

## U.S. Launches Bio Program for Russian Scientists

- [Arms Control Today](#)

The U.S. Department of State Sept. 15 announced a new initiative that aims to counter the threat of bioterrorism by channeling former Soviet bioweapons capabilities into health programs. To kick off the “BioIndustry Initiative,” the department awarded a \$1.7 million contract to the Boston-based Center for Integration of Medicine and Innovative Technology.

Although the United States has funded research projects for former bioweapons scientists since 1997, the new program connects scientists, physicians, and engineers once part of the Soviet Union’s biological weapons program with U.S. pharmaceutical companies, universities, and engineering companies. Through these linkages, the scientists will have new opportunities to move their research into the development, production, and marketing phases. Planned programs include accelerating vaccine development and fostering new drug research for resistant infections.

The initiative also provides funding to transform former Soviet bioweapons sites into research and production facilities for nonmilitary biotechnology. The program already has explored cooperation with the formerly closed Russian sites at Berdsk and Omutninsk.

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