

(b)(3)



NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE COUNCIL

30 October 2023

(b)(3)

To: (U) Avril Haines, Director of National Intelligence

From: (U) (b)(3),(b)(6), National Intelligence Officer (b)(3), National Intelligence Council

Subject: (U) **IC Posture Against COVID-19 Origins Key Intelligence Gaps**

Reference: (b)(3) In response to your request for the key intelligence gaps related to COVID-19 origins and the IC's strategy to address the gaps.

(b)(3) The IC continues to seek intelligence reporting and other sources of information to narrow or close key intelligence gaps (KIG) related to the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic. All agencies view both natural and laboratory-associated origins scenarios as plausible and have focused on four KIGs aligned against both hypotheses:

- (b)(3) **KIG 1: Details About Earliest COVID-19 Cases.** Information about the earliest case data from China would help the IC narrow potential scenarios of how the first human infection was caused. For example, if the earliest cases can be geolocated outside Wuhan in areas not known to be associated with previous field research, then that would strongly suggest a natural origin hypothesis was more likely than a laboratory-associated scenario.
- (b)(3) **KIG 2: Presence of Pre-Pandemic Holdings of SARS-CoV-2 or Progenitor Virus in a Laboratory.** Information indicating that a PRC laboratory held the virus or a closely related species would be a significant factor supporting laboratory origin; although the IC would need to weigh how this information aligns with potential laboratory-related exposure routes.
- (b)(3) **KIG 3: PRC Leadership Awareness of Evidence Implicating Natural Origin or a Laboratory-Associated Event.** Information that clarifies Beijing's potential awareness at the Politburo-level or above of direct evidence supporting or excluding either hypothesis or that reveals any leadership suppression of results of internal origins investigations that they perceive would embarrass the PRC.
- (b)(3) **KIG 4: Identification of a Reservoir or Intermediate Hosts of SARS-CoV-2 or Progenitor Virus in Nature.** Identification of hosts in nature would allow the IC to better understand—and potentially narrow—candidate natural or laboratory scenarios involving those animals.

(b)(3) The IC continues to evaluate classified information and new technical data from open-source reporting to identify additional opportunities to advance collection against PRC's public health and military entities who conduct biological research as well as organizations that may have been or continue to be involved in COVID-19 origin

(U) This memorandum was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer (NIO) (b)(3). It was drafted by the National Intelligence Council and coordinated with (b)(3). Questions may be directed to the NIO on secure (b)(3)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

investigations. Although all IC agencies remain poised to answer COVID-19 taskings, current IC personnel with relevant technical or regional expertise are not singularly focused on COVID-19 origins and work the issue as part of broader portfolios, such as global biological warfare trends, public health issues, or China political and military issues. Below are highlights of specific agencies' efforts relevant to the COVID-19 origins KIGs:

(b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3) CIA will review new intelligence and open-source reporting on all four KIGs should it become available and is prepared to do the following:

- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)
- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)
- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)
- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)

(b)(3) DHS does not have any ongoing or planned production focused on COVID-19 origins. (b)(1)

(b)(3) DIA's National Center for Medical Intelligence (NCMI) continues to push COVID-19 origins requirements as part of its overall mission to target and monitor biosafety level (BSL)-3 and BSL-4 facilities as well as to enhance biosecurity and biodefense (b)(1),(b)(3)

- (b)(3) KIG 1: If new intelligence on the earliest COVID-19 cases becomes available, DIA/NCMI will review and update our assessment, as appropriate.
- (b)(3) KIG 2: NCMI remains ready to assess new or unexploited genomic sequences.
- (b)(3) KIG 3: NCMI continues to push requirements to collection streams to identify additional information about (b)(1),(b)(3) on reverse genetics systems, the use of those for vaccine-related research, and any gain of function work in coronavirus and influenza and the use of nanotechnology, synthetic biology, military-civil fusion, clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR), and pathogens for military or dual-use applications.

(b)(3)

[REDACTED]

- (b)(3) KIG 4: NCMI remains ready to assess new or unexploited genomic sequences, (b)(1),(b)(3) additional genetic data on coronaviruses from animal hosts.

(b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)

[REDACTED]

- (b)(3) (b)(3)
- (b)(3) (b)(1)
- (b)(3) (b)(3)
- (b)(3) (b)(1)

(b)(3) FBI continues to pursue, analyze, and collect new intelligence and information (b)(3),(b)(7)(E)

[REDACTED]

(b)(3) (b)(1)

[REDACTED]

(b)(3) NIC (b)(3) continues to prioritize COVID-19 origins analysis, coordinating and providing feedback to analysts and collectors to emphasize timely and robust information sharing across the (b)(3) and global health communities. The NIC will continue to facilitate communications across the IC's community of interest on COVID-19 origins as well as to host appropriately cleared outside experts for analytic outreach. The NIC remains prepared to brief or release our assessments to additional partners and to assist with the declassification and public release of related information, pending collector's approvals and leadership direction.

- (U) KIG 1: No specific action planned.
- (U) KIG 2: No specific action planned.
- (b)(3) KIG 3: NIC (b)(3) is working with regional collectors on renewing leadership requirements.

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

[Redacted]

- (U//~~(b)(3)~~) KIG 4: NIC-~~(b)(3)~~ is hosting an analytic outreach event for the IC to engage with computational biologists in November.

(b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3)

[Redacted]

- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3) [Redacted]

- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3) [Redacted]

- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3) [Redacted]

- (b)(3) (b)(1),(b)(3) [Redacted]

(U) (b)(5)

[Redacted]

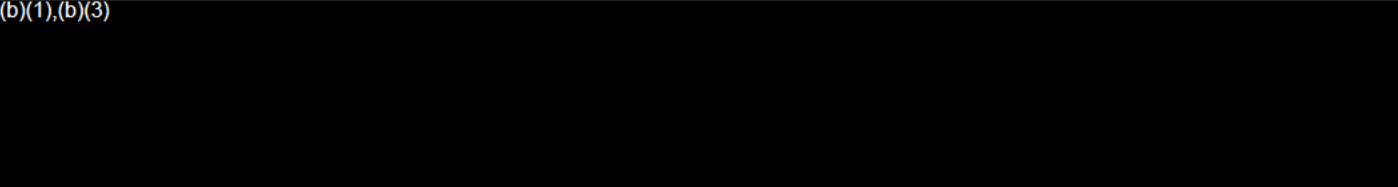
(b)(3)

[Redacted]

(b)(3)

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the top portion of the page.

(b)(1),(b)(3)

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the middle portion of the page.

(b)(3)

A small black rectangular redaction box at the bottom of the page.