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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 16, 2021

The Honorable Avril Haines  
Director of National Intelligence  
Office of the Director of National Intelligence  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Director Haines:

During your April 15, 2021 World Wide Threats briefing before the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, you indicated that Intelligence Community (IC) components have coalesced around “two plausible theories” related to the origins of COVID-19 with “one of them a laboratory accident.”

It is critical that we understand the origin of COVID-19 so that the United States Government and the global community can take appropriate measures to reduce the likelihood of another pandemic. Our prevention, preparedness, and surveillance activities must be informed by such an understanding. Moreover, if human error contributed to the outbreak or its spread, we must look hard at the root causes and implement the necessary public and international mechanisms to prevent a reoccurrence.

In short, we need to understand what occurred in the Chinese province of Wuhan—the origin of COVID-19—and what research was being conducted at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). However, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) has denied access to independent investigators and taken other actions that hinder international probes of the COVID-19 breakout. It is also telling that the PRC has engaged in a global disinformation campaign on this topic, including the outrageous allegation that the virus was created by the United States. These facts place significant responsibility on the IC to discover the truth of these matters.

As Members of Congress responsible for overseeing U.S. intelligence agencies, we believe the IC failed to properly support policymakers with timely products and analysis. Further, the IC has not been forthcoming about what processes it undertook to make seemingly authoritative statements early in the pandemic about the origins of the virus—conclusions that are now in question. This casts doubt on the validity of early judgments as well as the analytic integrity of COVID-19-related intelligence reporting.

Moreover, evidence shows that the IC’s failures continued in the pandemic’s aftermath. Specifically, Republican Members are aware of allegations that the IC suppressed dissenting views related to the origins of the pandemic and that the community relied upon “outside” experts with concerning yet undisclosed entanglements.

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Given your role in governing the IC, including the critical requirement of ensuring the analytic integrity of intelligence reporting as documented by Intelligence Community Directive 203, I request that you address the following:

1. Please provide all IC reporting and products regarding the origins of COVID-19 not already produced to the House Intelligence Committee. This should include any analytic products produced by federally funded research and development centers or outside experts. Should information be restricted and subject to limited dissemination, please make arrangements to enable appropriately cleared staff to review the information.
2. Please provide all intelligence underlying the January 15, 2021 State Department Fact Sheet (Activity of the Wuhan Institute of Virology) to include intelligence related to 1) illnesses at the WIV; 2) WIV research on “RaTG13” and “Gain of Function”; and 3) secret WIV links to military research.
3. Please provide the Committee any IC reporting concerning collaboration between the WIV and the Chinese military.
4. Does the IC have any evidence, circumstantial or otherwise, that COVID-19 occurred naturally and spilled over directly from an intermediate host to humans in the fall of 2019?
5. Has the IC assessed the PRC’s compliance with Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention? If so, please provide the committee that assessment.
6. Is the IC aware of collaboration between the WIV and its related entities or scientists and foreign scientists? Has the IC produced threat assessments or other reports concerning such activity?
7. Is the IC aware of any collaboration between the WIV and U.S. government entities or persons, including any potential ties to the Chinese military? If so, did the IC produce counterintelligence threat assessments or any other reports concerning such activity?
8. Was the IC involved in any interagency reviews concerning the appropriateness of U.S. government funding of research conducted at the WIV and its related facilities?
9. Was the IC involved in any interagency reviews concerning Gain of Function research and, specifically, the appropriateness of funding this research outside the United States or in collaboration with foreign adversaries such as China? If so, was this involvement documented and were any findings produced?

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10. Has the IC assessed the risks associated with Gain of Function research by nation states that are known to possess biological weapons capabilities?
11. Does the IC assess that Gain of Function research collaboration with China represents a threat to U.S. national security? If not, what is the basis for such a view?
12. It is publicly documented that the National Institutes of Health and USAID have provided funding to Chinese laboratories conducting dangerous dual-use research. Was the IC consulted prior to approval of funding for this activity, and does the IC maintain an ongoing review of the activity?
13. Has the IC produced an analysis on China's adherence to international health regulations in the wake of the COIV-19? If so, please provide it to the Committee.
14. Did the IC support the development of HHS guidelines that outline the risk assessment and mitigation steps associated with Enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogens (Department of Health and Human Services Framework for Guiding Funding Decisions about Proposed Research Involving Enhanced Potential Pandemic Pathogens)?
15. Please provide the Committee any IC reporting concerning PRC reactions to the January 15, 2021 Department of State Fact Sheet regarding activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.
16. According to press reports, the French General Directorate for External Security expressed repeated concerns over French participation in the construction and development of the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Does the IC have any reporting to corroborate these reports? If the General Directorate did express such concerns, was the IC made aware of them, and did the IC concur?
17. Does the IC understand the full scope of dangerous research conducted at the WIV? What are the IC's knowledge gaps?
18. Did the IC seek participation from other U.S. federal departments or agencies in the production of COVID-19 reporting and, if so, how was this accomplished?
19. Please provide the names of any outside infectious disease experts referenced in any IC report related to origins of COVID-19, their curriculum vitae or resume, and the criterion used to pick these particular experts.
20. How were outside experts vetted, including for potential conflicts of interest—such as prior involvement with the Wuhan Institute of Virology—and what was the selection process?

21. Who specifically was responsible for the selection of outside experts?
22. Has the IC organized or participated in any forums with outside experts on this topic? If so, please describe the engagement(s).
23. Who are the members of the Biological Sciences Experts group?
24. NBC News reported on May 8, 2020, "Report says cellphone data suggests October shutdown at Wuhan lab, but experts are skeptical." What is the IC's assessment concerning an "October shutdown at the WIV"?
25. Given the fact that cooperation with China is not attainable, and if offered would be unreliable, what investigative steps are planned to determine the cause of the COVID-19 outbreak?

I appreciate your assistance with this important matter. Given the scope of the request, I understand the IC's response may need to be provided in tranches. To facilitate the work of Republican Members of the Committee, I request that you provide information beginning no later than May 31, 2021. Please do not hesitate to contact Committee staff at (202) 225-4121 with any questions regarding this request.

Sincerely,



Devin Nunes  
Ranking Member

CC: Mr. David M. Taylor  
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence & Security  
The Honorable William J. Burns  
Director, Central Intelligence Agency  
General Paul M. Nakasone  
Director, National Security Agency  
Lieutenant General Scott D. Berrier  
Director, Defense Intelligence Agency  
The Honorable Steven K. Black  
Director of the Office of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, Department of Energy  
The Honorable Melissa Smislova  
Acting Under Secretary for Intelligence and Analysis, Department of Homeland Security  
The Honorable Kin Moy  
Acting Assistant Secretary of State  
The Honorable Michael Neufeld  
Acting Assistant Secretary, Department of Treasury, Office of Intelligence and Analysis  
Vice Admiral Robert Sharp  
Director, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency  
Dr. Christopher Scolese  
Director, National Reconnaissance Office

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The Honorable Christopher Wray  
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

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