"THEY PLAYED NO ROLE"

Select Subcommittee Republicans' Own Investigation Disproves Allegations That Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Suppressed the Lab Leak Theory Through the "Proximal Origin" Paper

Democratic Staff Report
July 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under the guise of examining the origins of the novel coronavirus, Select Subcommittee Republicans have been investigating the drafting and publication of a paper entitled "The proximal origin of SARS-CoV-2" ("Proximal Origin"), which was published in Nature Medicine in March 2020 and concluded that the novel coronavirus was likely of natural origin, as opposed to a laboratory-based incident.[1]

Select Subcommittee Republicans have used this investigation to allege that former Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) Dr. Anthony Fauci and former Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Dr. Francis Collins orchestrated a cover-up of the novel coronavirus's origins by organizing a February 1, 2020, conference call—where they purportedly pressured top virologists to suppress the lab leak theory—and then pushing for the publication of a paper that would suppress the lab leak theory to conceal their alleged role in funding research at the Wuhan Institute of Virology that caused the COVID-19 pandemic.

To manufacture the narrative of "the cover-up of the origins of COVID-19 and the potential suppression of the lab-leak hypothesis by Dr. Fauci, Dr. Collins, and other public health authorities,"[2] Select Subcommittee Republicans issued document requests to four United States-based scientists involved in the drafting and publication of "Proximal Origin." Select Subcommittee staff also conducted transcribed interviews with those individuals, namely:

- Dr. W. Ian Lipkin, Professor, Columbia University;
- Dr. Michael Farzan, Professor, Boston Children's Hospital;
- Dr. Robert Garry, Professor, Tulane University; and
- Dr. Kristian Andersen, Professor, Scripps Research.[3]

This Democratic Staff Report culminates a review of more than ten thousand pages of documents and transcribed interview testimony provided in response to Select Subcommittee Republicans' requests to the "Proximal Origin" researchers. This report concludes, based on evidence provided to the Select Subcommittee to date, that there was no cover-up of the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic and no suppression of the lab leak theory on the parts of Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins.

Findings released by Select Subcommittee Democratic Staff in this report include the following:

Contrary to Select Subcommittee Republicans' Allegations, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Made No Effort to Suppress the Lab Leak Theory During the February 1, 2020, Conference Call on the Novel Coronavirus's Origins and Had No Role in Organizing It

- Documents and testimony provided to the Select Subcommittee from the "Proximal Origin" authors confirm that former Director of the Wellcome Trust Dr. Jeremy Farrar "set up" the conference call that allegedly led to the "Proximal Origin" paper. Dr. Andersen's testimony reiterated that Dr. Farrar "completely organized" and "runs" the call. In their first subpoena of the 118th Congress, Select Subcommittee Republicans themselves publicly conceded that Dr. Farrar "organized" the call.

- In their transcribed interviews, the authors of "Proximal Origin" testified that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins attended the February 1, 2020, conference call as listeners and provided little to no input during it. Regarding Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins's participation on the call, Dr. Garry told Select Subcommittee staff: "Neither Fauci or Collins really had much to say," and Dr. Andersen told the Select Subcommittee: "I honestly don't remember Drs. Fauci or Collins even chiming in on the call itself."

Contrary to Select Subcommittee Republicans' Allegations, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Did Not Seek the Publication of "Proximal Origin" to Suppress the Lab Leak Theory and Had No Role in Leading, Overseeing, or Influencing the Drafting and Publication of the Paper

- The "Proximal Origin" authors testified that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not lead, oversee, or influence the drafting of the paper. According to Dr. Garry, they "never contacted me and, you know, gave me advice about writing the paper" and neither "did anything really to influence the paper in any way." According to Dr. Andersen, Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "played no role in the paper." In addition, when asked by Select Subcommittee staff whether Dr. Fauci or Dr. Collins tried to suppress scientific inquiry into the origins of COVID-19 in the context of the paper or in other contexts, Dr. Andersen confirmed: "Not only did they not do that, they encouraged scientific inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic."

- Communications and testimony provided by the authors demonstrate that Dr. Farrar helped to organize and facilitate the "Proximal Origin" paper. Dr. Garry and Dr. Andersen explained to Select Subcommittee staff that Dr. Farrar was recognized by the authors as a "leader" and "father figure" of the paper. In their March 5, 2023, staff memo, Select Subcommittee Republicans themselves confirmed that Dr. Farrar "led the drafting process of the paper."

Select Subcommittee Republicans' Allegations That Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "Prompted" the "Proximal Origin" Paper to "Disprove" the Lab Leak Theory, Including by Bribing the Authors of the Paper, Are Baseless Mischaracterizations of the Facts

- Dr. Andersen testified that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not influence the conclusions reached in the "Proximal Origin" paper or direct the authors to discredit the lab leak theory. He told Select Subcommittee staff: "As you can see from my emails, that Drs. Fauci and Collins, right have no influence and no play in our—played no role in the drafting of the paper itself."

- The "Proximal Origin" authors told Select Subcommittee staff that the scientific process fundamentally functions not to prove a hypothesis, but to disprove one. Dr. Andersen explained that the "Proximal Origin" authors sought to specifically "disprove" the lab leak theory because that is the theory that they initially believed to be true.

- Dr. Andersen refuted the allegation that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins offered the authors of "Proximal Origin" federal grant money in exchange for the paper's support of the natural origin theory. Dr. Andersen's testimony and publicly available documentation demonstrate that the grant at issue passed through NIH's Scientific Merit Review in November 2019—prior to the first reported cases of COVID-19 in December 2019.

I. CONTRARY TO SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE REPUBLICANS' ALLEGATIONS, DR. FAUCI AND DR. COLLINS MADE NO EFFORT TO SUPPRESS THE LAB LEAK THEORY DURING THE FEBRUARY 1, 2020, CONFERENCE CALL ON THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS'S ORIGINS AND HAD NO ROLE IN ORGANIZING IT

In his book *Spike: The Virus vs. The People – the Inside Story*, Dr. Farrar, then-Director of the Wellcome Trust, wrote:

> "My overriding concern was to get to the bottom of the origins of the virus as quickly and calmly and scientifically as possible. The first task was to discreetly gather a panel of top-class scientists to ponder aloud about what we were dealing with. I set up a conference call."[4]

All evidence received by the Select Subcommittee to date confirms that Dr. Farrar organized the February 1, 2020, conference call that allegedly led to the "Proximal Origin" paper. In fact, Select Subcommittee Republicans themselves concede that Dr. Farrar organized the conference call. One week after the Select Subcommittee concluded its transcribed interviews with the authors of "Proximal Origin," Select Subcommittee Chairman Brad Wenstrup issued a subpoena to Dr. Andersen requiring production of "[a]ll documents and communications sent or received via Slack **regarding the February 1, 2020, teleconference organized by Jeremy Farrar** regarding the origins of COVID-19."[5]

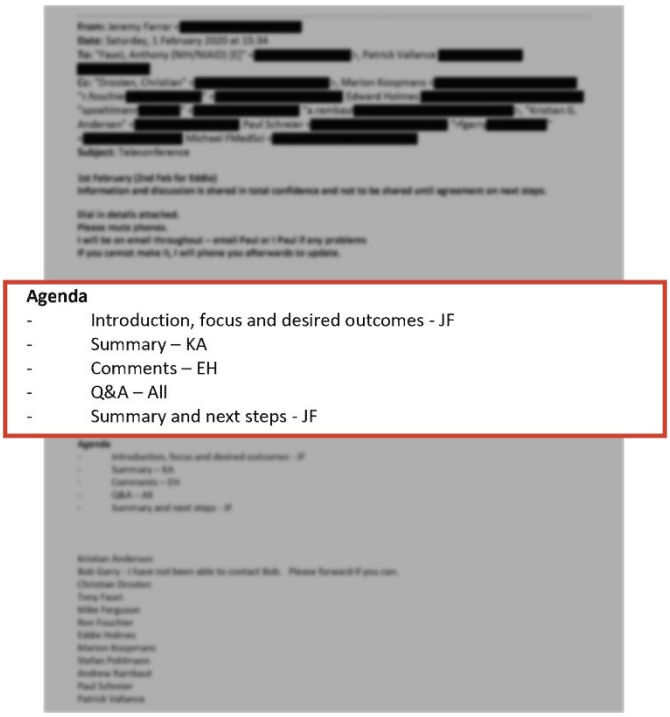
A. Dr. Farrar "Completely Organized" and "Runs" the Conference Call

In response to observations raised by Dr. Andersen in late January 2020 about certain SARS-CoV-2 genomic features, Dr. Farrar invited a group of scientists to discuss whether those features could elucidate the virus's origins. Dr. Farrar scheduled the discussion for a February 1, 2020, conference call.

Dr. Andersen told Select Subcommittee staff that Dr. Farrar "completely organized" and "runs" the conference call.

Dr. Andersen:	And that's the purpose of the conference call, which, again, is completely organized by Jeremy. Jeremy runs the call.[6]

Dr. Farrar provided the agenda and roster of attendees via email.[7] In that agenda, Dr. Farrar assigned himself the role of introducing and defining the focus of the call, setting desired outcomes for the call, and establishing next steps after the call.



Agenda

- Introduction, focus and desired outcomes - JF
- Summary – KA
- Comments – EH
- Q&A – All
- Summary and next steps - JF

Exhibit 1

In transcribed interviews with Select Subcommittee staff, Dr. Garry and Dr. Andersen testified that the call proceeded in line with the agenda Dr. Farrar provided and confirmed that the call was "Dr. Farrar's call."

Democratic Counsel:	Okay. So just sort of taking this email on its face, we have Dr. Farrar sharing the dial-in details for the call on a British line, sharing the agenda for the call, assigning himself the role of introducing everybody, defining the scope of the call, defining the focus and desired outcomes of the call, the summaries can come from Dr. Farrar, next steps come from Dr. Farrar. And Dr. Farrar is there to troubleshoot for anybody who can—is having technical problems and Dr. Farrar will call anybody who missed the call afterwards. Does that sound to you like it was Dr. Farrar's call?
Dr. Garry:	It does. It was Dr. Farrar's call.
Democratic Counsel:	Is that consistent with your recollection of the call?
Dr. Garry:	It is.[8]

Democratic Counsel:	So just sort of putting together the wholeness of that email, Dr. Farrar is laying out the agenda, making an introduction, giving the focus and the outcomes, the summary, the next steps.

Dr. Andersen:	Yes.
Democratic Counsel:	He's serving as tech support for anybody who has trouble on the call. He's going to call anybody who misses the call afterward. And he's giving the dial-in, which, from the +44, I take to be a British number.
Dr. Andersen:	Right.
Democratic Counsel:	Does it sound from all of that as if it was Dr. Farrar's call?
Dr. Andersen:	This was Dr. Farrar's call, yes.[9]

B. Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Provided Little to No Input During the Conference Call

Neither Dr. Fauci nor Dr. Collins were assigned roles on Dr. Farrar's call agenda. Testimony from Dr. Garry and Dr. Andersen corroborated that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins attended the call as listeners "to hear the scientists discuss what [Andersen] had brought up." Dr. Andersen told Select Subcommittee staff, "I honestly don't remember Drs. Fauci or Collins even chiming in on the call itself," and Dr. Garry recalled that "neither Fauci or Collins really had much to say," with the latter being "basically on and off the call."

Dr. Andersen:	And that's the purpose of the conference call, which, again, is completely organized by Jeremy. Jeremy runs the call. I honestly don't remember Drs. Fauci or Collins even chiming in on the call itself. I'm sure they probably had questions. But this is not their area of expertise and they were just there to hear the scientists discuss what I had brought up. And the discussion is primarily between myself and Andy Rambaut, Eddie Holmes, Christian Drosten, Ron Fouchier, and Marion Koopmans. Those are the main factors I remember here.[10]

Democratic Counsel:	Is there anything on here suggesting it was Dr. Fauci's call?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Certainly Dr. Fauci was an attendee on the call—we see him in the cc line but nothing in the substance of the email to suggest that Dr. Fauci played the type of organizing role that we're seeing from Dr. Farrar. Is that right?
Dr. Garry:	That is correct.

Democratic Counsel:	And I presume it would be a similar impression for Dr. Collins, nothing here suggesting that it was Dr. Collins' call.
Dr. Garry:	That's correct, too.
Democratic Counsel:	And is that consistent with your recollection of the call?
Dr. Garry:	It is.[11]

Republican Counsel:	Was Dr. Fauci actually on the call?
Dr. Garry:	He was.
Republican Counsel:	Did he say anything?
Dr. Garry:	He didn't say a whole lot.
Republican Counsel:	To your recollection—
Dr. Garry:	To my recollection.
Republican Counsel:	—what did he say?
Dr. Garry:	He just acknowledged that he was there, but the details are not really clear. He really didn't say much of substance. It was, you know—I mean, Jeremy Farrar was clearly sort of introducing and ending the meeting. It was his call to make. Neither Fauci or Collins really had much to say, other than just, you know, maybe a point of clarification here or there.
Republican Counsel:	So that was my next question. Dr. Collins is not on the roster. Was Dr. Collins on the call?
Dr. Garry:	He was on the call. What I remember was is that he was basically on and off the call, because I think he was having some kind of a social event at the time. So he did come on and off. But he, you know, he made his presence, you know, just I'm here, basically, known a couple of times.[12]

II. CONTRARY TO SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE REPUBLICANS' ALLEGATIONS, DR. FAUCI AND DR. COLLINS DID NOT SEEK THE PUBLICATION OF "PROXIMAL ORIGIN" TO SUPPRESS THE LAB LEAK THEORY AND HAD NO ROLE IN LEADING, OVERSEEING, OR INFLUENCING THE DRAFTING AND PUBLICATION OF THE PAPER

All evidence available to the Select Subcommittee demonstrates that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not lead, oversee, or influence the drafting and publication of "Proximal Origin" or

seek to suppress the lab leak theory through the paper's conclusions. To the extent that an uncredited individual organized or facilitated the paper, documents and testimony provided to the Select Subcommittee suggest that individual was Dr. Farrar.

Select Subcommittee Republicans themselves have conceded that Dr. Farrar served a leading role in organizing and facilitating "Proximal Origin." In fact, a March 5, 2023, Select Subcommittee Republican Staff Memo stated, "**Dr. Farrar led the drafting process** and in fact made direct edits to the substance of the publication."[13]

A. Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Did Not Lead, Oversee, or Influence the Drafting and Publication of "Proximal Origin"

All individuals interviewed by Select Subcommittee staff confirmed that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not lead, oversee, or influence the researchers in the drafting and publication of "Proximal Origin."

Republican Counsel:	Did Dr. Andersen or any other author imply to you at all that Dr. Fauci or Dr. Collins was involved in the paper?
Dr. Lipkin:	No.[14]

Republican Counsel:	I'm going to real quick just move to the COVID-19 pandemic starting in December of 2019, and just run through a list of people and ask if you have spoken to or emailed any of the following people since, like, December 1st, 2019, regarding COVID 19, specifically.
Republican Counsel:	Dr. Francis Collins?
Dr. Farzan:	No.
Republican Counsel:	Dr. Anthony Fauci?
Dr. Farzan:	No.[15]

Democratic Counsel:	And the second line of that email says: Jeremy, Dr. Farrar, has been amazing leader. Should be author. Is that email consistent with the idea that Dr. Farrar was a leader on this paper?
Dr. Garry:	It is.
Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Is that email consistent or inconsistent with the idea that Drs. Fauci or Collins were leaders on the paper?
Dr. Garry:	It's inconsistent.

Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Do you have any recollection of Drs. Fauci or Collins being leaders on the paper?
Dr. Garry:	I have no personal recollection—no personal recollection of that at all.[16]

The authors provided consistent testimony throughout Select Subcommittee Republican and Democratic staff questioning. Dr. Garry told Select Subcommittee staff that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "certainly never contacted me and, you know, gave me advice about writing the paper."

Republican Counsel:	You were also asked a lot about whether or not Dr. Fauci or Dr. Collins had a role similar to Dr. Farrar in this kind of oversight advisory role, and you said you didn't know and didn't have a recollection of those two having that kind of role. Is that a fair summary?
Dr. Garry:	They certainly never contacted me and, you know, gave me advice about writing the paper or, you know, anything that even came close to the level of what Dr. Farrar did. So, you know, I can't speak for the other authors, but, you know, for myself, none of those—neither of those people, you know, did anything really to influence the paper in any way.[17]

Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Did Dr. Tony Fauci organize the conference call?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Did Dr. Fauci, as far as you were able to see, play a substantive advisory role in the paper in the way that Dr. Farrar did?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Did Dr. Francis Collins organize the conference call?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Did Dr. Francis Collins play a substantive advisory role in the paper the way that Dr. Farrar did?
Dr. Garry:	He did not, no.
Democratic Counsel:	Did Tony Fauci or Francis Collins ever threaten you or bully you or intimidate you into concealing or altering the findings of your paper or in any other way?
Dr. Garry:	No.

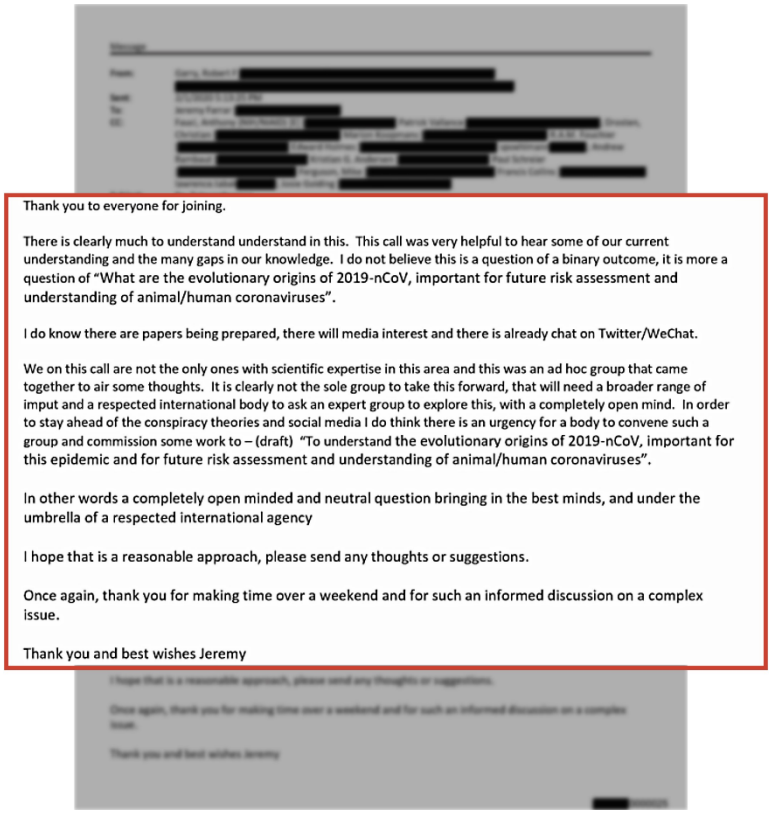
Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Did Drs. Fauci or Collins ever threaten to revoke or withhold Federal funding from you in any way?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Are you aware of any efforts by Drs. Fauci or Collins to suppress scientific inquiry into the origins of the virus?
Dr. Garry:	No.
Democratic Counsel:	Is there any version of this question that I haven't asked you yet to which the answer would somehow be yes?
Dr. Garry:	There is not.[18]

Dr. Andersen told Select Subcommittee staff that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not try to suppress scientific inquiry into the origins of the novel coronavirus, which is consistent with Dr. Fauci's public statements at the time.[19]

Democratic Counsel:	Did Drs. Fauci or Collins play a similar leadership role in the paper?
Dr. Andersen:	They played no role in the paper.
Democratic Counsel:	Okay. Did Tony Fauci or Francis Collins ever threaten you or bully you or intimidate you into concealing or altering the findings of your paper or in any other way?
Dr. Andersen:	They did not.
Democratic Counsel:	Did Drs. Fauci or Collins try to suppress scientific inquiry into the origins of COVID in the context of this paper or other contexts?
Dr. Andersen:	Not only did they not do that, they encouraged scientific inquiry into the origins of the COVID 19 pandemic.[20]

B. Dr. Farrar Helped Organize and Facilitate the Drafting of the "Proximal Origin" Paper

After the February 1, 2020, conference call, Dr. Farrar emailed the attendees with a thank you note and proposed "bringing in the best minds, and under the umbrella of a respected international agency" to "(draft)" an exploration of a "completely open minded and neutral question."[21]



Thank you to everyone for joining.

There is clearly much to understand understand in this. This call was very helpful to hear some of our current understanding and the many gaps in our knowledge. I do not believe this is a question of a binary outcome, it is more a question of "What are the evolutionary origins of 2019-nCoV, important for future risk assessment and understanding of animal/human coronaviruses".

I do know there are papers being prepared, there will media interest and there is already chat on Twitter/WeChat.

We on this call are not the only ones with scientific expertise in this area and this was an ad hoc group that came together to air some thoughts. It is clearly not the sole group to take this forward, that will need a broader range of imput and a respected international body to ask an expert group to explore this, with a completely open mind. In order to stay ahead of the conspiracy theories and social media I do think there is an urgency for a body to convene such a group and commission some work to – (draft) "To understand the evolutionary origins of 2019-nCoV, important for this epidemic and for future risk assessment and understanding of animal/human coronaviruses".

In other words a completely open minded and neutral question bringing in the best minds, and under the umbrella of a respected international agency

I hope that is a reasonable approach, please send any thoughts or suggestions.

Once again, thank you for making time over a weekend and for such an informed discussion on a complex issue.

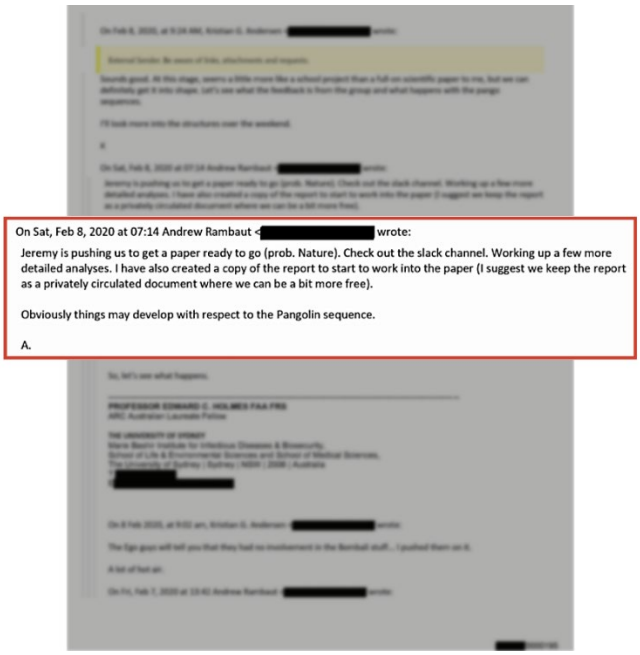
Thank you and best wishes Jeremy

Exhibit 2

According to Dr. Andersen, Dr. Farrar approached the World Health Organization to begin drafting a paper. That paper did not materialize. At the same time, Dr. Farrar continued communication with the group of researchers developing "Proximal Origin."

Dr. Andersen:	And I know that later on he does put some pressure on the WHO to, in fact, organize this . . . We keep in touch with him as part of our what later becomes the publication, and I will say this sort of like role to like, no, we really should do a publication on this because we have found again, first of all, realizing that the very early idea about an engineered virus here just does not make sense based upon the evidence available to us.[22]

In the weeks leading up to the publication of "Proximal Origin," Dr. Farrar "pushed" the authors to "get a paper ready to go."[23]



On Sat, Feb 8, 2020 at 07:14 Andrew Rambaut <[redacted] wrote:

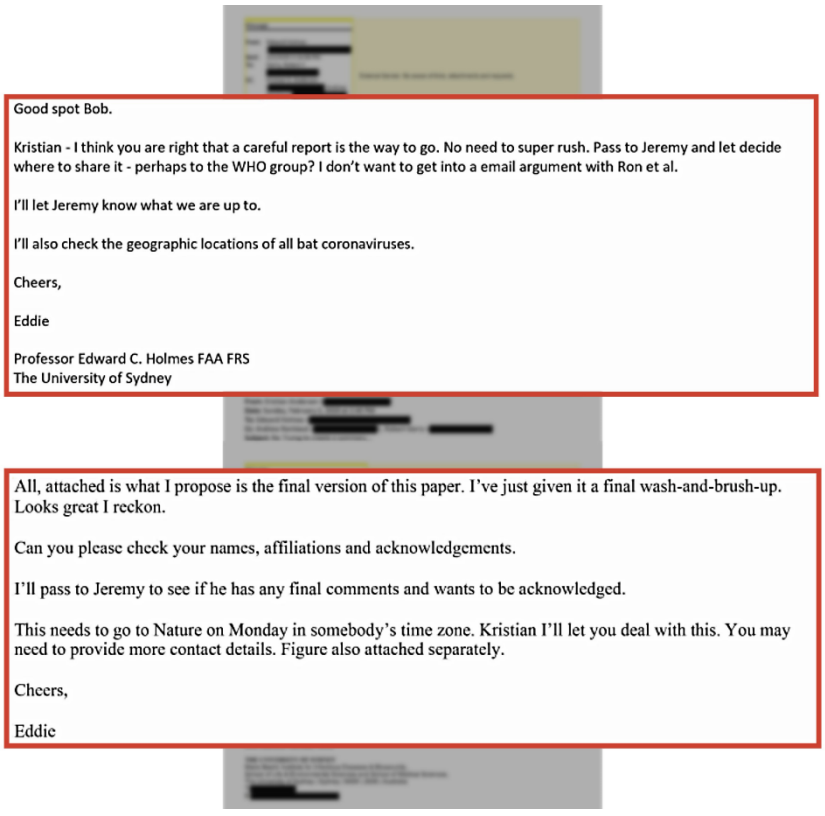
Jeremy is pushing us to get a paper ready to go (prob. Nature). Check out the slack channel. Working up a few more detailed analyses. I have also created a copy of the report to start to work into the paper (I suggest we keep the report as a privately circulated document where we can be a bit more free).

Obviously things may develop with respect to the Pangolin sequence.

A.

Exhibit 3

The authors sent Dr. Farrar drafts for his review:[24]



Good spot Bob.

Kristian - I think you are right that a careful report is the way to go. No need to super rush. Pass to Jeremy and let decide where to share it - perhaps to the WHO group? I don't want to get into a email argument with Ron et al.

I'll let Jeremy know what we are up to.

I'll also check the geographic locations of all bat coronaviruses.

Cheers,

Eddie

Professor Edward C. Holmes FAA FRS
The University of Sydney

All, attached is what I propose is the final version of this paper. I've just given it a final wash-and-brush-up. Looks great I reckon.

Can you please check your names, affiliations and acknowledgements.

I'll pass to Jeremy to see if he has any final comments and wants to be acknowledged.

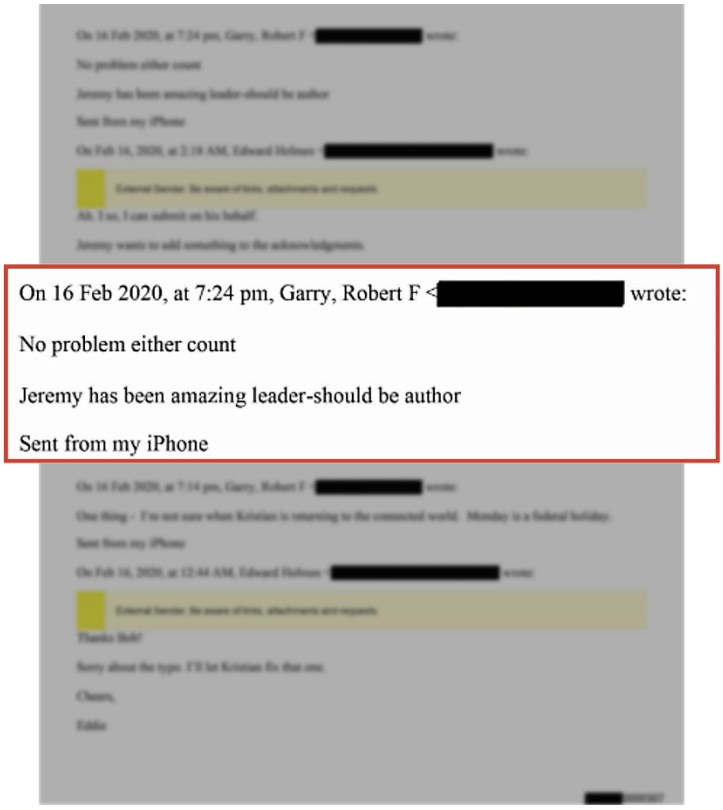
This needs to go to Nature on Monday in somebody's time zone. Kristian I'll let you deal with this. You may need to provide more contact details. Figure also attached separately.

Cheers,

Eddie

Exhibits 4 and 5

The authors likewise recognized Dr. Farrar's unique leadership role:[25]



On 16 Feb 2020, at 7:24 pm, Garry, Robert F <[redacted] wrote:

No problem either count

Jeremy has been amazing leader-should be author

Sent from my iPhone

Exhibit 6

The testimony of Dr. Garry and Dr. Andersen confirmed that Dr. Farrar helped organize and facilitate the drafting of "Proximal Origin." In their transcribed interviews, Dr. Garry and Dr. Andersen characterized Dr. Farrar as a "leader" and "father figure" of "Proximal Origin":

Democratic Counsel:	Towards the top of that page, I think we have an email from yourself. And the second line of that email says: Jeremy, Dr. Farrar, has been amazing leader. Should be author. Is that email consistent with the idea that Dr. Farrar was a leader on this paper?
Dr. Garry:	It is.[26]

Democratic Counsel:	Okay. And Dr. Farrar has in his email—this is soliciting inputs. It says interested in your—I'll give it a pause. He says: Interested in your views? And some of the things he would like to know is whether the paper is reasonably balanced, is there anything anyone disagrees with, advice on whether the paper should be published.

	So is that all consistent with the idea that Dr. Farrar acted as an intermediary for you all in terms of socializing the paper with the broader group?
Dr. Garry:	I think that's an accurate description, yes.[27]

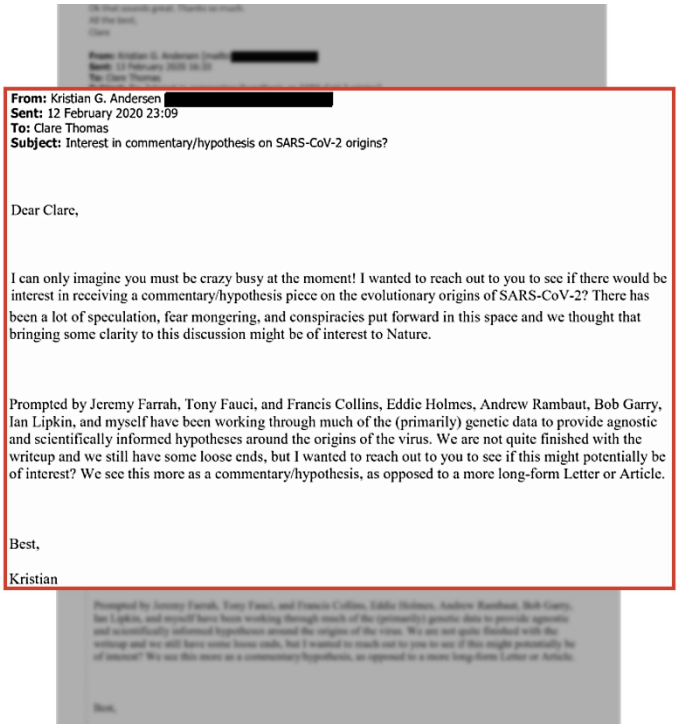
Democratic Counsel:	It's an email from Dr. Garry, and the second sentence of that email is: "Jeremy has been an amazing leader. Should be author." Is that consistent with the idea that Dr. Farrar was a leader, an amazing leader of the paper? Without suggesting there's anything wrong with that, but to the extent of who is or is not a leader.
Dr. Andersen:	Again, I mean, to the extent of a father figure helping us sort of navigate the process itself, yes.[28]

III. SELECT SUBCOMMITTEE REPUBLICANS' ALLEGATIONS THAT DR. FAUCI AND DR. COLLINS "PROMPTED" THE "PROXIMAL ORIGIN" PAPER TO "DISPROVE" THE LAB LEAK THEORY, INCLUDING BY BRIBING THE AUTHORS OF THE PAPER, ARE BASELESS MISCHARACTERIZATIONS OF THE FACTS

In the final stages of drafting "Proximal Origin," Dr. Andersen sent two emails that have since received significant scrutiny. Dr. Andersen's testimony clarified these emails and placed them in their appropriate contexts, refuting Select Subcommittee Republicans' allegation that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "prompted" the paper to "disprove" the lab leak theory. His testimony also refuted the allegation of a *quid pro quo* between the authors of "Proximal Origin" and Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins.

A. "Prompted by Jeremy Farra[r], Tony Fauci, and Francis Collins"

In an email to Clare Thomas, an editor at *Nature*, Dr. Andersen wrote:[29]



From: Kristian G. Andersen [redacted]
Sent: 12 February 2020 23:09
To: Clare Thomas
Subject: Interest in commentary/hypothesis on SARS-CoV-2 origins?

Dear Clare,

I can only imagine you must be crazy busy at the moment! I wanted to reach out to you to see if there would be interest in receiving a commentary/hypothesis piece on the evolutionary origins of SARS-CoV-2? There has been a lot of speculation, fear mongering, and conspiracies put forward in this space and we thought that bringing some clarity to this discussion might be of interest to Nature.

Prompted by Jeremy Farrah, Tony Fauci, and Francis Collins, Eddie Holmes, Andrew Rambaut, Bob Garry, Ian Lipkin, and myself have been working through much of the (primarily) genetic data to provide agnostic and scientifically informed hypotheses around the origins of the virus. We are not quite finished with the writeup and we still have some loose ends, but I wanted to reach out to you to see if this might potentially be of interest? We see this more as a commentary/hypothesis, as opposed to a more long-form Letter or Article.

Best,

Kristian

Exhibit 7

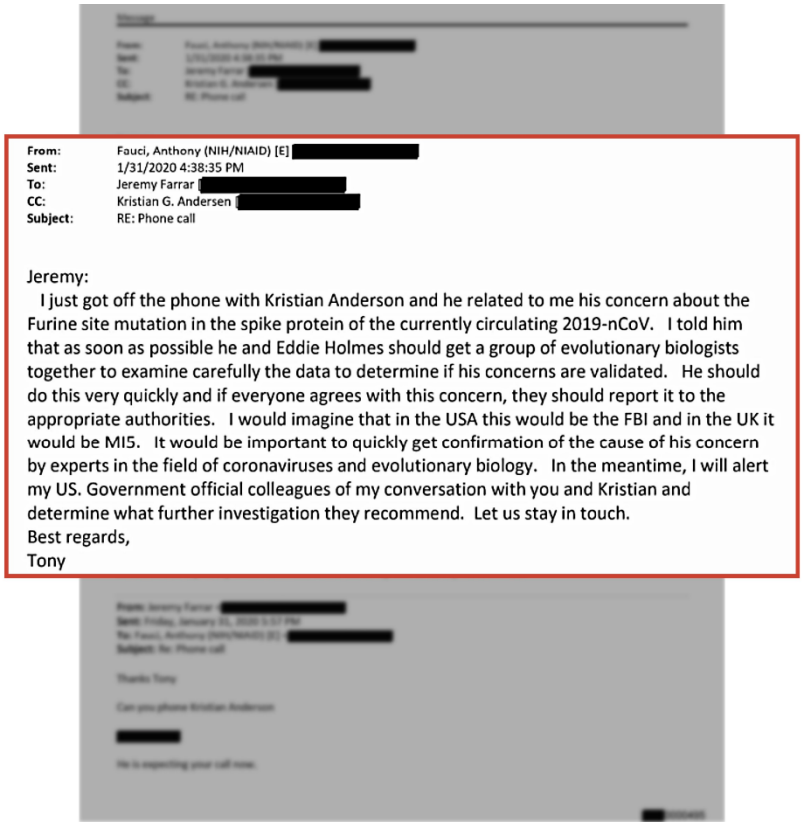
Contrary to allegations in Select Subcommittee Republicans' March 5, 2023, Staff Memo, Dr. Andersen's testimony explained that "prompted" did not mean Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins directed "Proximal Origin" to argue for a natural origin. Rather, before the February 1, 2020, conference call, Dr. Fauci suggested that Dr. Andersen and his eventual coauthors develop a paper to consider origin hypotheses. Evidence demonstrates that Dr. Fauci's suggestion, in fact, pertained to producing a paper in the event that Dr. Andersen's observations of a laboratory-based origin were validated. Dr. Fauci further suggested that those observations then be reported to intelligence and law enforcement agencies.[30]

Dr. Andersen's testimony referred to his "first conversation" with Dr. Fauci, after which Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "played no role in the drafting of the paper."

Republican Counsel:	What did you mean by "Prompted by Jeremy Farrar, Tony Fauci, and Francis Collins"?
Dr. Andersen:	I mean specifically that—again, as I've already explained, is that they prompted us to the idea of seriously considering the origin of the virus and to consider producing a paper on that. And, again, as I even say here, that to make you know, provide agnostic and scientifically informed hypotheses around the origin of the virus. That's specifically what I mean by "prompted." And, again, remember my first conversation with Tony Fauci, where he specifically suggests that if I think this came from the lab, I should consider writing a scientific paper on it.

Republican Counsel:	So that's what the—the prompt he was referencing that—
Dr. Andersen:	That's the prompt—
Republican Counsel:	—that first conversation?
Dr. Andersen:	Correct. That—that—that is referring—and as you can see from my emails, that Drs. Fauci and Collins, right, have no influence and no play in our—played no role in the drafting of the paper itself.[31]

Shortly before Dr. Farrar's February 1, 2020, conference call, Dr. Fauci emailed a summary of his conversation with Dr. Andersen to Dr. Farrar (with Dr. Andersen CC'd):[32]



From: Fauci, Anthony (NIH/NIAID) [E] [redacted]
Sent: 1/31/2020 4:38:35 PM
To: Jeremy Farrar [redacted]
CC: Kristian G. Andersen [redacted]
Subject: RE: Phone call

Jeremy:
I just got off the phone with Kristian Anderson and he related to me his concern about the Furine site mutation in the spike protein of the currently circulating 2019-nCoV. I told him that as soon as possible he and Eddie Holmes should get a group of evolutionary biologists together to examine carefully the data to determine if his concerns are validated. He should do this very quickly and if everyone agrees with this concern, they should report it to the appropriate authorities. I would imagine that in the USA this would be the FBI and in the UK it would be MI5. It would be important to quickly get confirmation of the cause of his concern by experts in the field of coronaviruses and evolutionary biology. In the meantime, I will alert my US. Government official colleagues of my conversation with you and Kristian and determine what further investigation they recommend. Let us stay in touch.
Best regards,
Tony

Exhibit 8

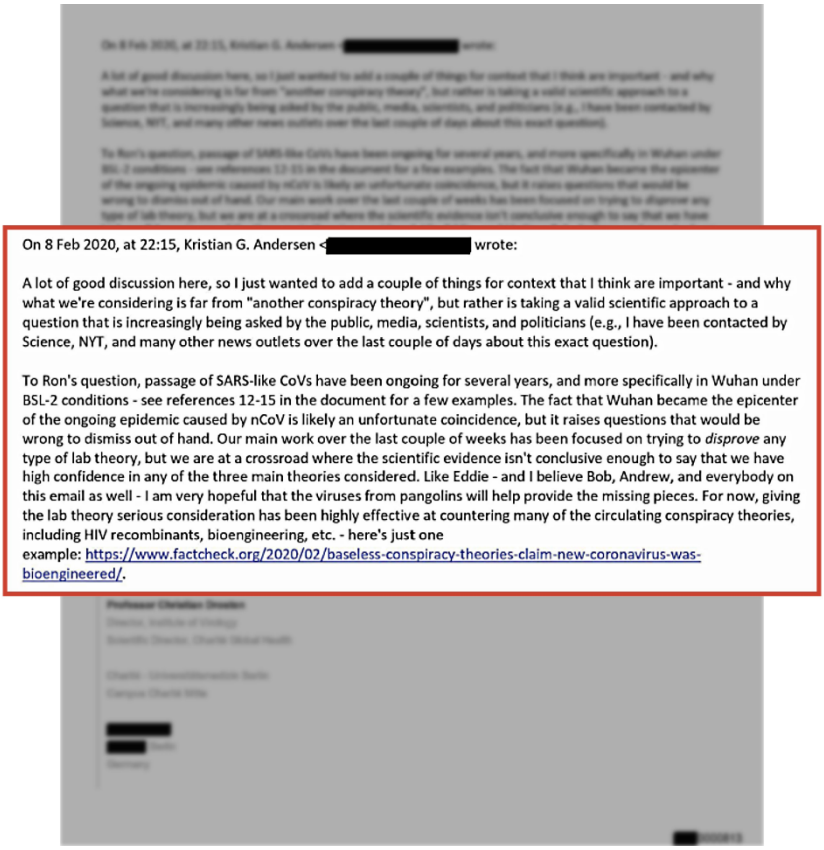
Dr. Andersen's testimony corroborated these events:

Dr. Andersen:	I have a quick phone call with Dr. Fauci . . . But following that call, essentially what I recall Dr. Fauci saying is to the effect of—and I'm paraphrasing him here—but basically saying that, look, if you think this came from a lab, then you should really consider writing a paper on it so it can be peer reviewed and judged by the community.[33]

Democratic Counsel:	Clarifying something. There has been previous discussion of your early conversation with Dr. Fauci, and Dr. Fauci said something to the effect of, okay, if you, Dr. Andersen, think that this came from a lab, you should write about that. You should publish on that. I just want to be clear. That statement from Dr. Fauci, it sounds like, was predicated specifically on the idea that the virus may have come from a lab?
Dr. Andersen:	That is correct, yes.[34]

B. "Our Main Work . . . Has Been Focused on Trying to Disprove Any Type of Lab Theory"

A second email from Dr. Andersen reads:[35]



On 8 Feb 2020, at 22:15, Kristian G. Andersen <[redacted] wrote:

A lot of good discussion here, so I just wanted to add a couple of things for context that I think are important - and why what we're considering is far from "another conspiracy theory", but rather is taking a valid scientific approach to a question that is increasingly being asked by the public, media, scientists, and politicians (e.g., I have been contacted by Science, NYT, and many other news outlets over the last couple of days about this exact question).

To Ron's question, passage of SARS-like CoVs have been ongoing for several years, and more specifically in Wuhan under BSL-2 conditions - see references 12-15 in the document for a few examples. The fact that Wuhan became the epicenter of the ongoing epidemic caused by nCoV is likely an unfortunate coincidence, but it raises questions that would be wrong to dismiss out of hand. Our main work over the last couple of weeks has been focused on trying to *disprove* any type of lab theory, but we are at a crossroad where the scientific evidence isn't conclusive enough to say that we have high confidence in any of the three main theories considered. Like Eddie - and I believe Bob, Andrew, and everybody on this email as well - I am very hopeful that the viruses from pangolins will help provide the missing pieces. For now, giving the lab theory serious consideration has been highly effective at countering many of the circulating conspiracy theories, including HIV recombinants, bioengineering, etc. - here's just one example: https://www.factcheck.org/2020/02/baseless-conspiracy-theories-claim-new-coronavirus-was-bioengineered/.

Exhibit 9

Contrary to Select Subcommittee Republicans' suggestion that Dr. Andersen's February 8, 2020, email is evidence that he and his fellow authors were seeking to discredit the lab leak theory, Dr. Andersen's testimony contextualized "disprove" to be a comment about the scientific method—a method fundamentally structured not to prove a hypothesis, but to disprove one—made within a discussion among scientists familiar with that terminology:

Dr. Andersen:	Again, I'm writing to all the scientists here. I think any scientist reading this sentence I think will understand what I'm saying, which is that the scientific method is to pose a hypothesis, which needs to be falsifiable. If a hypothesis is not falsifiable, it's, in fact, not a scientific one and that falsification of that becomes that if you can falsify the hypothesis, you have disproven it. And that's what I'm referring to here. But as I correctly state, it's that we cannot do that based on available evidence, and the reason why I single out the lab leak here is that that was, indeed, our initial hypothesis.[36]

Every "Proximal Origin" coauthor the Select Subcommittee interviewed corroborated this point.[37] And as Dr. Andersen explained, the reason the "Proximal Origin" authors sought to specifically "disprove" the lab leak theory is because that is the theory that they initially believed to be true.

C. Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins Did Not Bribe the Authors of "Proximal Origin" with Federal Grant Money

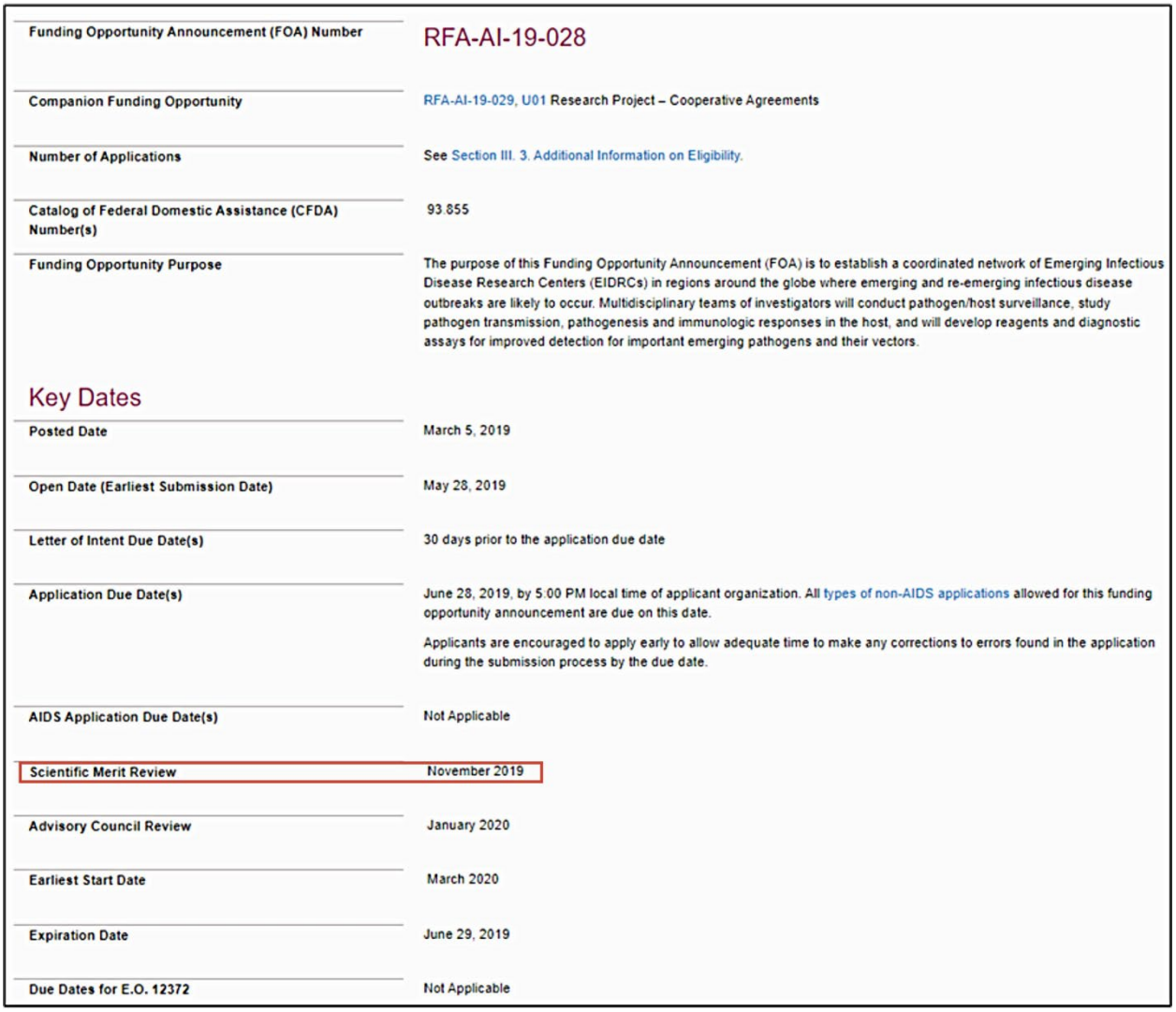
Dr. Andersen's testimony refuted the allegation that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins offered the authors of "Proximal Origin" federal grant money in exchange for the paper's support of a natural origin.

Counsel for Dr. Andersen:	I was about to ask the question. Dr. Andersen, there have been some public allegations that you have changed your opinion about the source of the virus because of a $9 million grant. Would you like to respond to that?
Dr. Andersen:	Yeah. I'll say those allegations are, of course, false. There's no connection between, for example, the drafting of proximal origin and the CREID grant that we received in 2020. That grant was written in June or submitted, applied for, in June of 2019, was reviewed and scored in November 2019, prior to the pandemic, with counsel at the NIH, in which they make funding decisions in January 2020, prior to any of the events leading, for example, to the February 1 conference call.

Counsel for Dr. Andersen:	And prior to the award of the grant, have you had any conversations with Dr. Fauci about the grant?

Dr. Andersen:	I have not, no.
Counsel for Dr. Andersen:	Have you had any conversations with Dr. Collins about the grant?
Dr. Andersen:	I have not, no.[38]

NIH's online *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts* is available for public review.[39] Grants and associated research projects can be located by a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number. The NIH guide plainly notes that the grant at issue—FOA RFA-AI-19-028—passed through NIH's Scientific Merit Review in November 2019—prior to the first reported cases of COVID-19 in December 2019:[40]



Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Number	RFA-AI-19-028
Companion Funding Opportunity	RFA-AI-19-029, U01 Research Project – Cooperative Agreements
Number of Applications	See Section III. 3. Additional Information on Eligibility.
Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number(s)	93.855
Funding Opportunity Purpose	The purpose of this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) is to establish a coordinated network of Emerging Infectious Disease Research Centers (EIDRCs) in regions around the globe where emerging and re-emerging infectious disease outbreaks are likely to occur. Multidisciplinary teams of investigators will conduct pathogen/host surveillance, study pathogen transmission, pathogenesis and immunologic responses in the host, and will develop reagents and diagnostic assays for improved detection for important emerging pathogens and their vectors.
Key Dates	
Posted Date	March 5, 2019
Open Date (Earliest Submission Date)	May 28, 2019
Letter of Intent Due Date(s)	30 days prior to the application due date
Application Due Date(s)	June 28, 2019, by 5:00 PM local time of applicant organization. All types of non-AIDS applications allowed for this funding opportunity announcement are due on this date. Applicants are encouraged to apply early to allow adequate time to make any corrections to errors found in the application during the submission process by the due date.
AIDS Application Due Date(s)	Not Applicable
Scientific Merit Review	November 2019
Advisory Council Review	January 2020
Earliest Start Date	March 2020
Expiration Date	June 29, 2019
Due Dates for E.O. 12372	Not Applicable

IV. CONCLUSION

Contrary to Select Subcommittee Republicans' allegations, no evidence provided to the Select Subcommittee to date indicates that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins orchestrated a cover-up of

the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic to suppress the lab leak theory, including through the drafting and publication of the "Proximal Origin" paper.

More than ten thousand pages of documents and transcribed interview testimony provided to the Select Subcommittee confirm that:

- Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins made no effort to suppress the lab leak theory during the February 1, 2020, conference call on the novel coronavirus's origins and had no role in organizing it;

- Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins did not seek the publication of "Proximal Origin" to suppress the lab leak theory and had no role in leading, overseeing, or influencing the drafting and publication of the paper; and

- Allegations that Dr. Fauci and Dr. Collins "prompted" the "Proximal Origin" paper to "disprove" the lab leak theory, including by bribing the authors of the paper, are baseless mischaracterizations of the facts.

[1] Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, New Evidence Resulting from the Select Subcommittee's Investigation into the Origins of COVID-19 – "The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2" (Mar. 5, 2023) (online at https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/2023.03.05-SSCP-Memo-Re.-New-Evidence.Proximal-Origin.pdf).

[2] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, *Wenstrup to Hold Hearing with "Proximal Origins" Authors* (June 27, 2023) (online at https://oversight.house.gov/release/wenstrup-to-hold-hearing-with-proximal-origins-authors%EF%BF%BC/).

[3] Two of *Proximal Origin's* authors—Dr. Edward Holmes and Dr. Andrew Rambaut—are based outside of the United States and did not receive document or transcribed interview requests from the Select Subcommittee this Congress.

[4] Jeremy Farrar and Anjana Ahuja, *Spike: The Virus vs. The People – the Inside Story* (2021) (emphasis added).

[5] Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Subpoena to Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 23, 2023) (online at https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Andersen-Kristian-subpoena_06.23.23.pdf) (emphasis added).

[6] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[7] Email from Jeremy Farrar to Anthony Fauci et al. (Feb. 1, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[8] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Robert Garry (June 9, 2023).

[9] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[10] *Id*.

[11] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Robert Garry (June 9, 2023).

[12] *Id*.

[13] Majority Staff, Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, New Evidence Resulting from the Select Subcommittee's Investigation into the Origins of COVID-19 – "The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2" (Mar. 5, 2023) (online at https://oversight.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Andersen-Kristian-subpoena_06.23.23.pdf) (emphasis added).

[14] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. W. Ian Lipkin (Apr. 6, 2023).

[15] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Michael Farzan (Apr 23, 2023).

[16] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Robert Garry (June 9, 2023).

[17] *Id*.

[18] *Id*.

[19] *White House Asks Scientists to Investigate Origins of Coronavirus*, ABC News (Feb. 6, 2020) (online at https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/white-house-asks-scientists-investigate-origins-coronavirus/story?id=68807304).

[20] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[21] Email from Jeremy Farrar to Robert Garry et al. (Feb. 1, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[22] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[23] Email from Andrew Rambaut to Robert Garry et al. (Feb. 8, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[24] Email from Edward Holmes to Robert Garry et al. (Feb. 2, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff); Email from Edward Holmes to Robert Garry et al. (Feb. 15, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[25] Email from Robert Garry to Edward Holmes et al. (Feb. 16, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[26] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Robert Garry (June 9, 2023).

[27] *Id*.

[28] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[29] Email from Kristian Andersen to Clare Thomas (Feb. 12, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[30] Email from Anthony Fauci to Jeremy Farrar (Feb. 1, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[31] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[32] Email from Anthony Fauci to Jeremy Farrar (Feb. 1, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[33] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[34] *Id*.

[35] Email from Kristian Andersen to Christian Drosten et al. (Feb. 8, 2020) (on file with Select Subcommittee staff).

[36] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[37] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. W. Ian Lipkin (Apr. 6, 2023); Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Michael Farzan (Apr 23, 2023); Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Robert Garry (June 9, 2023).

[38] Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Pandemic, Transcribed Interview of Dr. Kristian Andersen (June 16, 2023).

[39] National Institutes of Health, *About the NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts* (online at https://grants.nih.gov/funding/about-nih-guide-to-grants-and-contracts.htm) (accessed July 5, 2023).

[40] National Institutes of Health, *NIH Guide - RFA-AI-19-028* (online at https://grants.nih.gov/grants/guide/rfa-files/RFA-AI-19-028.html) (accessed July 5, 2023).