

How did the Wuhan lab leak theory go from conspiracy theory hunch to genuine national security question?

Throughout much of the pandemic, the “lab leak” hypothesis has been ridiculed by scientists as a baseless conspiracy theory, fueled by President Donald Trump in an effort to deflect attention from his administration’s botched pandemic response.

Far from dismissing the lab-leak theory, however, President Biden has told his spies to see if the previous administration’s officials, whose work some of his own skeptical aides have called tendentious and overreaching, may have been right to question the lab and conduct a thorough investigation.

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[A [fact sheet released January 15](#)] described three categories of activity that pointed to the latter scenario: the report of sick workers; [the lab’s history of research on coronaviruses in bats](#); and findings that the lab had secretly engaged “in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.”

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One of the former officials stressed that the evidence has not substantially changed, but that there are many unanswered questions.

“There are a lot of coincidences and circumstantial stuff, and the question is, when are too many coincidences too much?” another former official said. “One side of the ledger is growing, and the other isn’t.”

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