

Editorial

State-Sponsored Doping System in Russia: A Grand Failure of the Largest Institutional Conspiracy in History of Sport

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We coined the term “state-sponsored doping” in our article published in USA in Perspectives in Biology and Medicine in 2003 and referred it to the 1970s events in the former Soviet Union. We demonstrated that doping in the former Soviet Union was “state-sponsored.” The information provided was substantial to prove the involvement of governmental authorities in sponsoring doping research in the former Soviet Union.

A culture of doping in Russian sport dates back to the Soviet Union. The current events in Russia are the repeat on a the larger and more sophisticated scale of a Cold War era Communist subversion.

We published revelations about the involvement of state institutions in research on anabolic steroids in the former Soviet Union, which appeared in Deutsche Zeitschrift für Sportmedizin in 2002 (in German) and in our book.

Ergogenic Aids

Performance-Enhancing Substances in Sport and Exercise in 2008 (in English). We disclosed the classified doping report and this was the first significant break-up into the secrecy of doping in the former Soviet Union. We revealed, that in 1972, the State Central Institute of Physical Culture published 150 copies for a “limited use” among selected sport functionary and disseminated a classified document that outlined the secret Soviet research on steroids and recommendations for use steroids in sports. The author of this Editorial (Kalinski M.I.) [1] was the first recipient of this document on December 15, 1972 as a chairman of the department of Sport Biochemistry at the Kiev State Institute of Physical Culture in the former Soviet Union. The Institute’s research vice president instructed me to pass the document to four other department chairs. I never did. To expose the document to the West was not an option at that time, because it would land me in Soviet Gulag in Siberia. Instead of disseminating and implementing the report, I concealed it and kept it secret for 30 years. During the first decade after immigration to the USA, I was hesitant to disclose it to the West, fearing KGB revenge. Also, my main goal was to re-establish my academic career in the USA. Only after becoming US citizen in 2001 and by the strong

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encouragement of a Professor of California State University in Chico, Dr. Thomas Fahey, after 30 years of receiving the document, I finally chose to reveal its content to the West. Dr. Fahey, one of the prominent American Sport Physiologists, spent a lot of effort to convince me how vitally important this classified report was for the possible rewriting of Olympic history, for shedding light on true history of doping in the Soviet Union [2].

The 1972 anabolic steroids document

The document contains a series of scientific reports providing the times and dosages for the administration of androgenic-anabolic steroids to human subjects (athletes) and data from experiments conducted at the Research Laboratory of Training Programming and Physiology of Sport Performance of the State Central Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow. It is important to note, that the editors of the classified research report, were important sport functionary appointed by the Russian government: the Director of the Research Institute of Physical Culture and Sports in Moscow, (a division of the Russia Sport Committee), Dr. V. Zatciorsky and a prominent Soviet doping scientist, the Chair of the Department of Sport Biochemistry of the State Central Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow Dr. N. Volkov. Another new turn to this story took place in 2016. The leading author of the studies, described in the secret 1972 document, was Dr. Sergei Sarsania. In 2016, after 45 years of performing the secret studies, described in the discussed report, Dr. Sarsania, who is now 80 years old, came forward for the first time with a confirmation of his personal involvement in the doping process using anabolic steroids and the training of some of the former Soviet Union and Russia’s top athletes. Dr. Sarsania made those acknowledgements in his interview to The Asahi Shimbun in 2016. When the Asahi Shimbun journalist asked Dr. Sarsania to show him a copy of the 1972 document, a big surprise came: Dr. Sarsania didn’t have the copy of the document he prepared himself for the publication! This confirmed my deep suspicion that this evidence of a state-run Soviet doping program was purposely destroyed. The copy I smuggled to the USA is the only existing copy in the world!

It is obvious from the State Central Institute of Physical Culture's report that experiments with anabolic-androgenic steroids using athletes as subjects had occurred in the former USSR by 1971–1972 or earlier. All orders to organize and finance such research were given in a highly centralized system. Research into the medical and biological aspects of sport was an integral part of the athletic agenda in the former Soviet Union. It was conducted in more than 28 State Institutes of Physical Education and State Research Institutes of Physical Culture. In the totalitarian country as Soviet Union was, all crucial decisions about financing and implementation of research programs on androgenic-anabolic steroids by the State Central Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow were made with the knowledge and consent of governmental officials. We conclude that all those clandestine research and secret dissemination of the recommendations for the Soviet athletes by its nature were state-directed, state-sponsored. There was no "private" doping research in the highly centralized Soviet system.

Dr. Volkov blood doping secret studies

Further, in our article "State-sponsored research on creatine supplements and blood doping in elite Soviet sport", we presented previously restricted information regarding the development and use in elite Soviet sport another procedure - blood doping - in the former USSR. We exposed that the Soviet government supported the development of blood doping, which is banned by the International Olympic Committee. Our article documented the broad secret research program, which involved the highest levels in sports institutions of the USSR, including the Central Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow and the Central Institute of Hematology and Transfusiology, and was carried out over a number of years. It also involved many of the country's elite athletes, including Olympic competitors, from different sports disciplines. The results of this clandestine government-sponsored research—including information pertaining to the use of blood doping during the 1976 Olympic Games—were restricted from open publication. Only 14 years after blood doping was used at the Olympic Games were the results of this research finally allowed to be made public—and then only in the form of an abbreviated Ph.D. dissertation report of Russian scientist Dr. Nikolay Volkov in 1990. After our publication the Soviet government denials of the development and use of blood doping was recognized as a cover up. Blood doping was exposed as pervasive in the USSR in the 1970s and 1980s, and was used by many Soviet athletes in the 1976 and 1980 Olympic Games. Swimmers, cyclists, rowers, skiers, biathletes and skaters systematically were blood-doped, according to Volkov's research. Dr. Volkov was awarded a Gold Medal of Russia's Sport Committee for his research. When the Soviet Union came apart, sport biochemists and sport pharmacologists, like Dr. Volkov and Dr. Portugalov, "trained to drug" their athletes, remained in their positions in Russia until recently. For example, Dr. Volkov was a chair of the Department of Sport Biochemistry of the State Central Institute of Physical Culture in Moscow until his death in 2014 [3].

Professor Richard H. McLaren's reports

With the new biggest doping scandal in history, which started after the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics in Russia, Professor

Richard H. McLaren [4, 5], the Independent Person ("IP") was appointed by the World Anti-Doping Agency ("WADA") President to investigate with his team a suspected rampant cheating across Russian sports. The IP was to conduct an investigation of the allegations made by the former Director of the Moscow Laboratory, Dr. Grigory Rodchenkov published in the New York Times on 12 May 2016 and aired as a segment of the 60 Minutes television program on 08 May 2016. Eventually, McLaren's team established a universal understanding how sport competitions had been virtually hijacked by the Russians through doping manipulations. One of the key findings of the McLaren's WADA IP Report was that an institutional conspiracy existed across summer and winter sports athletes who participated with Russian officials within the Ministry of Sport and its infrastructure, such as the Russian Anti-Doping Agency, Center of Sport Preparation of National Teams of Russia, and the Moscow Laboratory, along with the FSB (Russian Security Service) for the purposes of manipulating doping controls. The summer and winter sports athletes were not acting individually but within an organized infrastructure. The swapping of Russian athletes' urine samples was occurring at Sochi, and did not stop at the close of the Winter Olympics. The forensic testing, which is based on immutable facts, is conclusive. The results of the forensic and laboratory analysis initiated by the IP establish that the conspiracy was perpetrated between 2011 and 2015. Over 1000 Russian athletes competing in summer, winter and Paralympic sport, can be identified as being involved in or benefiting from manipulations to conceal positive doping tests.

In the Sochi Olympic Games in Russia in 2014, Russian athletes won 33 medals, including 13 golds, 10 more than at the previous Winter Olympics in Vancouver, Canada. Richard Pound, the former president of WADA, said Russia should be banned from the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. WADA called on the Olympic Committee to bar the entire Russia team from the Rio Games. However, the Olympic Committee did not follow WADA's recommendations and refused to ban the Russia's team as a whole. Instead, it deferred to individual sport federations. As a result, most Russian athletes were allowed to compete at the 2016 Summer Olympics. Only about 100 Russian athletes were barred from the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. This decision favored Russia. The international sport federations (with only exception of track and field governing body, IAAF) actually found themselves disarmed against Russia's hybrid war with international sport. The rest of the world agreed to send their athletes to Rio de Janeiro to compete with the Russians "stuffed" by the Duchess cocktail of banned substances.

The real motivation to organize the insane state-controlled doping system in the former Soviet Union and in present day Russia

The real reason rests deep within Russia's collective ego with its extreme aggressiveness, manifested in Ribbentrop-Molotov pact with Nazi Germany, which started the World War II in 1939 against Poland. It was also manifested in the wars of Russia against Finland in 1939, Russia's aggressions against Hungary in 1956, occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, invasion into Afghanistan in 1979, as well as in Georgia in 2006, war against Ukraine and occupation of Crimea in 2014, and Russia's taking

part in current conflict in Syria. The collective ego in the form existing in current Russia, is constantly in need of conflict and enemies, the need to be right against others who are wrong etc. The others, who are wrong, are of course the Western countries. One of the ways in which Russia's ego attempts to escape unhappiness of the selfhood, compared with the more successful West, is to strengthen its sense of self by identifying with success in sport. Sport always has been a useful propaganda tool to infuse the sense of sportive nationalism, national pride within egoic collective psychopathic unconsciousness in the communist regime in the former Soviet Union and in a present day authoritarian Russia. Since the old times of former Soviet Union, the government's goal was outdoing the West, by winning medals by any price, reap the benefits from Olympic victories, and convince the world of the superiority of the Russian sport system to a decadent West. The former Soviet Union had mastered decades-long dominance in sport in the second half of the 20th century and after a devastating defeat at Vancouver Games in 2010, Putin mastered a new victory over the West at Sochi Olympic Game on Russia's soil just four years later in 2014. Russia's WADA accredited lab had substituted steroid-laced urine samples of Russian athletes and had evaded the detection of antidoping authorities. How much more brazen can it get when the notorious Federal Security Service of Russia played a central role in the doping scandal?

What's on the horizon in Russia's hybrid war against international sport?

Regretfully, international sport institutions did not show the political will and did not stand against the Russians, who violated common human decency. Allowing Russia to compete at the Rio Olympics in 2016 and expected capitulation by the sport bureaucrats of the IOC to Putin by giving Russians permission to compete at the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, will be the final blow to Olympic ideals, a complete sabotage of the Olympic principle: "the essential thing is not to have conquered, but to have fought well." The credibility of IOC's moral purity is proven false again. It seems that IOC lost moral guidance based

on the founder of modern Olympic Games Pierre de Coubertin's ethics.

In June of 2017, before the qualifying took place for the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea, Thomas Bach, the President of the International Olympic Committee promised more sanctions. Based on the past IOC rhetoric and decisions, the sport community can expect at best some half-measures, but unlikely a blanket ban for Russia for the 2018 Winter Olympics in South Korea. Despite the bacchanalia of doping at Sochi Winter Olympics in Russia in 2014, the deserved judicial punishment, so called the "nuclear option" for Russia most likely will not be served again. However, in order to get it right, there should be a different approach. As Max Cobb, executive director of U.S.A. Biathlon put it: "If you tell all Russian sports that they cannot compete internationally, things will change very fast."

Because doping transmits medical danger for athletes, sport medicine professionals are obligated to protect the athletes and not be silent when state-sponsored doping system in Russia, the largest institutional conspiracy in history of sport, is now available for the world to see. This is a Western democracy, no one westerner would be sent to Siberia to perish for expressing Olympic values and standing against institutional conspiracy. The apathy of the West is gloomy.

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