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WHO Urges Countries to Reveal Intelligence on COVID-19 Origins After FBI Director's Statements

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In another narrative shift on the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) asked governments with intelligence on the virus to come forward, after a growing number of U.S. officials signaled that it may have resulted from a Chinese lab leak.

“If any country has information about the origins of the pandemic, it’s essential for that information to be shared with WHO and the international scientific community,” WHO

Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus [said](#) on March 3.

The request came after FBI Director Christopher Wray told Fox News last week that the bureau has determined that the COVID-19 pandemic's source was "most likely a potential lab incident in Wuhan," China. Wray's assertion comes nearly three years after claims emerged that the virus emerged from the P4 Wuhan Institute of Virology, although such assertions were downplayed or even labeled as misinformation in early 2020 by so-called fact-checkers, social media platforms, and mainstream media outlets.

The very first COVID-19 infections were recorded in late 2019 in Wuhan. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) officials have claimed that the virus was first transmitted at a wet market in the city, although a team of WHO investigators was blocked by the CCP from investigating the origins in 2021.

In his remarks last week, Tedros stressed that

the WHO didn't wish to blame any government or organization. Instead, the WHO is seeking to "advance our understanding of how this pandemic started so we can prevent, prepare for and respond to future epidemics and pandemics."

"WHO continues to call for China to be transparent in sharing data and to conduct the necessary investigations and share the results," said Tedros, who has drawn [criticism for having](#) ties with the CCP's leadership. "Until then, all hypotheses on the origins of the virus remain on the table."

Earlier on in the pandemic, the WHO came under criticism after Tedros and other officials praised the CCP for its "[transparency](#)" in dealing with COVID-19.

"What they are doing is a very, very strong measure and with full commitment," Tedros said of the regime in early 2020, weeks after the virus emerged.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, [told](#) reporters that the U.N. health organization has contacted the U.S. diplomatic mission in Geneva, Switzerland, for more information regarding the FBI director's statement.

"It remains vital that that information is shared," she said.

Wray's Remarks

In late February and in his first remarks on the COVID-19 pandemic's origins, Wray [told](#) Fox News that there's an FBI team that focuses explicitly on biological threats that fall into the "wrong hands," including a "hostile nation-state."





This aerial view shows the P4 laboratory (L) on the campus of the Wuhan Institute of Virology in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, on May 13, 2020. (Hector RETAMAL /AFP via Getty Images)

“You’re talking about a potential leak from a Chinese government-controlled lab that killed millions of Americans,” Wray said of the virus, “and that’s precisely what that capability was designed for.”

Wray noted that the bureau’s investigation is still classified and that he can’t share many details. He also said the CCP hasn’t been cooperative with U.S. efforts.

“I will just make the observation that the Chinese government, it seems to me, has been doing its best to try to thwart and obfuscate the work here,” the FBI director said. “The work that our U.S. government and close foreign partners are doing. And that’s unfortunate for everybody.”

Wray's concession last week marks the second time in recent days that a federal government agency has publicly backed the lab leak hypothesis. A Department of Energy report also backed the assessment that the virus may have emerged from the Wuhan lab.

Amid the reports, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said last week that President Joe Biden supports "a whole of government" attempt to find the origin of the virus.

"We're just not there yet," he told reporters. "If we have something that is ready to be briefed to the American people and the Congress, we will do that."

At about the same time, Republicans and Democrats in the Capitol indicated that they are focusing on threats they believe the CCP poses to U.S. national security. They'll hold a series of hearings in the coming days about the Chinese regime's use of spy balloons, its stance toward

the Russia–Ukraine conflict, its perceived belligerent behavior toward Taiwan, and the Chinese-owned social media app TikTok.