

A discredited conspiracy theory about the origins of COVID-19

The Wuhan Lab Leak slander being resurrected to bolster US war drive against China

Benjamin Mateus
26 February 2023

On Sunday, the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) reported that the US Department of Energy (DOE) had shifted its previous stand on how the COVID-19 pandemic emerged from previously being undecided to now concluding that SARS-CoV-2 “most likely arose from a laboratory leak.”

However, not one shred of new evidence has been offered in support of this discredited right-wing conspiracy theory. The *Journal* can only note that the Energy Department’s conclusion, now coinciding with that of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, “is the result of new intelligence and is significant because the agency has considerable scientific expertise and oversees a network of US national laboratories, some of which conduct advanced biological research.”

The essence of this statement is that the “intelligence” must be credible because the DOE says it is.

One must ask why doesn’t the *Journal*, with all its resources and clout, not demand the federal government to make this evidence publicly available? One reason, of course, is the editorial alignment of the newspaper, part of the media empire of billionaire Rupert Murdoch, with the Republican Party. The House of Representatives, now under Republican control, has set up a new select committee to investigate (i.e., resurrect from the dead) the claim that China deliberately created the virus which causes COVID-19.

But it is more than the Republicans, since the DOE is under the direction of the Democratic administration of President Joe Biden, which is now spearheading a campaign to prepare the American population for war

with China. COVID could provide yet another *casus belli* against Beijing, even though Biden has declared that the pandemic is over, and he has stopped thinking about it.

Biden’s lying declaration does not change the fact that it has been an unprecedented catastrophe for hundreds of millions in the US, and billions around the world, and left an indelible scar on global society and mass consciousness.

In America alone, 1.12 million have died from a preventable pandemic and upwards of 16 to 20 million continue to suffer from Long COVID as a result of their infections. And even as hundreds of people continue to die from SARS-CoV-2 infections, the entire government has essentially turned out the lights on every conceivable metric that provided the population some inkling of the state of the pandemic.

And soon, with the ending of the pandemic emergency measures, millions of people will lose their government-sponsored Medicaid health insurance. This will push many health systems that are already operating in the red into outright bankruptcy.

The Center for Healthcare Quality and Payment Reform is forecasting that more than 200 rural US hospitals may have to shutter their doors in the next couple of years, which will leave millions without access to immediate care and heighten the crisis of delivering healthcare to the remaining systems, which are seeing record numbers of emergency room visits, crippling their ability to safely triage patients.

The *Journal* readily concedes that “US officials” decline to “give details on the fresh intelligence and

analysis that led the Energy Department to change its position.” The newspaper was only told that “while the Energy Department and the FBI each say an unintended lab leak is most likely, they arrived at those conclusions for different reasons.” The mystery is solved two different ways, and no details are given of either solution. Case closed!

The only sentence offered to the contrary is that according to unnamed sources who had actually read the report, the DOE’s “judgment,” was made with “low confidence.” Given that Colin Powell’s lying indictment of Iraqi “weapons of mass destruction” in 2003 was made on the basis of intelligence assessments of “high confidence,” this could mean nothing more than something overheard in a bar, or on the podcast of fascist Stephen Bannon, one of the originators of this smear campaign.

National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, speaking on CNN’s “State of the Union” program yesterday, acknowledged as much when he said, “if we gain any further insight or information, we will share it with Congress and we will share it with the American people. But, right now, there is not a definitive answer that has emerged from the intelligence community on this question.”

Missing in this weekend exclusive and breaking news reports is any discussion on the mountain of evidence that has evolved out of painstaking examination of the available evidence that has led foremost researchers and scientists in the field to conclude that coronavirus emerged as a zoonotic spillover in the wet-animal market in Wuhan in November 2019.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has written extensively on these studies and interviewed many of their authors. These findings and much further analysis of the issues raised by the COVID pandemic can be found collected in *COVID, Capitalism, and Class War, Vol. 1* as well as in more recent commentaries, including here and here.

The timing of the Journal’s “exclusive” is chilling, as it is part of a barrage of national-chauvinist and anti-China propaganda efforts, from the “spy balloon” to the claims of Chinese “near misses” on US jets flying over the South China Sea, added to the standard anti-Chinese tropes about Xinjiang and Taiwan. The US ruling elite is using all of its media resources to dupe the population and enable their war plans against China

to go forward.

The case in point is Sunday’s broadcast of *Meet the Press*, when host Chuck Todd, speaking with Republican Senator Dan Sullivan, asked, “If we end up determining, if our intelligence community over time determines this is the majority view, and it’s the US government’s view that this was a lab leak in China and the government covered it up, what should be the consequences?”

Sullivan responds, “Think about what just happened over the last three years: one of the biggest pandemics in a century. A lot of evidence that it’s coming from the Chinese, and when other countries even raise it, like Australia, the Chinese use their coercive economic activities to shut people up.”

He then added, “So, I think we need to do extensive hearings. I hope our Democratic colleagues in the Congress can support that. I know the Republicans in the House are certainly supportive of that. But I think if that happens, we need to make sure every country in the world knows this. Look, this is a country [China] that has no problem coming out and lying to the world. We just saw that with this Chinese spy balloon. It’s the nature of Communist dictatorship to lie to their own people, to lie to the world ... Obviously millions of deaths, huge economic impacts, and it would once again show that the Chinese Communist Party is not only a menace, but the nature of these regimes is to lie to the world. And we need to make that clear to people.” Todd gave his wholehearted agreement to this malignant xenophobic perspective.

Such lies have accompanied every American war of the last 30 years and more. The countries targeted for US military violence are painted in demonic colors and blamed for every possible crime, particularly those, like the rampant spread of the coronavirus pandemic, for which the capitalist ruling class is directly responsible.



To contact the WSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)