

News Release



*Defense Threat Reduction Agency
U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction
Standing Joint Force Headquarters for Elimination*

On the Web: www.dtra.mil
Media Contact: 1 (703) 767-5870

For Immediate Release

No. DTRA 2014-004
September 27, 2014

DTRA/SCC-WMD Director joins U.S. Ambassador at Ribbon Cutting for A Public Health Research Laboratory in Kazakhstan

FORT BELVOIR, VA – Kenneth A. Myers, Director of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency/U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (DTRA/SCC-WMD) joined John Ordway, U.S. Ambassador to Kazakhstan in a ribbon cutting ceremony for the first Biological Safety Level Three Laboratory in Otar, Kazakhstan today.

In his remarks, Mr. Myers noted that the United States and our Kazakhstani partners, selected Otar as a location of this laboratory because of its existing scientific infrastructure, expertise, and proximity to other Central Asian scientific research institutes. It is a premier location for the first laboratory of this type to be built in Kazakhstan.

Speaking to the work of the new lab, Myers added, “This is a state-of-the-art laboratory, staffed by public health professionals, scientists, researchers and laboratory technicians from Kazakhstan. These Kazakhstani professionals will use this laboratory to conduct clinical and diagnostic research of infectious diseases that may affect both humans and animals. Working in coordination with other public health related agencies, this facility will enable Kazakhstan and the surrounding region to better anticipate and respond to human and animal diseases which have potentially significant consequences for human and animal health.”

The laboratory, a state-of-the-art Biosafety Level 3 facility, is the result of an ongoing partnership between Kazakhstan and the United States to improve public health safety in Kazakhstan and is the first research facility of its kind in Kazakhstan and Central Asia. It will support clinical and diagnostic research of infectious diseases that may affect both humans and animals. The laboratory will be administered by the Ministry of Education and Science and will contribute to the advancement of both public and veterinary health research and safety for the Republic of Kazakhstan. The facility will be staffed by public health professionals, scientists, researchers and laboratory technicians from Kazakhstan.

Attending dignitaries from the Government of Kazakhstan included Minister Aslan Sarinzhapov, Minister of Education and Science; Mr. Ansar Mussakhanov, Akim of Almaty Region; and Dr. Abylay Sansyzbay, Director, Research Institute of Biological Safety Problems. .

DTRA/SCC-WMD safeguards America's interests from weapons of mass destruction (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high explosives) by controlling and reducing the threat to the United States and its allies, and providing quality tools and services for the war fighter. This Department of Defense combat support agency is located at Fort Belvoir, Va., and operates field offices worldwide.

DTRA is the U.S. Department of Defense's official Combat Support Agency for countering weapons of mass destruction, addressing the entire spectrum of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high yield explosive threats. DTRA's programs include basic science research and development, operational support to U.S. warfighters on the front line, and an in-house WMD think tank that aims to anticipate and mitigate future threats long before they have a chance to harm the United States and our allies. SCC-WMD, the U.S. Strategic Command Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction, synchronizes Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction efforts across our military's geographic commands and leverages the people, programs and interagency relationships of DTRA at a strategic level. We work with the military services, other elements of the United States government, and countries across the planet on counterproliferation, nonproliferation and WMD reduction issues with one goal in mind: Making the World Safer.