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*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

# FBI director says covid-19 ‘most likely’ originated from lab incident

By Anumita Kaur and Dan Diamond

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FBI director Christopher A. Wray said Tuesday that covid-19 “most likely” originated from a lab incident in Wuhan, China, his first public comments on the agency’s position on the origins of the coronavirus. They come as Republican leaders have reignited probes into the possible source of the pandemic, with GOP House leaders holding a roundtable Tuesday to review the government’s response and scheduling a hearing for next week to delve into the virus’s origins.

“The FBI has for quite some time now assessed that the origins of the pandemic are most likely a potential lab incident in Wuhan,” Wray said Tuesday in an interview with Fox News. “The Chinese government, seems to me, has been doing its best to try and thwart and obfuscate the work here, the work that we’re doing, and that’s unfortunate for everybody.”

Wray’s statement follows a Department of Energy analysis for a new government-wide intelligence assessment, first reported by the Wall Street Journal, that a lab accident in Wuhan was most likely responsible for the deadly pandemic.

Energy Department officials, who said they had “low confidence” in the new conclusion after changing their previous stance, maintain that there is still no definite conclusion on the virus’s origins, and that the virus wasn’t developed as a bioweapon. Among the nine entities investigating the pandemic’s origin, most still favor the theory that the virus naturally spread from animals to humans, with, as The Post reported, only the FBI concluding that the cause of the pandemic was a lab accident, a view that the agency held with “moderate” confidence.

But the Energy Department’s report galvanized congressional Republicans, many of whom have vowed to install greater oversight on the issue and argued that Chinese officials may have covered up the incident.

Tuesday’s roundtable kicked off a lengthy series of meetings and hearings led by House Republicans, aiming to probe the virus’s origins and decisions by U.S. leaders, with another hearing next week.

“At the end of this process, our goal is to produce a product, hopefully bipartisan, based on knowledge and lessons learned,” said Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio), the panel’s chair.

The panel invited three professors — Stanford’s Jay Bhattacharya, Harvard’s Martin Kulldorff and Johns Hopkins’ Marty Makary — who joined the GOP in largely criticizing the government’s actions, such as the Biden administration’s vaccine mandate.

**Dan Diamond** 

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At today’s [@COVIDSelect](#) roundtable — kicking off the GOP’s planned probes into the virus — witnesses were asked their thoughts on the lab-leak theory, given recent news and U.S. funding of virus research.

Hopkins doctor [@MartyMakary](#): “It’s a no-brainer that it came from the lab”

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Several lawmakers and witnesses also broached the topic of the lab-leak theory, suggesting that it had been wrongly dismissed as a conspiracy.

“It’s a no-brainer that it came from the lab,” Makary said, suggesting that Chinese leaders and other scientists had been involved in a coverup.

Democrats during the roundtable said that “mistakes” transcended political parties.

Rep. Robert Garcia (D-Calif.) reflected on his struggles as mayor of Long Beach, Calif., in 2020 “trying to get tests, trying to get support from the Trump administration.”