



PERSPECTIVES

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Too Many Coincidences: The Likelihood That a Lab Leak in Wuhan Led to the COVID-19 Outbreak by Lt. Col. (res.) Dr. Dany Shoham

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: More than a year and a half after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the way in which its causative virus first emanated remains unclear. While new viruses appearing within humans usually derive from animal viruses, a series of exceptional coincidences in Wuhan, China prior to and during the onset of the pandemic strongly support the laboratory leak theory.

In principle, when a new virus appears in humans that has a genomic similarity to a virus existing in non-laboratory animals, it is plausible to assume that it originated from those animals. This absolutely applies to coronaviruses, and it is for this reason that SARS-CoV-2 was widely postulated to have emerged that way as well.

All that needs to be done to confirm such a hypothesis is to locate the concrete mechanism and conditions that enabled the emergence of the human virus. This kind of a priori approach inevitably endows the natural contagion theory with supremacy over any alternative unnatural contagion concept.

But in the case of SARS-CoV-2, its numerous particularities are such that other possibilities ought to be investigated independently of (and in parallel with) the natural contagion theory. In practical terms, this means that as long as there is no indisputable proof of natural contagion, the unnatural contagion theory—primarily, in this case, the theory of a lab-derived contagion—has to be pursued and soberly evaluated, regardless of any intermediary findings that are published in support of the natural contagion theory.

Such intermediary findings do not in any way affect the intrinsic rationale and likelihood of the unnatural contagion theory. Even if the scientific credibility of the natural contagion idea seems to increase at times, this has

nothing to do with the possible validity of an unnatural contagion. Such a possibility in the case of SARS-CoV-2 is wholly autonomous, residing within the intelligence sphere as well as the scientific sphere. The two concepts are not just contradictory in terms of content; they are distinct from one other in both substance and essence.

The possibility that SARS-CoV-2 originated in an unnatural contagion stems from a series of exceptional coincidental events that preceded its emergence in Wuhan, China in 2019. In combination, these multiple convergent coincidences take on a weighty complexity. In other words, there is more to be understood than the fact of the coincidences themselves. Their clustering, just prior to and during the emergence of the virus, is highly suggestive unto itself and should be tackled thoroughly.

Here are some of these coincidental events:

- The Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) is affiliated with the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Shortly after the pandemic started in Wuhan, Maj. Gen. Prof. Wei Chen, a prominent Chinese biological warfare expert affiliated with the military's Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, was appointed head of the WIV P4 biosafety level (the highest biosafety level) wing, where various SARS-like viruses are held.
- The P4 biosafety level wing was constructed under the supervision of a knowledgeable French company. China arbitrarily put an end to the collaboration with the French when construction was completed in 2017.
- The year 2017 also prefigured an upgrade and increased momentum within the scientific sphere at WIV regarding SARS-like coronaviruses. That year, a PhD thesis was completed at WIV on the "Reverse genetic system of bat SARS-like coronaviruses and function of ORFX," one main achievement of which was the establishment of "a scheme to replace the S (spike) gene without traces."
- The Wuhan Institute of Biological Products has worked with SARS-like viruses at its National Engineering Technology Research Center for Combined Vaccines, in collaboration with WIV, since 2017, and continuing into 2019. During the period of the construction of the WIV P4 wing, the center was relocated 200 meters away from it. The two facilities essentially became one.
- On February 24, 2020, a patent for a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 was filed by principal investigator Yusen Zhou, a PLA (People's Liberation

Army) scientist who worked on it with WIV. Zhou died three months later in undisclosed circumstances.

- SARS-CoV-2 was found extensively pre-adapted to humans (especially in terms of transmissibility) from the beginning of the pandemic. Specific gain of function experimentation potentially leading to a comparable pre-adapted virus was attempted and mastered at WIV in recent years, including 2019.
- A primordial, naturally man-adapted SARS-resembling virus was transmitted from bats to humans in 2012, infecting and killing miners in southwest China. That virus was subsequently “adopted” by WIV, together with related viruses isolated from the same mine. The identity and fate of those viruses have been blurred, despite the fact that they were examined and experimented on up to 2019.
- Months before the declared COVID-19 outbreak, the WIV P4 wing requested bids for major renovations to air safety and waste treatment systems in research facilities that had been operational for less than two years.
- On September 12, 2019, a vital database regarding viruses collected by WIV was removed from the institute. The removal was explained (much later) by a WIV senior scientist as a step taken “during the COVID-19 pandemic... to prevent cyber security attacks.”
- Chinese authorities claim that Patient Zero (the first infected person of the pandemic) appeared in Wuhan on December 8, 2019—yet intelligence reports and scientific findings point to some time between early October to mid-November 2019 as the real onset of the pandemic.

This partial list of coincidences should be evaluated in the context of the January 2021 US State Department Fact Sheet, which discussed a covert collaboration between WIV and the PLA that has been ongoing since at least 2017. According to the Fact Sheet, this collaboration “includ[ed] laboratory animal experiments” (i.e., mice with “humanized” lungs). During this period, WIV was supplied with rhesus monkeys from the Macaque Breeding Base in Suizhou City.

The full list of peculiar coincidences is much longer than what is listed here. The rest pertain largely to the intelligence sphere. They comprise informational (including open source) intelligence as well as estimative intelligence. The volume and substance of classified informational intelligence

pertaining to the emergence of SARS-CoV-2 are mostly unknown, at least for the time being.

Estimative intelligence might prove an essential, perhaps even crucial tool for deciphering and confirming the explanation for this remarkable clustering of events. However, we can also make common sense deductions based on circumstantial evidence. Sound deductions often serve, in fact, as force multipliers that can amplify the validity of conclusions reached by intelligence estimates.

There appears to be one logical way to comprehensively explain the described clustering of coincidences prior to and during the outbreak of the global COVID-19 pandemic: a lab leak from China's WIV. A variety of other peculiar coincidences concerning WIV that have been published in recent months accord with the same logic.

Brett Giroir, a former four-star admiral in the US Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, said: "I believe it's just too much of a coincidence that a worldwide pandemic caused by a novel bat coronavirus that cannot be found in nature started just a few miles away from a secretive laboratory doing potentially dangerous research on bat coronaviruses. Sometimes, the most obvious explanation is indeed the correct one."

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