

Business Meeting: 2/9/23

Opening remarks from Ranking Member Rand Paul

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate the fact that we've met privately and are talking about trying to work in a collaborative fashion.

One of the things that I've been examining and looking at for the last two years are the origins of the COVID virus. A million people died in America, it's said somewhere between 6 million and 15 million worldwide.

At least a substantial number of scientists now believe this leaked as an accident from a lab in China. There's a great deal of information because we fund this research in China. It actually became available in the last month that, through an unclassified report from the Intel Committee in the House, that not only do we fund civilian research, but we are funding American universities that are then funding military research in China at the Academy of Military Medical Sciences.

We can't make the Chinese cooperate, and they haven't been very cooperative, but our government should be more cooperative. They don't seem to be too interested in one Republican's request, but they might be more interested if we could get a bipartisan request.

All we're asking for is information from NIH and HHS. We sometimes will get a 250 page document where everything is redacted. The only information that's been useful that we've gotten in the last two years on this has really come from FOIA requests. So the federal government is so resistant to giving information to us that outsiders file these and a lot of information has come forward.

The two biggest things that have come forward that would have never come forward are that in 2018 Chinese researchers came to DARPA and they asked for money and they said they want to create a coronavirus, but they want to put on the coronavirus a furin cleavage site that will make it more infectious for humans. They wanted to test and see if they can do this.

Well when COVID-19 came out and they sequenced it, that's exactly what COVID-19 is. Might be a coincidence, it's not proof that they did it, but we know they were asking for money to do it in the year preceding the pandemic.

We only know this though because a whistleblower leaked this information. Somebody at DARPA or somebody that worked there, or some sleuth that got it off the internet, I don't know how, but we know it because of, in all likelihood, an illegal leak. But we can't even get it because when we ask they won't tell us these things. So we only learned about this through a leak.

The other thing we learned about was through a declassification. And you know we've had a big controversy over classified records, the current president and the previous president, caught up in this classification stuff. But when the Trump administration left, they declassified information that allowed us to know that three researchers in the Wuhan lab got very sick with flu like symptoms in November of 2019, and we think actually was maybe when the accident happened. Once again, circumstantial evidence but not secure evidence. But these two items we only know because they sort of slipped out because someone declassified one and someone leaked one illegally.

We could find out more information if our own government were more forthcoming. But my only request to the Chairman and other Democrats is if you will sign letters to our own government to release information so we could learn more about possibly if this virus was an accidental leak. Thank you.