillars of Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem [On the Record]:

<https://www.state.gov/russias-pillars-of-disinformation-and-propaganda-report/>

Website Links [Provided with No Attribution]:

- News Front: [https://news-front\[.\]info/](https://news-front[.]info/); also accessible via [https://ambassadeur\[.\]info/](https://ambassadeur[.]info/)
- New Eastern Outlook: [https://journal-neo\[.\]org/](https://journal-neo[.]org/)
- Oriental Review: [https://orientalreview\[.\]org/](https://orientalreview[.]org/)
- Rebel Inside: [https://reblins\[.\]com/](https://reblins[.]com/)

Example 1 [Provided with No Attribution]:

Overview: The following five articles demonstrate how Russian state entities used similar propaganda and disinformation narratives to undermine the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. These websites are all a part of Russia's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem, and the articles here highlight how similar narratives are picked up across Russia's disinformation ecosystem and can be pushed to wider audiences globally.

Oriental Review: "Bill Gates, Vaccinations, Microchips, And Patent 060606"

- **Posted 04/29/2020**
- <https://orientalreview.org/2020/04/29/bill-gates-vaccinations-microchips-and-patent-060606/>
- The most popular article on the Oriental Review website as of January 14, 2021 is an article titled "Bill Gates, Vaccinations, Microchips, And Patent 060606."
- The article attempts to undermine the vaccine development efforts of Bill Gates, claiming that the "globalist media" defends his dark connections to a "supranational government" comprised of corporations and international organizations. It alleges that Microsoft registered a patent WO/2020/060606 for a technology that will use chips inserted into a person's body to monitor his/her daily activity.

New Eastern Outlook: "What's Not Being Said About Pfizer Coronavirus Vaccine"

- **Posted 11/13/2020**
- <https://journal-neo.org/2020/11/13/what-s-not-being-said-about-pfizer-coronavirus-vaccine/>
- The article promotes the idea that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe, describing the mRNA gene-editing as a "radical" technology that lacks "precision."
- The author implies that the vaccine is not trustworthy, noting that even Pfizer's CEO "doesn't share the confidence" in his vaccine because he sold 62% of his stock in the company the day Pfizer announced vaccine trials.
- The article accuses Pfizer-BioNTech, the WHO, Bill Gates and the "notorious" Dr. Fauci of rushing through the vaccine approval and therefore "clearly playing fast and loose with human lives." The article quotes Robert F. Kennedy Jr to accuse Dr. Fauci, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases that he leads, of ignoring known issues with a dengue fever vaccine that had led to the death of 600 Filipino children.

Rossiya 1: "Weekly News with Dmitriy Kiselyov"

- **Posted on 11/29/20**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPQpoHdN5zQ&t=1032>
- After praising the Russian vaccine Sputnik V, Dmitriy Kiselyov, the host of the flagship weekly news analysis program on the state-owned television channel Rossiya 1, pointed out alleged huge flaws in the Pfizer vaccine, claiming it is too costly to store and that there is no infrastructure in the world to transport it.

- Kiselyov argued that Pfizer's history is full of scandals worthy of a crime drama, including illegal deadly experiments on children, falsification of research, false advertising, and fraud. Pfizer executives, Kiselyov said, sold their shares in the company, implying that they might know something that will bring the share price down when the vaccine is actually used. Considering Pfizer's reputation, one can expect anything, he concluded.

RT Arabic: "Britain bans the Pfizer vaccine for those with allergies"

- **Posted on 12/09/2020**
- <https://euvdisinfo.eu/report/6-people-died-because-of-the-pfizer-vaccine/>
- RT Arabic reported that 6 people who received the Pfizer vaccine died during the clinical trials. According to the EUvsDisinfo, this claim is partly false. "Six people did die during the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine trials, but only two of them were given the vaccine. The other four were given a safe placebo solution of salt and water. Furthermore, no causal relationship was established between the vaccine and the two deaths, which occurred in line with the normal death rate for the general population, as both of them were older than 55," EUvsDisinfo said.

Sputnik Georgia: "Mass vaccinations began in the EU, but will they save Europe from the pandemic?"

- **Posted on 12/29/20**
- <https://sputnik-georgia.ru/video/20201229/250479267/Massovaya-vaktsinatsiya-nachalas-v-ES-Spaset-li-eto-Evropu-ot-pandemii---video.html>
- Reporting on the start of mass vaccinations with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in Europe, Sputnik Georgia says that is unclear whether it will be effective against the new strains, while claiming that such effectiveness of Sputnik V has been proven. The report asserts that Europe refuses to buy the Russian vaccine for political reasons.

Example 2 [Provided with No Attribution]:

Overview:

New Eastern Outlook (NEO) describes itself disingenuously, claiming in its "About" section to be a "notable international networking platform offering unbiased expert opinions and open dialogue among all thinking people worldwide regardless of their nationality, race or religion." Outlined below are the many places that an article from NEO's website appeared across the internet and the globe. The article was originally posted on January 10, 2021 and is titled "Growing Protests Over Threat of US Bio Weapons." The article includes a litany of long-refuted disinformation about alleged U.S. biological weapons. These examples highlight how Russia's disinformation spreads and can be picked up both on purpose, by other Russian proxy sites and channels, and unknowingly by other sites.

Link to original NEO article: <https://journal-neo.org/2021/01/10/growing-protests-over-threat-of-u-s-bio-weapons/>

The article quickly appeared in:

- **New Age, (Bangladesh)**, posted on January 12, 2021
 - <https://www.newagebd.net/article/126917/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons>.
 - Full article published
- **Piazza Della Carina (Italy)** posted January 10, 2021
 - <https://piazadcara.wordpress.com/2021/01/10/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons/>.
 - Lengthy excerpts posted on this site along with a link to full article on NEO.
- **The Free online, (Spain)** posted on January 10, 2021
 - <https://thefreeonline.wordpress.com/2021/01/10/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons-piazza-della-carina/>.
- **Qoshe, (location unknown)** posted on January 10, 2021
 - <https://qoshe.com/new-eastern-outlook/vladimir-platov/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons/96684538>.
 - Excerpts are posted along with a link to the original article.
- **Anarchist Federation (France)**, posted on January 10, 2021
 - <https://www.anarchistfederation.net/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons-piazza-della-carina/>.
 - Automatically posts "news from 377 anarchist collectives,"
 - Links to "The Free online" article.
- **Astute News, (location unknown)**, posted on January 13, 2021
 - <https://astutenews.com/2021/01/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons/>.
 - Full article published.
 - **This site appears to be part of the covert Russian disinformation ecosystem.**
 - Its single "partner blog" is "Oneworld Global Thinktank" (<https://astutenews.com/our-partners/>)
 - OneWorld described itself as a "new analytical and non-profit start-up" that doesn't have "any 'political correctness' or agenda," but merely seeks to "connect people from all across the world who share the same interest in international events."
 - But in July 2020, OneWorld was said by U.S. officials to have "[ties to the G.R.U.](#)," Russia's military intelligence agency.
 - Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/28/us/politics/russia-disinformation-coronavirus.html>.
- **Message of Wisdom (Iran)**, posted on January 12, 2020
 - <https://messageofwisdom.blogspot.com/2021/01/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio.html>.
 - Full article republished.
- **oc20.com (Cuba)**, (no date identifiable)
 - https://oc2o.com/en/cu/topics/World_Politics/kuts3z/growing-protests-threat-us-bio-weapons-the-united-states-1-495-biological-laboratories-25-countries-which-large-scale-outbreaks-infectious-diseases.
 - Full article published.
- **The Russophile (Sweden)**, (no date identifiable)

- https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:yiDgA_U2PVIJ:https://therussophile.org/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons.html/+&cd=10&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=us.
- Full article published.

Thanks again for your time last week and I look forward to hearing back from you to set up a time to chat further.

Very best,

Emily

Emily K. Zimmerman

Public Affairs Officer

Global Engagement Center

U.S. Department of State

Accenture Federal Services Contractor

Cell: (202) 615-3162



Sender:	"Ice, John T" <IceJT@state.gov>
Recipient:	Gordon, Michael <michael.gordon@wsj.com>; Zimmerman, Emily <ZimmermanE@state.gov>

From: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>;
Michael Crowley (b)(6)@nytimes.com>;
Lara Jakes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up
Date: Sun, 7 Mar 2021 10:40:25 -0500

(b)(6)

I see the Journal story on the state report has (at last) been published

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/russian-disinformation-campaign-aims-to-undermine-confidence-in-pfizer-other-covid-19-vaccines-u-s-officials-say-11615129200>

Can you provide us a copy of the report?

Julian

Julian E. Barnes

Intelligence, National Security reporter

The New York Times

(b)(6) Mobile/WhatsApp/Signal

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 6:13 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Thanks! Do you still plan to run the story tomorrow?

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer

Global Engagement Center

U.S. Department of State

Accenture Federal Services Contractor

Cell: (b)(6)



From: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 6:09 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Got this and forwarding to lead writer.

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 6:05 PM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Julian,

My apologies again for this delay! Busy times at the State Department today. Please let me know if there is still time to make it in the story.

The following comments are provided on background, attributable to a State Department Spokesperson.

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic we've seen Russia's disinformation ecosystem develop false narratives around the virus and pandemic response, including vaccines.
- On vaccines specifically, Russia has pushed two common disinformation and propaganda narratives to the global community, primarily focused on promoting their own vaccines, and seeking to sow distrust in U.S.- and Western-origin vaccine development programs.
- Towards the end of 2020 as vaccines received regulatory approval, the State Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) analyzed COVID-19 vaccine-focused messaging from over 1,000 suspected Russian-aligned Twitter accounts.
- Consistent with past observations of Russian-aligned disinformation efforts on Twitter, Spanish-language accounts showed the greatest engagement during this period.
- These false narratives focus on disproportionately magnifying the risk of potential side effects associated with western vaccines. Additionally, some accounts promoted intentionally misleading narratives falsely alleging that mRNA vaccines are untested and thus risky.
- Scientists and manufacturers all over the world are innovating and doing remarkable things to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States continues to focus on the facts and follow the lead of scientists that are working on robust and transparent clinical trials, regulatory processes, and high-quality manufacturing. Russia's efforts to promote disinformation through social media, undermines the collective global effort to end the global pandemic.

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



--

(b)(6) mobile/signal/WhatsApp

Sender: Julian Barnes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

(b)(6)@state.gov>;

Recipient: GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>;
Michael Crowley (b)(6)@nytimes.com>;
Lara Jakes (b)(6)@nytimes.com>

AMERICA FIRST LEGAL FOUNDATION

From: "Gordon, Michael" (b)(6)@wsj.com>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up
Date: Thu, 25 Feb 2021 09:28:59 -0500

I told J.T. the other day that I am aiming for the first part of next week. I will be back to you for final fact-checking, etc. Thanks

Michael Gordon
National Security Correspondent
The Wall Street Journal
(b)(6) (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)
(b)(6)@wsj.com (work email)
(b)(6)@protonmail.com (encrypted email)
Book site: michaelrgordon.com

On Thu, Feb 25, 2021 at 9:25 AM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Michael,

Wanted to confirm if there is anything else I can help with? Also wanted to gauge when you thought this could be published, thank you!

Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 8:56 AM
To: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>
Cc: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,

Thanks for your time last week. The attribution from the call on January 14th is confirmed. The remarks Acting Coordinator Kimmage gave were on Background, attributable to a GEC official, and the Q&A was on Deep Background. To follow up from our call last week please find our responses below.

Question: Why does Russia have a focus on Pfizer vs Moderna? Has it increased in recent months?

Off the Record: We are studying the situation, but have no further information we can provide at this time.

Off the Record: For a more general idea of how Russian disinformation works, these two reports from the NGO Community are useful.

Atlantic Council's DFR Lab: [Weaponized: How rumors about COVID-19's origins led to a narrative arms race](#)

Australian Strategic Policy Initiative: [Chinese and Russian influence campaigns risk undermining Covid-19 vaccination programs](#)

On Background Quotes, Attributable to a State Department Spokesperson

"Russian intelligence services bear direct responsibility for using these four platforms to spread propaganda and lies."

"From the very beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic last year, we have seen Russia's disinformation ecosystem develop and spread false narratives around the crisis."

On Background, Attributable to a State Department Spokesperson

- In the GEC's *Pillars of Russia's Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem* report released in 2020, we looked at so-called proxy sites, which play a key role in the dissemination of COVID-19 disinformation. The media multiplier effect described in the report has the potential to create disinformation storms on any given topic, but it also allows Russia to be opportunistic. On COVID-19 disinformation, Russia has used the global pandemic as a hook to push longstanding disinformation and propaganda narratives.
- With development and plans for the global distribution of COVID vaccines rolling out in late 2020, the GEC increased its monitoring of Russia's disinformation campaigns specific to vaccine development. In this area, the GEC looks at two separate but reinforcing approaches by Russia: first, Russia's propaganda promoting its own vaccines, and second, Russia's disinformation regarding U.S.- and Western-origin vaccine development programs.
- In general, Russian disinformation and propaganda related to COVID-19 vaccines seeks to position Russia as a world leader in the fight against the pandemic (especially in the eyes of its domestic audience) and to promote sales of the Russian vaccine Sputnik V. To achieve these goals, Russia highlights Sputnik V while spreading false and distorted information about Western vaccines: exaggerating adverse effects, spreading conspiracy theories about the alleged malign intentions behind the vaccine production, portraying Western vaccination efforts as failing, underscoring the alleged tensions among the Western partners.

Very best,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 8:47 AM

To: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Cc: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,
Sorry for the delay. We will be in touch soon, thank you!
Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 12:44 PM

To: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Cc: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,
Please let me know no later than 2pm today.
Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:46 AM
To: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>
Cc: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Sounds good, would you be able to provide the questions?
Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



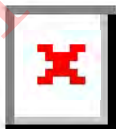
From: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:38 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

It's about the material you guys sent me

On Wed, Feb 17, 2021 at 8:31 AM (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Hi Michael,
Glad that time works for you. Would you be able to provide your questions today by noon?
Very best,

(b)(6)

Public Affairs Officer
Global Engagement Center
U.S. Department of State
Accenture Federal Services Contractor
Cell: (b)(6)



From: Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 4:40 PM
To: Gordon, Michael <(b)(6)@wsj.com>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Hey Michael,
Thanks for the text confirmation at 2:00 PM on Thursday works for you.
J.T.

From: Gordon, Michael <(b)(6)@wsj.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 3:50 PM
To: Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

J.T.
I have a zoom call around that time. Could we do 11 AM or 1 PM or pretty much anytime Thursday?
The questions all pertain to the material and links you guys sent me. Thanks
Michael
National Security Correspondent
The Wall Street Journal
(b)(6) (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)
(b)(6)@wsj.com (work email)
(b)(6)@protonmail.com (encrypted email)
Book site: michaeltgordon.com

On Tue, Feb 16, 2021 at 3:44 PM Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Hi Michael,

Thanks for the call. Daniel Kimmage can talk at 2:00 PM on Thursday. Would that work for you?

Also, would you mind giving us the questions in advance? I think that would go a long way toward helping Daniel to be prepared.

Best,

J.T.

From: Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 11:57 AM
To: Gordon, Michael <(b)(6)@wsj.com>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Hey Michael,

As discussed on the phone, we will look forward to hearing from you on Tuesday.

In the meantime, have a nice weekend.

J.T.

From: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 11:24 AM

To: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Can you give me until Tuesday to sort this out within the WSJ?

Michael Gordon

National Security Correspondent

The Wall Street Journal

(b)(6) (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)

(b)(6)@wsj.com (work email)

(b)(6)@protonmail.com (encrypted email)

Book site: michaeltgordon.com

On Fri, Feb 12, 2021 at 11:22 AM Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Dear Michael,

I hope this email finds you well and ready for the long weekend.

Just giving you a heads up that at this point we would like to go ahead and pitch this information to another outlet. If you are planning to publish something imminently, please let us know and we can hold.

We sincerely appreciate your interest, and we hope we can work on another project, soon.

Best,

J.T.

John T. Ice

Deputy Spokesperson

United States Department of State

(b)(6)

✉: (b)(6)@state.gov

From: Ice, John T (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 9:40 AM

To: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Thanks, Michael! Can you share if you have a time frame in mind?

J.T.

From: Gordon, Michael (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Sent: Thursday, February 4, 2021 9:03 AM

To: Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: GEC Follow Up

Yes. I will be back to you relatively soon. Got tied up with Myanmar, etc.

Michael

National Security Correspondent

The Wall Street Journal

(b)(6) (cell, WhatsApp, Signal)

(b)(6)@wsj.com (work email)

(b)(6)@protonmail.com (encrypted email)

Book site: michaeltgordon.com

On Thu, Feb 4, 2021 at 8:41 AM Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi Michael,

I hope this email finds you well. Just to follow up on (b)(6) email, do you think you will do the article?

Happy to help with any questions you might have.

Best,

J.T.

John T. Ice

Deputy Spokesperson

United States Department of State

(b)(6)

✉: (b)(6)@state.gov

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 4:37 PM

To: (b)(6)@wsj.com (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Cc: Ice, John T <(b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Subject: re: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,

Hope you are doing well. I wanted circle back with you on this to confirm receipt of the follow on information and to see if you had any other questions.

I'm also copying in our Deputy Spokesperson, J.T. Ice, in case you have any questions for him.

Look forward to hearing from you soon.

Very best,

(b)(6)

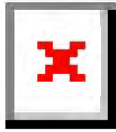
Public Affairs Officer

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Cell: (b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 11:50 AM

To: (b)(6)@wsj.com (b)(6)@wsj.com>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; GEC Press <GECPress@state.gov>

Subject: GEC Follow Up

Hi Michael,

Thank you again for your time last week. Please find some follow-on information both below and attached. In addition, I wanted to see if you had a few minutes to chat quickly by phone today between 1pm-3:30pm, so that our Principal Deputy Coordinator could provide some further context off the record?

Information Provided:

1. GEC's Special Report (**On the Record**)
2. Links to each of the sites discussed (**Provided with No Attribution**).
3. Examples of disinformation spreading (**Provided with No Attribution**).
4. Current and removed social media presences by each of the sites in the matrix attached (**Provided on Deep Background**).

- **Off the Record:** *The GEC is in no way claiming a cause/effect relationship between any GEC exposure effort and the timing of any account removals. All takedowns are the decisions of the companies and based on their own terms of service.*

GEC's Special Report Pillars of Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem [On the Record]:

<https://www.state.gov/russias-pillars-of-disinformation-and-propaganda-report/>

Website Links [Provided with No Attribution]:

- **News Front:** [https://news-front\[.\]info/](https://news-front[.]info/); also accessible via [https://ambassadeur\[.\]info/](https://ambassadeur[.]info/)
- **New Eastern Outlook:** [https://journal-neo\[.\]org/](https://journal-neo[.]org/)
- **Oriental Review:** [https://orientalreview\[.\]org/](https://orientalreview[.]org/)
- **Rebel Inside:** [https://reblins\[.\]com/](https://reblins[.]com/)

Example 1 [Provided with No Attribution]:

Overview: The following five articles demonstrate how Russian state entities used similar propaganda and disinformation narratives to undermine the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine. These websites are all a part of Russia's disinformation and propaganda ecosystem, and

the articles here highlight how similar narratives are picked up across Russia's disinformation ecosystem and can be pushed to wider audiences globally.

Oriental Review: "Bill Gates, Vaccinations, Microchips, And Patent 060606"

- **Posted 04/29/2020**
- <https://orientalreview.org/2020/04/29/bill-gates-vaccinations-microchips-and-patent-060606/>
- The most popular article on the Oriental Review website as of January 14, 2021 is an article titled "Bill Gates, Vaccinations, Microchips, And Patent 060606."
- The article attempts to undermine the vaccine development efforts of Bill Gates, claiming that the "globalist media" defends his dark connections to a "supranational government" comprised of corporations and international organizations. It alleges that Microsoft registered a patent WO/2020/060606 for a technology that will use chips inserted into a person's body to monitor his/her daily activity.

New Eastern Outlook: "What's Not Being Said About Pfizer Coronavirus Vaccine"

- **Posted 11/13/2020**
- <https://journal-neo.org/2020/11/13/what-s-not-being-said-about-pfizer-coronavirus-vaccine/>
- The article promotes the idea that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is unsafe, describing the mRNA gene-editing as a "radical" technology that lacks "precision."
- The author implies that the vaccine is not trustworthy, noting that even Pfizer's CEO "doesn't share the confidence" in his vaccine because he sold 62% of his stock in the company the day Pfizer announced vaccine trials.
- The article accuses Pfizer-BioNTech, the WHO, Bill Gates and the "notorious" Dr. Fauci of rushing through the vaccine approval and therefore "clearly playing fast and loose with human lives." The article quotes Robert F. Kennedy Jr to accuse Dr. Fauci, and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases that he leads, of ignoring known issues with a dengue fever vaccine that had led to the death of 600 Filipino children.

Rossiya 1: "Weekly News with Dmitriy Kiselyov"

- **Posted on 11/29/20**
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPOpoHdN5zQ&t=1032>
- After praising the Russian vaccine Sputnik V, Dmitriy Kiselyov, the host of the flagship weekly news analysis program on the state-owned television channel Rossiya 1, pointed out alleged huge flaws in the Pfizer vaccine, claiming it is too costly to store and that there is no infrastructure in the world to transport it.
- Kiselyov argued that Pfizer's history is full of scandals worthy of a crime drama, including illegal deadly experiments on children, falsification of research, false advertising, and fraud. Pfizer executives, Kiselyov said, sold their shares in the company,

implying that they might know something that will bring the share price down when the vaccine is actually used. Considering Pfizer's reputation, one can expect anything, he concluded.

RT Arabic: "Britain bans the Pfizer vaccine for those with allergies"

- **Posted on 12/09/2020**
- <https://euvdisinfo.eu/report/6-people-died-because-of-the-pfizer-vaccine/>
- RT Arabic reported that 6 people who received the Pfizer vaccine died during the clinical trials. According to the EUvsDisinfo, this claim is partly false. "Six people did die during the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine trials, but only two of them were given the vaccine. The other four were given a safe placebo solution of salt and water. Furthermore, no causal relationship was established between the vaccine and the two deaths, which occurred in line with the normal death rate for the general population, as both of them were older than 55," EUvsDisinfo said.

Sputnik Georgia: "Mass vaccinations began in the EU, but will they save Europe from the pandemic?"

- **Posted on 12/29/20**
- <https://sputnik-georgia.ru/video/20201229/250479267/Massovaya-vaktsinatsiya-nachalas-v-ES-Spaset-li-eto-Evropu-ot-pandemii---video.html>
- Reporting on the start of mass vaccinations with the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine in Europe, Sputnik Georgia says that is unclear whether it will be effective against the new strains, while claiming that such effectiveness of Sputnik V has been proven. The report asserts that Europe refuses to buy the Russian vaccine for political reasons.

Example 2 [Provided with No Attribution]:

Overview:

New Eastern Outlook (NEO) describes itself disingenuously, claiming in its "About" section to be a "notable international networking platform offering unbiased expert opinions and open dialogue among all thinking people worldwide regardless of their nationality, race or religion." Outlined below are the many places that an article from NEO's website appeared across the internet and the globe. The article was originally posted on January 10, 2021 and is titled "Growing Protests Over Threat of US Bio Weapons." The article includes a litany of long-refuted disinformation about alleged U.S. biological weapons. These examples highlight how Russia's disinformation spreads and can be picked up both on purpose, by other Russian proxy sites and channels, and unknowingly by other sites.

Link to original NEO article: <https://journal-neo.org/2021/01/10/growing-protests-over-threat-of-u-s-bio-weapons/>

The article quickly appeared in:

- **New Age, (Bangladesh),** posted on January 12, 2021

- <https://www.newagebd.net/article/126917/growing-protests-over-threat-of-us-bio-weapons>.
- Full article published
- **Piazza Della Carina (Italy)** posted January 10, 2021

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