



History and Origin of KONA BLUE

The All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO) first learned of the KONA BLUE program from interviews conducted as part of its historical review. Multiple interviewees identified KONA BLUE as a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) sensitive compartment established to protect the retrieval and exploitation of "non-human biologics." AARO researched the information provided by the interviewees and learned KONA BLUE was a Prospective Special Access Program (PSAP) that had been proposed to DHS leadership but was never approved or formally established. KONA BLUE never received any materials or funding, and there is no information beyond the proposal presentation marked with the KONA BLUE name.

AARO traced the origin of the proposal for KONA BLUE to the Advanced Aerospace Weapon System Application Program (AAWSAP)/Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP) program, which was managed by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) from 2009-2012 and funded through congressional earmarks. Bigelow Aerospace, headquartered in Nevada, served as the primary contractor executing funds for the program and delivered multiple reports during the period of their contract. DIA terminated the program due to a cited lack of merit and lack of utility in the products Bigelow produced for DIA's mission.

When DIA canceled AAWSAP/AATIP, several individuals involved with that program advocated for DHS to take the effort over and fund a new version of AAWSAP/AATIP under the code name "KONA BLUE." According to the proposal, KONA BLUE would continue the work previously undertaken by DIA's AAWSAP/AATIP to investigate, identify, and analyze sensitive materials and technologies, to include advanced aerospace vehicles. In 2011, the DHS Under Secretary for Science and Technology (S&T) established KONA BLUE as a PSAP based on claims that relevant information and material existed and required this level of protection. The Under Secretary (S&T) also cited congressional interest in the subject and possible impacts on homeland security as part of the justification for the program. Six months later, however, the Deputy Secretary of DHS disapproved KONA BLUE as a Special Access Program (SAP), and further directed its immediate termination citing concerns about the adequacy of justification for the program, and sufficiency of information central to the proposal development, including personnel and budget requirements.

It is critical to note that while some DHS personnel believed that relevant information and material would be delivered to DHS upon establishment of the SAP, no data or material of any kind was ever transferred to or collected by DHS under the auspices of KONA BLUE. Information associated with the activities conducted under the auspices of AAWSAP/AATIP remains within DIA's archived holdings.

This archived PSAP proposal and associated documents have been declassified in partnership between DoD and DHS and are being released to the public in accordance with both agencies' commitment to transparency.

Other than a single instance of Attorney-Client material redacted from page 38 by DHS, all redactions were made by the Department of Defense.