



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 9, 2022

Case No. FL-2021-00527

Mr. Gene P. Hamilton
600 14th Street NW, 5th Floor
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

As we noted in our letter dated January 12, 2022, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State (the “Department” or “State”) processed over 300 pages of potentially responsive records since its last letter. Specifically, the Department reviewed 4 records consisting of 251 pages that it determined were not responsive to your request and located 9 responsive records consisting of 54 pages that are subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that all 9 records may be released in part. The processing of your request is ongoing.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact U.S. Department of Justice Trial Attorney Derek Hammond at 202-252-2511, Derek.Hammond@usdoj.gov. Please refer to the case number, FL-2021-00527, and the civil action number, 21-cv-02253, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeanne Miller".

Jeanne Miller
Chief, Programs and Policies Division
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

(b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:

- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
- 1.4(b) Foreign government information
- 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
- 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
- 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
- 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
- 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction

(b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency

(b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:

ARMSEXP	Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c)
CIA PERS/ORG	Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g)
EXPORT CONTROL	Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c)
FS ACT	Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f)
IRAN	Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505

(b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information

(b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product

(b)(6) Personal privacy information

(b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:

- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
- (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
- (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- (D) disclose confidential sources
- (E) disclose investigation techniques
- (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual

(b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions

(b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

From: (b)(6)
 Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
 (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN
Date: 2021/05/26 14:56:59
Priority: Normal
Type: Note

(b)(5) Asher started on China's nuclear program and civil-military fusion for SBO DiNanno and SPEAC.



(b)(6)
 Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
 Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
 U.S. Department of State
 (b)(6)

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:53 AM
To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Yes - that works for me.

(b)(6) (b)(5)

 Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On May 26, 2021 at 10:51:08 AM EDT, Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) wrote:

How about this:

(b)(5)

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:36 AM

To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

<TurnerBI@state.gov> (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

(b)(5)

See below.

Best - Laura

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On May 26, 2021 at 10:32:09 AM EDT, Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) wrote:

Why not simpler? Would everyone be alright with something like this?

What happened to Asher? I'm told he's claiming he was fired.

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:28 AM

To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Yes we are going to use this, and if anyone asks about whether Asher was fired we have a line for off-the-record

What happened to Asher? I'm told he's claiming he was fired.

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:22 AM

To: (b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

(b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Ah ok (b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:19 AM

To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

(b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Alex this was put in final. Please see the attached and let me know if you have any red lines

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 10:17 AM

To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

(b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Some edits and a question.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 9:40 AM

To: (b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL

<AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

For some reason I cannot make any edits to the text. One change:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 9:28 AM

To: (b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: RE: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Some technical corrections.

(b)(6)



Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach

Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 9:20 AM

To: AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: NSC Press Guidance on CNN

Please review and let me know if any6 concerns. This does not replace our lines which we will continue to work.

Sender:	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
	(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sent Date: 2021/05/26 14:56:57

Delivered Date: 2021/05/26 14:56:59

From:	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
	Turner, Bruce J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon
Date:	2021/06/16 17:41:30
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

One additional suggestion:

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State



(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 1:34 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6) Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

Forgot my own amendment

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 1:31 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6) Desautels, Eric (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

So this is what we have:

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 12:35 PM
To: Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
 (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

I like Eric's edits. Best - Laura

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 12:34 PM
To: (b)(6) Bell,
 Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6) (b)(6)
 (b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(6) **From:** (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 12:23 PM
To: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Desautels, Eric
 (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

(b)(6)



Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 12:17 PM

To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Desautels, Eric (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, June 16, 2021 12:14 PM

To: (b)(6) Desautels, Eric (b)(6) >; Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 5:05 PM
To: Desautels, Eric (b)(6); Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
(b)(6); Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

Eric: I'm sorry my previous was a little glib, but all we are talking about is the net amount, not anything related to the time spent or anything that would provide info like that. So the Dept. provides info on all sorts of contracts with humanitarian orgs., NGOs, etc. And believe me, the competition among humanitarian orgs for USG \$\$ is fierce.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 5:01 PM
To: (b)(6); Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
(b)(6); Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: Re: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 4:56:31 PM
To: Desautels, Eric (b)(6); Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
(b)(6); Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

There is nothing typical about this story. He could obtain this info thru FOIA and has threatened to do so.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Desautels, Eric (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 4:56 PM

To: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

From: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:18:32 PM

To: (b)(6) Bell,

Alexandra F (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: Desautels, Eric (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

Adding Eric

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 3:03 PM

To: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5)

Thanks,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:39 PM

To: Price, Edward C (b)(6); SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

(b)(5); (b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Price, Edward C (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 2:33 PM

To: (b)(6) SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6); Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

I had a long chat with him on Saturday about the general issue for this story. I didn't go into the contract — and I don't really know the details. (b)(6) (b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 15, 2021 7:48:25 PM

To: Price, Edward (b)(6) SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: Inquiry from WSJ Michael Gordon

Gordon called me to ask about factual details of the contract under which the AVC investigation into Covid origin was conducted. He knows that there was a general contract – said it was for \$5 Million— with NSRI. He wants to know how much was spent specifically on the COVID investigation, and what kind of other projects do we fund under this. He’s ok with deep background. Said he’s working on a “forward looking story” on the Biden Admin’s investigation and what it has to start with and what challenges it may face, so these details help to fill the story out a bit. He said he could get this info thru a FOIA but doesn’t want to wait 5 months.... Deadline is Friday.

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Sender:	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Bell, Alexandra (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Sent Date:	2021/06/16 17:41:27
Delivered Date:	2021/06/16 17:41:30

From:	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
To:	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
	(b)(6) a
	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Subject:	RE: FOX News onCovid Origin
Date:	2021/05/18 15:28:31
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
 Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
 U.S. Department of State



(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From:	(b)(6)
Sent:	Tuesday, May 18, 2021 11:11 AM
To:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6) M
	(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: FOX News onCovid Origin

Correction, meant to say led to...

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 11:07 AM

To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

(b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: FOX News onCovid Origin

Recommended changes from me below.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 10:07 AM

To: (b)(6) Bell,

Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: FOX News onCovid Origin

HI - I have edits to the third bullet.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 9:23 AM

To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F

(b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: FOX News onCovid Origin

Laura and (b)(6)

We worked with Bruce and Alex to draft these points for SPOX background. Welcome your thoughts.

Thanks

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)



From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 18, 2021 8:43 AM

To: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: FOX News onCovid Origin

Many thanks (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best - Laura

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On May 18, 2021 at 8:26:43 AM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

Finally found the clip from last night's Special Report on Fox

<https://www.foxnews.com/person/g/jennifer-griffin>

Still need the background info on the AVC investigation for Ned

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
	(b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sent Date: 2021/05/18 15:28:29

Delivered Date: 2021/05/18 15:28:31

From:	(b)(6)
To:	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6) (b)(6)
CC:	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) (b)(6) Gross, Laura J (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation
Date:	2021/05/26 12:45:49
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Bruce,

I just sent an edit to points that SPOX sent to us this morning (b)(5)

(b)(5) (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
 Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
 U.S. Department of State



(b)(6)

From: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 8:35 AM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) >; Gross, Laura J

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

Bruce

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 8:27 AM

To: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL
<AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

[Redacted content]

(b)(5)

Once we align we can get Ned's ok and [Redacted]

(b)(6)

(b)(6) **Director of Press Operations**

U.S. Department of State

Office: (b)(6) Cell: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, May 26, 2021 7:28 AM
To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; (b)(6)
 (b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

+ (b)(6)

(b)(5); (b)(6)
[Redacted content]

From: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 11:19 PM
To: (b)(6) AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

Yes, but (b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 10:58 PM

To: AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>; (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F

(b)(6) Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)

Subject: FW: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 10:48 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6) AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>

Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

I just spoke to a (b)(6) (b)(5)

(b)(5)

I'm reaching out to CNN, FOX, and CBS, OTR per (b)(6) instructions to give them a sense of that context.

(b)(6) **Director of Press Operations**

U.S. Department of State

Office: (b)(6) | Cell: (b)(6)

On May 25, 2021 at 10:43:49 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

(b)(6)

Based on (b)(6) last email, (b)(5)

Thanks,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 10:04 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)
 (b)(6) AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: RE: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

Let me know if you have questions.

(b)(6)

(b)(6) **Director of Press Operations**
 U.S. Department of State
 Office: (b)(6) || Cell: (b)(6)

On May 25, 2021 at 9:49:03 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
 The lines I sent to her did not/not "confirm" anything was killed. (b)(5)
 (b)(5)
 (b)(5) Attaching my response to Ms. Atwood

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 9:41 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); DL NSC HealthSecBio <DL.NSC.HealthSecBio@nsc.eop.gov>; PA Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6); SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6); OES-PA-DG <OES-PA-DG@state.gov>; AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

Thanks (b)(6) Did we ever tell her that the something was formally killed? (b)(5)
 (b)(5)

On May 25, 2021, at 9:32 PM, (b)(6) wrote:

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

From: Atwood, Kylie (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, May 14, 2021 5:22 PM
To: PA Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; Price, Edward C (b)(6) AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: COVID-19 origins questions

Hi –

Is there a small group at the State Department still investigating if COVID-19 possibly resulted from Chinese government biochemical weapons research and development program? There was a small number of officials in the AVC bureau and policy planning looking into this during the Trump administration, and I wonder if that effort is still underway.

If State is not looking into this with a small group any longer, is the IC investigating the possibility that the coronavirus could have come from the Chinese government's biochemical weapons research and development program?

Does State stand by the veracity of the fact sheet put out by former Secretary Pompeo on Jan 15th, which revealed new information about WIV and its connections to the Chinese military among other details?

Last year Dr. Fauci said that the US was “very, very strongly leaning toward” the belief that the virus “could not have been artificially or deliberately manipulated-the way the mutations have naturally evolved.” Does the US government still believe that?

Thanks, Kylie

Kylie Atwood
CNN National Security Correspondent
Cell, Signal, WhatsApp: (b)(6)
State Dept: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 9:22 PM
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6) DL

NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>;
(b)(6); SPOX2 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6) OES-PA-DG <OES-PA-DG@state.gov>; AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-
DL@state.gov>

Subject: RE: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

Here are the cleared lines we used to respond on background to a similar CNN inquiry:

- • * In February and March of 2021, the team's draft findings were briefed to AVC and Policy Planning policy staff in the new administration.
- • * AVC has now completed work on this project. Even though this discrete project has concluded, the State Department continues to work with the interagency to look into the COVID origins issue. State Department-wide participation does include AVC, as appropriate.
- • * We continue to have serious questions about the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its origins within the Peoples Republic of China.
- • * The world needs to understand how this pandemic originated so that we can better prepare our governments, our people, and our public health institutions for future health crises.
- • * That's why we are working within the WHO and with other Member States to support a science-based and expert-driven evaluation of the pandemic's origins that is free from interference or politicization.
- • * We're not going to make pronouncements that prejudge an ongoing WHO study into the source of SARS-CoV-2, but we've been clear that sound and technically credible theories should be thoroughly evaluated by international experts.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 9:17 PM
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA
Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6) SPOX2
<SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6) OES-PA-DG <OES-PA-DG@state.gov>;
AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

+AVC

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:41 PM
To: (b)(6)
 (b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA
 Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6) SPOX2
 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6) OES-PA-DG <OES-PA-DG@state.gov>
Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

Fox News just inquired as well.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:36 PM
To: (b)(6)
 (b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA
 Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6) SPOX2
 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6) OES-PA-DG <OES-PA-DG@state.gov>
Subject: Re: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

+OES

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:25 PM
To: (b)(6)
 (b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA
 Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6) SPOX2
 <SPOX2@state.gov>; (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

+ (b)(6) to combine threads

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:22 PM
To: (b)(6)
 (b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio (b)(6) PA Press
 Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6) SPOX2
 <SPOX2@state.gov>
Subject: FLAG SPOX: Re: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

+SPOX

Just received a query on tis from Conor Finnegan with ABC News as well.

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:14 PM

To: (b)(6) DL NSC HealthSecBio

(b)(6) PA Press Duty <PAPressDuty@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: CNN report on Wuhan investigation

This just in. Flagging for (b)(6) #BSH, (b)(6) and State PA. #Press has not responded.

From: Gittleston, Benjamin D. <Benjamin.D.Gittleston@abc.com>

Sent: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 8:11 PM

To: DL NSC Press (b)(6)

Cc: Nagle, Molly F. <Molly.F.Nagle@abc.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] CNN report on Wuhan investigation

Good evening – Can you confirm this report, that the Biden admin shut down the State Dept effort launched by Pompeo to prove COVID-19 originated in the Wuhan lab, over concerns about the quality of its work?

>>><https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/25/politics/biden-shut-down-trump-effort-coronavirus-chinese-lab/index.html><<<;;

Ben Gittleston

ABC News | The White House

Cell/Signal/WhatsApp: (b)(6)

Office: (b)(6)

Twitter: @bgittleston

<RE: Following up with one thing / Re: Response to Your Inquiry About Origins of COVID-19.eml>

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Sent Date:	2021/05/26 12:45:48
Delivered Date:	2021/05/26 12:45:49

From:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6) (b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) (b)(6)
	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6) (b)(6)
To:	Desautels, Eric (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: COVID study briefing for SFRC Staff
Date:	2021/06/09 01:29:11
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

We can take the pen and add some additional information. (b)(6) reminded me that Eliot was copied on emails related to the effort before I became involved. I involved the interagency when I found out as a way to have outside input and engage them in the process.

I don't know that Eliot did anything related to the effort, but he did know about it. My recollection is that he knew Asher from a previous working relationship which is why Asher reached out to him.

(b)(5) Thanks - Laura

Sent from [Workspace ONE Boxer](#)

On June 8, 2021 at 6:22:03 PM EDT, Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) wrote:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

See attached for the possible start of the BCL. Who should have the pen?

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 5:19 PM
To: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6); Turner, Bruce I (b)(6); Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
Subject: RE: COVID study briefing for SFRC Staff

Hi Alex (b)(5)
 (b)(5)

A classified call would be ok.

Best - Laura

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 8, 2021 1:13 PM
To: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6); Desautels, Eric (b)(6); Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Subject: COVID study briefing for SFRC Staff

Afternoon Everyone,

SFRC staff has requested a briefing on the COVID origins work here in AVC. (b)(5)
 (b)(5)

Below are the questions that I think we need answers to and those asked by SFRC to A/US

Kang. (b)(5)
 (b)(5)

Before officially tasking anything to a larger group, are there any questions you would add/edit/drop?

General questions we need answers to:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Questions from SFRC:

1) Did you (Kang) have a role in this investigation? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

2) Is the investigation on COVID origins still ongoing? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3) Is the report finished? What documents exist on the findings? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

4) Is AVC investigating whether there was a CBW violation? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

5) Was the intel community involved? If yes, what was their role? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

6) What was the interagency role? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

7) Do you personally know the people named in the article? What can you say about their character? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

8) Do you know where these people involved in the investigation are now? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

9) What was Ford's role? Is ISN involved in this? Is (b)(6) still at State? How was he utilized in the investigation? (b)(5)

(b)(5); (b)(6)

(b)(5) Chris

Ford.

10) Did Jenkins meet with these individuals, correspond with them, or give them instructions? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

11) How would you characterize the COVID origins investigation? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

<Briefing Points.docx>

Sender:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	Desautels, Eric (b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Sent Date:	2021/06/09 01:29:10
Delivered Date:	2021/06/09 01:29:11

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
CC: Turner, Bruce (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Contract support to AVC FO/VPO
Date: 2021/02/10 19:04:00
Priority: Normal
Type: Note

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Ok – many thanks, (b)(6) Sounds good. You had mentioned us doing our own searches previously, and we welcome it. I'll talk to the team tomorrow at our staff meeting about scheduling a training session with (b)(6). Best - Laura

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 2:00 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Cc: Turner, Bruce (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Contract support to AVC FO/VPO

Laura,

I don't have a copy of the contract and don't have access to it. (b)(5)
 (b)(5) I've learned that (b)(6)
 (b)(6) has access to a program on INRIS that can be set to automatically run very detailed searches for information on all the topics that the Bureau works. What this means is that VPO, working with (b)(6) can set up a search profile for offices and action officers specific to their topics. All the AO will need to do is periodically check the results of the automatic search and review items of interest. (b)(6) can work with AOs to refine the search parameters as topics change. The AO can save the relevant responses into a separate file for ease of reference. This means that VPO will facilitate the search process, but each office and AO will use their own account and control the results. We're happy to set up a demonstration anytime you are ready. I think you'll find this program very helpful.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 11:22 AM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)
Subject: Contract support to AVC FO/VPO

(b)(6)

Hi [redacted] Last week we discussed two additional steps in resolving the COVID-related issue and I wanted to follow up with you. First, we talked about you getting a copy of the FO contract. Second, we talked about developing an SOP about support that VPO could provide in the future. Have you had any luck getting a copy of the contract? If so, would you mind sharing it?

(b)(5)

I saw your note about the Hill asking for briefings on undefined topics. (b)(5)

(b)(5); (b)(6)

Please let me know if it would be helpful to have another meeting. Best - Laura

Laura J. Gross
Director, CBW Affairs

U.S. National Authority, CWC
AVC Bureau, Department of State

Sender:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6) (b)(6)
Recipient:	Turner, Bruce I (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent Date:	2021/02/10 19:04:35
Delivered Date:	2021/02/10 19:04:00

From:	(b)(6)
	Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
CC:	(b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Additional question
Date:	2021/06/11 21:43:15
Priority:	Normal
Type:	Note

Laura,

This may not be as exact as you want. Not sure we can provide the specificity that you're looking for.

(b)(5); (b)(6)

(b)(5)

Hope this helps,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 5:20 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6); Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Additional question

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

Thanks again for the slides. We have one more question that requires an answer:

(b)(5)

Thanks – Laura

(b)(5)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) >

Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 8:35 AM

To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6); Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Subject: RE: 2 additional full copies of the material provided to Ned Price and the 6 slide February 19 briefing

Laura,

We're in the process of printing the documents now. We'll get them to you as soon as possible.

Answers to your questions:

(b)(5); (b)(6)



Hope this helps,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State



(b)(6)



From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, June 11, 2021 6:10 AM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)

Subject: Re: 2 additional full copies of the material provided to Ned Price and the 6 slide February 19 briefing

(b)(6)

Hi [redacted] No worries, I expected you were sleeping, as I wish I was doing. Best - Laura

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On June 11, 2021 at 5:11:08 AM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Laura,

We're working this. Sorry I didn't respond last night.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)
Director, AVC/VPO
(b)(6)

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, June 10, 2021 11:43:28 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6)
Subject: Re: 2 additional full copies of the material provided to Ned Price and the 6 slide February 19 briefing

(b)(6)

Hi [redacted] Sorry, one more question. (b)(5)
(b)(5)
(b)(5) Thanks - Laura

(b)(6)

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On June 10, 2021 at 10:46:44 PM EDT, Gross, Laura J (b)(6) wrote:

Hi [redacted] - In addition to the question below, (b)(5)
(b)(5); (b)(6)

Thanks - Laura

(b)(6)

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On June 10, 2021 at 6:24:00 PM EDT, Gross, Laura J (b)(6) wrote:

Hi [redacted] - Could you ask [redacted] to print off an additional 2 full copies of the material that was provided to Ned Price, along with the February 19 briefing? We need to take it to the Hill on Monday, so if he could

print it tomorrow it would be much appreciated. We would also appreciate an electronic copy, so we can email it to (b)(6) who is joining Alex and me at the meeting on Monday. (b)(6) did not have the exact documents you provided me.

Many thanks - Laura

Laura J. Gross
Director
Office of Chemical and Biological Weapons Affairs
Department of State

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Gross, Laura J (b)(6) (b)(6)
	Bell, Alexandra F (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent Date:	2021/06/11 21:43:12
Delivered Date:	2021/06/11 21:43:15

From:	(b)(6)
To:	
Subject:	FW: Pompeo-led effort to hunt down Covid lab theory shut down by Biden administration over concerns about quality of evidence - CNNPolitics
Date:	Tue, 25 May 2021 23:47:00 +0000

(b)(6), do you guys have lines on this for (b)(6) tomorrow?

><https://www.cnn.com/2021/05/25/politics/biden-shut-down-trump-effort-coronavirus-chinese-lab/index.html><

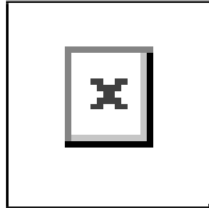
Pompeo-led effort to hunt down Covid lab theory shut down by Biden administration over concerns about quality of evidence

Washington (CNN) — [President Joe Biden](#)'s team shut down a closely-held State Department effort launched late in the Trump administration to prove the coronavirus originated in a Chinese lab over concerns about the quality of its work, according to three sources familiar with the decision.

The existence of the State Department inquiry and its termination this spring by the Biden administration -- neither of which has been previously reported -- comes to light amid renewed interest in whether the [virus could have leaked out](#) of a Wuhan lab with links to the Chinese military. The Biden administration is also facing scrutiny of its own efforts to determine if the Chinese government was responsible for the virus.

Those involved in the previously undisclosed inquiry, which was launched last fall by allies of then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, say it was an honest effort to probe what many initially dismissed: that China's biological weapons program could have had a greater role in the pandemic's origin in Wuhan, according to two additional sources.

But the inquiry quickly became mired in internal discord amid concerns that it was part of a broader politicized effort by the Trump administration to blame China and cherry-pick facts to prove a theory.



[Why scientists are suddenly more interested in the lab-leak theory of Covid's origin](https://cdn.cnn.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/210511235602-who-team-in-wuhan-0202-large-169.jpg)

The decision to terminate the inquiry, which was run primarily out of the State Department's arms control and verification bureau, was made after Biden officials were briefed on the team's draft findings in February and March of this year, a State Department spokesperson said. Questions were raised about the legitimacy of the findings and the project was deemed to be an ineffective use of resources, explained a source familiar with the decision.

Sources involved in the Trump-era inquiry rejected criticisms over the quality of their work and told CNN their objective had been to examine scientific research and information from the US intelligence community which backed the lab leak theory and shone more light on how it could have emerged in the lab.

Though Biden officials shut down this particular inquiry, they remain skeptical of Beijing's role in limiting investigators from accessing information that may be pertinent to the origins of the virus. US intelligence agencies continue to examine the question of whether the virus emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals or if it could have been the result of a laboratory accident.

One US intelligence report, which CNN and the Wall Street Journal recently reported on, found that several researchers at China's Wuhan Institute of Virology fell ill in November 2019 and had to be hospitalized, a new detail which has fueled the continued debate about the virus's origin. The exact nature of their symptoms remain unclear.

A State Department spokesperson confirmed work on the inquiry had stopped, saying, "Even though this discrete project has concluded, the State Department continues to work with the interagency to look into the COVID origins issue."

Origins of the inquiry

The State Department project began in late 2020, months after Pompeo and President Donald Trump first claimed that the virus could have originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology. In May 2020, Pompeo claimed there was "enormous evidence" and a "significant amount of evidence" to support the claim -- despite the US intelligence community saying there was no definitive answer as to precisely where and how the virus began transmitting.

Pompeo did not respond to CNN's requests for comment.

The inquiry also came amid a broader effort by some in the Trump administration to look for ways to blame the Chinese government for the outbreak and deflect responsibility from its own handling of the virus, which had claimed over 200,000 lives by Election Day in November.

As Trump and Pompeo regularly spoke about the "China virus," their continued suggestions that the virus originated in a lab raised concerns among some State Department and intelligence officials over what they viewed as attempts to politicize what little the US knew about the virus's origins. But those involved in the effort looked at it as more of a need to probe unanswered questions, rather than a politically motivated program.

Still, the quiet inquiry eventually became a contentious issue at the State Department during the few months it was active.

Proponents of the effort, including Pompeo himself, argued that the potential connection between the Chinese military and the pandemic needed to be investigated and that the administration was justified to include the inquiry in the State Department's ongoing and legally mandated review of countries' compliance with arms control treaties, according to four sources familiar with the matter.

Officials involved in the effort relied on scientific research as well as public and classified information to probe the lab leak theory, including looking into any possible connection between the virus and the Chinese government's biological weapons program, three of the sources told CNN.

The Chinese government is party to the major international agreements regulating biological weapons which prohibit developing, producing, transferring or stockpiling of bacteriological and toxin weapons. The US government has said that it believes China maintained an offensive biological weapons program even after joining the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention in 1984. China refutes this.

<https://cdn.cnn.com/cnnnext/dam/assets/201222105836-04-anthony-fauci-vaccine-1222-large-169.jpg>

Dr. Anthony Fauci recently said he is not convinced that Covid-19 developed naturally but last spring he said the US strongly leaned toward the idea that the virus could not have been artificially or deliberately manipulated. Officials involved in the State Department inquiry believed Fauci's initial comments last year were "baseless."

"People in the US government were working on the question of where Covid-19 came from but there was no other effort that we knew of that took the lab leak possibility seriously enough to focus on digging into certain aspects, questions and uncertainties," said David Feith, a former senior State Department official who was briefed on the efforts.

'Suspicious as hell'

Opponents of the State Department inquiry viewed the effort as alarming because those working on it appeared to actively hide their work from skeptics, two sources said.

"The way they did their work was suspicious as hell," said one former State Department official who was familiar with the effort. "They basically conducted it in secret, cutting out the State Department's technical experts and the Intelligence Community, and then trying to brief certain senior officials in the interagency on their 'tentative conclusions' even before they'd let the department leaders they worked for know an investigation was underway at all."

During the final weeks of the Trump administration, when senior officials in the department who had been shielded from the efforts learned about how far the inquiry had gone, they pushed for a panel of outside scientists to review the findings. When scientists looked at the data, during a 3-hour long meeting in early January, the evidence collected up until that point appeared inconclusive and misguided, two sources said.

"It smelled like they were just fishing to justify pre-determined conclusions and cut out experts who could critique their 'science,' " said the former official familiar with the effort. "The reason for all this became clear when real scientists finally got a chance to see their analysis, and [the inquiry's] 'statistical' case fell apart."

The briefing prompted then-Assistant Secretary Chris Ford to send a memo to a handful of department officials, including top leadership, urging caution about the group's findings.

Ford called aspects of the analysis "gravely flawed" and urged officials "against suggesting that there is anything inherently suspicious -- and suggestive of biological warfare activity -- about People's Liberation Army involvement at WIV on classified projects."

'Dissenting perspectives on purpose'

But those involved in the project -- who said they relied on the intelligence community throughout their inquiry -- defended their efforts.

"Our scientific consulting process involved dissenting perspectives on purpose," said one source involved in the project. "It was a meeting with deliberative disagreement."

"There was a total misunderstanding of the entire process. We used experts and one specific team of experts but there was no consensus in the IC," said a second former official working on the effort. "The IC was saying this is a public health issue and this has nothing to do with biological weapons. Well, we said, how do we know that?"

Pompeo put out [a statement](#) as the Trump administration was leaving office that said the US had determined collaboration between the Wuhan lab where Covid-19 research has been conducted on bats, and secret Chinese military projects. The process behind declassifying the intelligence in that statement took weeks, and certain details were scrubbed from the final version which was put out, sources familiar with the process told CNN. The State Department's small group looking into the lab leak theory contributed to that fact sheet, but most of its information came from the US intelligence community, sources told CNN.

When the Biden administration took office, it did not see any significant doubts in the datapoints featured in the fact sheet Pompeo put out, according to one source familiar.

The information was vetted by the intelligence community but it was also a select few datapoints from a mountain of data in what the Biden administration viewed as a deliberate effort to put more weight into the lab leak theory while they ignored information suggesting the virus spread naturally from animals to humans.

Biden administration critical of the WHO

National security adviser Jake Sullivan has been vocal in criticizing the World Health Organization's efforts thus far, which have been inhibited by the Chinese government restricting their access.

"Going forward, all countries, including China, should participate in a transparent and robust process for preventing and responding to health emergencies, so that the world learns as much as possible as soon as possible," Sullivan said in February. The State Department has echoed those calls.

The Biden administration's effort to investigate the origins of the pandemic is primarily focused on rallying pressure and support for the WHO's investigation to be transparent and fulsome, explained a Biden administration official.

The WHO, too, has said the theory needs more investigation and more access is required.

Biden national security officials have also stated publicly that the US intelligence community does not have any solid details about the origin of the virus.

"It is absolutely accurate the intelligence community does not know exactly where, when or how Covid-19 virus was transmitted initially," US Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said last month during a congressional briefing.

Despite continued calls for the need to understand what caused the Covid-19 outbreak more clearly as a way of preventing a future pandemic, the US still is far from understanding its precise origin.

"It appears we do not understand the emergence of Covid-19 any better than we did 6-9 months ago. The world needs to learn as much as possible about the earliest days of the Covid-19 pandemic to better prepare our governments, our people, and our public health institutions for the next health crisis," the State Department spokesperson said.

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	

(SBU) ADAS Gross
COVID study briefing for SFRC Staff
August 4, 2021

(b)(5)



Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5); (b)(6)

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5); (b)(6)

(b)(5)

PARTICIPANTS

Laura Gross, AVC A/DAS

(b)(6) INR

(b)(6) INR

(b)(6) ISN/BPS

SFRC

TBD

Approved: AVC – Alex Bell (OK)

Drafted: AVC/CBW – Laura Gross (b)(6), ext 7-2024

Cleared:

AVC/VPO: (b)(6) (OK)

ISN/BPS: (b)(6) (OK)

EAP/CM: (b)(6) (OK)

IO/EDA: (b)(6) (OK)

OES/IHB: (b)(6) (OK)

S/CRHS: (b)(6) (OK)

L/NPA: (b)(6) (OK)

INR/SPM: (b)(6) (OK)

T: (b)(6) (OK)

P: (b)(6) (OK)

D: (b)(6) (OK)

H: (b)(6) (OK)

C: (b)(6) (INFO)

R: (b)(6) (INFO BY RQST)

GPA: (b)(6) (INFO BY RQST)