



CIA SAYS COVID-19 'MORE LIKELY' CAME FROM CHINESE LAB - THE EPOCH TIMES

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Photo: President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for CIA Director, John Ratcliffe, testifies before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on Capitol Hill in Washington on Jan. 15, 2025. Madalina Vasiliu/The Epoch Times

The CIA has found a lab origin “more likely” for the COVID-19 pandemic, joining two other top U.S. agencies that have previously made the assessment.

“CIA assesses with low confidence that a research-related origin of the COVID-19 pandemic is more likely than a natural origin based on the available body of reporting,” a spokesperson for the agency said in a Jan. 25 statement to media outlets.

The agency emphasized that it has “low confidence” in the assessment and still considers it plausible that the virus came from nature.

The CIA will “continue to evaluate any available credible new intelligence reporting or open-source information that could change CIA’s assessment,” the spokesperson said.

The assessment marks a shift in stance from the intelligence agency that has for years refrained from making a conclusion on the issue, citing lack of information.

John Ratcliffe, the new CIA director, has long supported the lab leak possibility, telling a congressional [panel](#) in April 2023 that it’s the “only explanation” for the disease that has since killed millions around the globe.

After gaining Senate [confirmation](#), Ratcliffe told Breitbart News that addressing the pandemic origin would be a “day one” priority for him.

“I’ve been on record, as you know, in saying I think our intelligence, our science, and our common sense all really dictates that the origins of COVID was a leak at the Wuhan Institute of Virology,” he said, adding that he plans to look at intelligence and get the agency “off the sidelines.”

The international efforts to get more clarity about the source of the virus from China have made little headway.

In late December 2024, the World Health Organization repeated a [request](#) for Beijing to share COVID-related data.

“This is a moral and scientific imperative,” the organization said. “Without transparency, sharing, and cooperation among countries, the

world cannot adequately prevent and prepare for future epidemics and pandemics.”

In the years since the pandemic broke out from central Chinese city Wuhan, Beijing has silenced on-the-ground [citizen](#) journalists, doctors, and academics who sought to shed light on the [issue](#) or criticize the regime’s handling of the virus.

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.), the Senate Intelligence Committee chairman, said he was pleased to see the CIA’s assessment.

“I’ve said from the beginning that COVID likely originated in the Wuhan labs. Communist China covered it up and the liberal media covered for them,” he said in a Jan. 25 [statement](#) “Now, the most important thing is to make China pay for unleashing a plague on the world.”

The FBI and the Energy Department have previously assessed that the virus had originated from a lab. The State Department, under the first Trump administration, said in a [fact sheet](#) that several researchers had fallen sick with COVID-like symptoms in the autumn of 2019, months before the pandemic exploded to a global scale.

Leaked Chinese documents that The Epoch Times [obtained](#) also show that Chinese hospitals were treating patients with COVID-like symptoms months before the regime’s official timeline.

“The Chinese government, it seems to me, has been doing its best to try to thwart and obfuscate the work here—the work that we’re doing, the work that our U.S. government and close foreign partners are doing. And that’s unfortunate for everybody,” then-FBI Director Christopher Wray [said](#) in early 2023.