

# House Intel Republicans say 'significant circumstantial evidence' of COVID Wuhan lab leak

A panel report notes investigations into the origins of the virus have been 'stymied by a lack of cooperation' from China

[Brooke Singman](#) May 19

## [Evidence of COVID origin points to Wuhan lab: Pompeo](#)

Former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says the left wanted to deny the theory that coronavirus was leaked from a lab in Wuhan.

**EXCLUSIVE:** Republicans on the House Intelligence Committee say there is "significant circumstantial evidence" that the COVID-19 outbreak stemmed from a leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, urging the federal government to put "more pressure on China" to allow for a "full, credible investigation" into the source of the global pandemic.

Committee Ranking Member Devin Nunes, R-Calif., and

Republicans on the panel released a report Wednesday, first obtained by Fox News, saying it is "crucial for health experts and the U.S. government to understand how the COVID-19 virus originated" to prevent "or quickly mitigate future pandemics."

## [HOUSE INTEL REPUBLICANS PRESS BIDEN, DNI HAINES FOR MORE INFORMATION ON COVID-19 LAB LEAK THEORY](#)

"International efforts to discover the true source of the virus, however, have been stymied by a lack of cooperation from the People's Republic of China," Republicans wrote. "Nevertheless, significant circumstantial evidence raises serious concerns that the COVID-19 outbreak may have been a leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology."

Republicans pointed to China's "history of research lab leaks resulting in infections," and warnings from U.S. diplomats in China as early as 2017 that the Wuhan lab was conducting "dangerous research" on coronaviruses without following "necessary safety protocols, risking the accidental outbreak of a pandemic."

Republicans also pointed to public reports that "several researchers in the Wuhan lab were sickened with COVID-19-like symptoms" in Fall 2019, and the Chinese military's "involvement in the Wuhan Lab."

"By contrast, little circumstantial evidence has emerged to support the PRC's claim that COVID-19 was a natural occurrence, having jumped from some other species to human," they wrote, saying Chinese authorities "have failed to identify the original species that allegedly spread the virus to humans, which is critical to their zoonotic transfer theory."

Committee Republicans also claimed there are "clear signs" that U.S. government agencies and academic institutions "may have funded or collaborated in Gain of Function research" at the Wuhan Lab, claiming that research "was published even after the U.S. government had paused these kinds of studies in the United States due to ethical concerns over their biowarfare applicability and their potential to accidentally unleash a pandemic.

"To protect American citizens from future pandemics, the U.S. Government must place more pressure on China to allow full, credible investigations of the source of the COVID-19 pandemic and to allow probes of the likelihood that it resulted from a lab leak," the report states. "The U.S. Government must also provide a full accounting of any American cooperation with the Wuhan lab's coronavirus research, including the support of these projects through U.S. Government funds."

The report was released after Nunes and other GOP members on the committee penned letters to President Biden and Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines,

accusing the intelligence community of failing to provide timely updates on its investigation into the origins of COVID-19 and of not being "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."

The letters demanded that the intelligence community turn over all of its information on COVID-19's origins, requesting any reporting on a possible "collaboration" between the Wuhan lab and the Chinese military. It asked for any evidence intelligence agencies had to prove coronavirus broke out naturally and originated in animals, and also asked if the intelligence community was involved in any reviews of "gain of function" research and whether it was appropriate to fund such research outside the U.S.

The letters set a deadline of May 31 to begin providing information relevant to the request.

## **WUHAN 'LAB LEAK' CORONAVIRUS THEORY IN FOCUS AS HOUSE REPUBLICANS DEMAND ANSWERS**

The calls for more information come after the White House last month said it believes that China has "not been transparent" in releasing its findings on the origins of COVID-19, as part of a report it wrote in collaboration with the World Health Organization.

The report dismissed claims that COVID-19 had escaped from a lab in Wuhan and instead called the theory of

zoonotic transmission, or transfer of infection from animals to humans, "likely to very likely."



## [Video](#)

The White House said the WHO's China report lacks crucial information and provides just a "partial, incomplete picture" of the virus's origin.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki last month called on China and the WHO to allow international experts "unfettered access" to data and to allow them to ask questions of people on the ground at the time of the outbreak. Psaki said that U.S. medical experts are still reviewing the report, but the White House believes it "doesn't meet the moment."

## [RAND PAUL, FAUCI SPAR OVER COVID ORIGINS](#)

The report calls the prospect that the virus transmitted

from an animal reservoir to an animal host, followed by subsequent spread within that intermediate host that then transmits it to humans, "likely to very likely." It calls the idea that the virus may have leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology "extremely unlikely."

The report called for further investigation in every area except the lab leak hypothesis.

Even WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the research team's assessment on whether coronavirus entered the human population as a result of a laboratory incident was not "extensive enough."

President Biden said last month he had not spoken to Chinese President Xi Jinping about the origins of COVID-19.

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*