

United States Senate

May 24, 2021

COMMITTEES:
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
JUDICIARY
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

I write to follow-up on my March 1, 2021 letter with lingering concerns about the validity of the World Health Organization's (WHO) investigation into the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior reports appear to confirm that the WHO had "little power to conduct a thorough, impartial examination."¹ On May 13, 2021, in a letter published in *Science*, a group of 19 prominent scientists called for a deeper investigation of the two primary hypotheses: 1) the virus began to spread after jumping from infected animals to humans; and 2) the virus was accidentally released from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology and began spreading in the human population.²

Among other issues, these scientists call into question the China-WHO joint study's consideration of the two main hypotheses stating, "Only 4 of the 313 pages of the report and its annexes addressed the possibility of a laboratory accident." This fact is deeply concerning in light of recent media reports that, "[t]hree researchers from China's Wuhan Institute of Virology became sick enough in November 2019 that they sought hospital care."³

In light of these reports and my continued concerns, please respond, in writing, to the following questions:

1. According to reports, the WHO asked the U.S. government to recommend three experts for the China-WHO joint investigation team. Although they were not ultimately selected, another U.S. scientist was selected for the team.
 - a. Please name the three scientists recommended by the U.S., and articulate the WHO's reasoning for not choosing these individuals.

¹ https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-china-hunt-covid-origins-11616004512?mod=hp_lead_pos10

² <https://science.sciencemag.org/content/372/6543/694.1>

³ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/intelligence-on-sick-staff-at-wuhan-lab-fuels-debate-on-covid-19-origin-11621796228>

2. Beijing has refused to share critical raw data on the initial cases of COVID-19 in China. Has Beijing provided the U.S. with that data? If not, please explain why.
3. The China–WHO joint investigation stated that they “lacked expertise and access to investigate a potential lab leak.”⁴ What will the administration do to insure that competent, impartial experts are involved in future investigations?
4. WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic said the organization was not mandated to do a forensic audit. Why was this the case? Will your administration insist on a fulsome forensic audit for future outbreaks?

I request the courtesy of a reply by June 14, 2021.

Sincerely,



Marsha Blackburn
U.S. Senator

⁴ https://www.wsj.com/articles/who-china-hunt-covid-origins-11616004512?mod=hp_lead_pos10ibid