

Intelligence report exposes media promotion of Wuhan Lab lie

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On Friday evening, the Biden administration published a previously classified intelligence report acknowledging that three years of investigations have produced no evidence that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, was created in a laboratory by scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) in China.

This admission demolishes years of false claims, uncritically promoted by the entire spectrum of the US media and political establishment, that China deliberately created the virus that has infected the world and killed more than 20 million people.

The report reveals that three leading US newspapers—the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal*—lied when they claimed that the United States had evidence that researchers at the institute were hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms before the start of the pandemic, and were thus the proverbial “patient zero.”

The report declared that the researchers’ symptoms were “not diagnostic of COVID-19,” and “could have been caused by a number of diseases and some of the symptoms were not consistent with COVID-19.” Critically, the document declared, “We have no indications that any of these researchers were hospitalized because of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19.”

The report affirms that the Wuhan Institute of Virology acquired SARS-CoV-2 after it began to spread widely throughout the population of Wuhan, China in late December 2019. It states: “Information available to the IC [intelligence agencies] indicates that the WIV first possessed SARS-CoV-2 in late December 2019, when WIV researchers isolated and identified the virus from samples from patients diagnosed with pneumonia of unknown causes.”

The report concludes that “SARS-CoV-2 was not developed as a biological weapon.”

The document was declassified by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) in response to the COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023, which mandated that the government “declassify any and all information relating to...

researchers at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who fell ill in autumn 2019,” among other information.

Over the course of the past three years, scientists have worked systematically to uncover the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, amassing an overwhelming body of evidence to determine that SARS-CoV-2 spilled over from animals to humans, in the same manner as every other prior pandemic.

In July 2022, scientists Michael Worobey, Kristian Andersen and others traced the initial sources of the COVID-19 outbreak to stalls at the Huanan market in Wuhan, demonstrating that “live SARS-CoV-2-susceptible mammals were sold at the market in late 2019 and that within the market, SARS-CoV-2-positive environmental samples were spatially associated with vendors selling live mammals.”

In contrast to this and a vast body of further concrete, factual and scientifically grounded research, the advocates of the Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory, whose claims were reported uncritically and without context in every national US newspaper, based their assertions on “leaks” regarding the US government’s alleged possession of evidence supporting the claim that COVID-19 was a man-made virus.

Specifically, the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Wall Street Journal* all published claims, based on unsubstantiated “leaks,” that the US government possessed evidence that researchers at the WIV were hospitalized with COVID-19-like symptoms.

The origin of these claims was a May 23, 2021 article in the *Wall Street Journal* titled “Intelligence on Sick Staff at Wuhan Lab Fuels Debate on Covid-19 Origin.”

The article declared, “Three researchers from China’s Wuhan Institute of Virology became sick enough in November 2019 that they sought hospital care, according to a previously undisclosed U.S. intelligence report.”

The author of this article was Michael R. Gordon, whose 2003 reporting with Judith Miller helped promote the Bush administration’s lies that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, providing critical propaganda to justify the

launching of the Iraq war.

Gordon's May 2021 article was seized upon by the major US print and broadcast media to give their imprimatur to the Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory. Within forty-eight hours, the *Washington Post's* fact checker column declared the "lab leak" theory credible.

Within one week, the *Post* published a correction of its February 17, 2020 article, "Senator Tom Cotton Repeats Fringe Theory of Coronavirus Origins," which removed any reference to the lab leak theory as "debunked" and a "conspiracy theory."

In other words, the claim that three scientists were hospitalized with COVID-19 symptoms in late 2019 became the linchpin upon which the entire edifice of the US media was shifted to declare a completely false narrative "credible."

This claim has now been demolished. The media's embrace of the conspiracy theory was a house of cards, built on a total and complete lie.

Critically, the "COVID-19 Origin Act of 2023" was sponsored by January 6 insurrectionist Josh Hawley and passed with the unanimous support of every single member of Congress. It was hailed by the Biden administration, which falsely declared that "there is reason to believe the COVID-19 pandemic may have originated at the Wuhan Institute of Virology." In other words, this right-wing conspiracy theory has essentially been enshrined as US state doctrine.

What explains the universality with which this lie has been promoted by the US government and media?

The Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory was created by the fascist ideologist Stephen K. Bannon and his right-wing Chinese expatriate associates in January 2020. At the same time, the fascist right promoted the "herd immunity" response to the pandemic, encouraging the mass infection of the population and the complete evisceration of public health.

Since the emergence of the highly infectious and immune-resistant Omicron variant in November 2021, the Biden administration, with the support of the entire US media and political establishment, has fully embraced the "herd immunity" strategy. This culminated in the unscientific ending of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration last month.

Despite wastewater sampling showing levels of COVID-19 prevalence comparable to those that existed in much of 2020 and 2021, the US has shut down all COVID-19 case reporting, while the government and media actively discourage masking, a vital and inexpensive measure to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

There is a well known saying that "if geometrical axioms impinged upon human interests, attempts would be made to refute them." In regards to the pandemic, science has proven definitively that SARS-CoV-2 was not engineered in a Chinese laboratory, and a comprehensive program could and can be implemented to stop the spread of this dangerous virus. But the American ruling class and its representatives in the media, who have embarked on the path to war with China and cannot tolerate any infringement on their ability to make profits, pursue every effort to distort and falsify this science.

In seeking to scapegoat scientists, the US government and media have sunk to the lowest depths of superstition and witch-burning, blaming scientists for the very pandemic they foretold and tried to prevent.

If there were an outbreak of bubonic plague today, the US political establishment would deny its spread by rats and would declare its opposition to containing the disease through sanitary measures.

Even as it becomes increasingly clear that the Wuhan Lab conspiracy theory is a lie from beginning to end, the fascist forces that are its cheerleaders are pressing their campaign to threaten and demonize scientists, most sharply in the vitriolic campaign against the principled vaccinologist Peter Hotez, an outspoken critic of the Wuhan Lab lie.

This right-wing witch hunt must be stopped! The defense of scientific principles that have been rejected by the entire capitalist political and media establishment falls to the working class. Workers must reject all efforts to scapegoat scientists for the pandemic.

Those responsible for the deaths of over 1.1 million Americans and over 20 million people globally are not the scientists fighting to stop infectious diseases, but governments and the financial oligarchs they speak for, who did nothing while COVID-19 ripped through the population.



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