

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

May 16, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
President of the United States  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As part of our ongoing oversight investigation related to Chinese threats to U.S. economic and national security, Republican Members of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence are investigating the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was first reported in Wuhan, China in 2019. We write to request that you initiate a whole-of-government effort to identify the origins of the virus and to direct federal agencies and departments to examine all plausible scenarios as part of such investigation.

During the course of our investigation, which is ongoing, we have identified substantial circumstantial evidence supporting the theory that a laboratory leak could have been responsible for the origination of COVID-19.<sup>i</sup> It is critical that this possibility be thoroughly examined, particularly in light of the Chinese government's obstruction of multilateral bio-forensic investigations and its destruction of important evidence.<sup>ii</sup>

A senior Administration official has confirmed our finding that the origin of COVID-19 could have been the result of a lab leak. In April, the Director of National Intelligence explained that either “[COVID-19] emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals or it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan.”<sup>iii</sup> It is unclear, however, if the Intelligence Community or any other part of the U.S. government is seeking to determine the truth.

We concur with the assessment of Secretary of State Antony Blinken who recently stated that the origin of COVID-19 is important “because we need to understand what happened if we are going to have the best possible opportunity to prevent it from happening again, and to make sure we can put in place an even stronger global health security system, to make sure that we can prevent,

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<sup>i</sup> “Should we discount the laboratory origin of COVID-19?” Environmental Chemistry Letters, Segreto, R., Deigin, Y., McCairn, K. et al., March 25, 2021; “The origin of COVID: Did people or nature open Pandora’s box at Wuhan?” Nicholas Wade, May 5, 2021, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists; “Call for a Full and Unrestricted, International Forensic Investigation into the Origins of COVID-19,” Colin D. Butler, Henri Cap, et al, April 7, 2021; and “Investigate the Origins of COVID-19,” Jesse D. Bloom, Yujia Alina Chan, Ralph S. Baric, et al., May 14, 2021.

<sup>ii</sup> “COVID BOMBHELL WHO chief orders new probe into Wuhan lab leak theory as he rubbishes his own team’s whitewash Covid report,” Henry Holloway, *The Sun*, March 30, 2021; “Call for a Full and Unrestricted, International Forensic Investigation into the Origins of COVID-19,” Colin D. Butler, Henri Cap, et al, April 7, 2021; “Chinese scientists destroyed proof of virus in December,” *The Times*, March 1, 2020; “China Told Labs to Destroy Coronavirus Samples to Reduce Biosafety Risks,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 16, 2020; and “What happened in Wuhan? Why questions still linger on the origin of the coronavirus,” Lesley Stahl, CBS News, March 28, 2021.

<sup>iii</sup> Testimony of the Director of National Intelligence, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, April 15, 2021.

*detect, [and] mitigate future pandemics. And that has to start with understanding exactly what happened.”<sup>iv</sup>*

In addition, I want to call to your attention the fact that U.S. government funds—whether directly or indirectly—are supporting dangerous dual-use scientific research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). Our findings, though incomplete, suggest the United States supported such work despite clear evidence of the People’s Liberation Army’s involvement at the WIV.<sup>v</sup> It is essential that your Administration examine this matter and ensure that appropriate threat assessments are conducted anytime the U.S. government considers collaborating with a foreign adversary on future dual-use research. This may require a review of the interagency processes associated with such decisions.

In summary, I request your Administration’s support for a whole-of-government effort to identify the origins of COVID-19 and urge you to undertake a review of the interagency processes associated with the funding of dangerous dual-use research—particularly when conducted with foreign adversary nations.

Attached you will find a letter to the Director of National Intelligence, which includes many outstanding questions. My Republican colleagues and I hope you will agree that getting to the truth is of critical importance. We stand ready to work with your Administration to address these matters.

Sincerely,



Devin Nunes  
Ranking Member

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<sup>iv</sup> Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Australian Foreign Minister and Minister for Women Marise Payne at a Joint Press Availability, Washington, D.C., May 13, 2021.

<sup>v</sup> “Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” U.S. Department of State, January 15, 2021, and “Worrying new clues about the origins of Covid: How scientists at Wuhan lab helped Chinese army in secret project to find animal viruses,” Ian Birrell, *The Daily Mail*, April 24, 2021.