

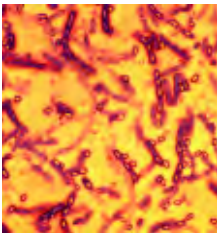
## Collaborative Efforts



### COLLABORATIVE BIOLOGICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM

Most people probably do not realize that there are vials of pathogens – including anthrax, the plague, tularemia (also known as “rabbit fever”), and others – sitting in labs all over the world that could potentially be used for terrorist activities. Fortunately, there is a program in place to help ensure these pathogens are used for research purposes, and a group of AAAS Fellows played a key role in determining whether or not the program was working. In 1997, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) at the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) launched the Collaborative Biological Research (CBR) program in Russia as part of the Biological Threat Reduction Program (BTRP). In 2004, DTRA organized a second program that focused on non-Russia, former Soviet Union countries. One year later, three Fellows at DTRA were selected to conduct an evaluation of the program’s effectiveness.

Susan Cumberledge, DJ Patil and Benjamin Perman, all 2004–05 AAAS Fellows at DoD, formed the core team that examined whether the program was meeting its goals of integrating former bioweapons scientists into the international scientific community, researching countermeasures to bioweapons threats, and informing the U.S. of new developments. The core team coordinated with a group of consultants: Lara Campbell of AAAS Research Competitiveness Services; Barrett Ripin, a former AAAS Fellow currently with the U.S. Department of State; Alex Dehgan, a 2003–05 AAAS Fellow at the U.S. Department of State; Richard Markham of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Norman Neureiter of the AAAS Center for Science, Technology & Security Policy; and John Steinbruner of the Center for International Security Studies at Maryland.



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The evaluation included site visits to Georgia, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In the field, the team of AAAS Fellows and consultants interviewed scientists and toured their facilities to determine if they were receiving the funding they needed to carry out their research, if they were following the regulations for handling and storing the pathogens, and if the program was succeeding in its larger mission of redirecting scientific efforts away from bioweapons development toward public health initiatives. According to D], “They [the scientists] appreciated speaking to another scientist instead of a government official. They see that there’s a shared professional relationship, and they were very open to us.”

In the end, the team compiled its findings in a report that was submitted to DTRA and other officials within DoD to make improvements to the program to ensure its long-term success. At the recommendation of the Fellows and consultants, the Biological Threat Reduction Program initiated Country Science Plans to develop targeted research strategies specific to each country.

