

US Using Lab Leak Theory to Cast a Shadow on China's Win Over COVID and Talks With Kabul, Prof. Says

Description



by [Ekaterina Blinova](#) via [Sputnik News](#)

Although the US probe into COVID's origins failed to find a "smoking gun" against China, US politicians are seeking to increase pressure on Beijing. The attempt to scapegoat China comes as the US is swiftly losing strategic dominance in Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific region, says Director of the Centre for Transition Sciences (CTS) Heinz Dieterich.

The latest intelligence review of COVID-19 origins "**was largely a waste of precious time**" and "doomed to fail from the start", [wrote](#) The Washington Post's Josh Rogin on 2 September, citing several US officials and lawmakers.

Rogin blames the probe's limited scope, tight deadline and China's "uncooperativeness" for its failure, while citing fears that Joe Biden's White House could "sweep the issue under the rug". He highlighted "**there's no shortage of ideas**" of how to force China to cooperate: US lawmakers are proposing to sanction China's labs, release more of the intelligence the US holds about the Wuhan labs and order the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Allergy to provide Congress with records of their collaborations on coronaviruses in China.

There are two major factors explaining why the fuss over the origins of COVID-19 is still gaining steam in Washington, says Heinz Dieterich, director of the Centre for Transition Sciences (CTS) at the Autonomous Metropolitan University in Mexico City, and coordinator at the World Advanced Research Project (WARP).

First, "the US governance system is losing the global battle for soft power-hegemony against China"; **second**, the GOP and the Democrats are bracing for a major struggle for Congress in the 2022 midterms. According to the professor, in both cases, the theory that the virus originated in the Wuhan lab and China's alleged complicity in what Washington calls the "mishandling of the pandemic" is nothing but a political tool.

China Outperforms US on COVID & Afghan 'Fronts'

The US Covid-19 debacle and the Afghanistan defeat are the clues to understanding why the US wants to scapegoat China, Dieterich notes. From 3 January 2020 to 3 September 2021, there have been 123,136 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 5,685 deaths in China, [according](#) to the World Health Organisation (WHO). Meanwhile, the US has reported over 39,900,000 cases and more than 648,000 COVID-related deaths, [according](#) to Johns Hopkins University.

This stark difference has dealt a blow to the US image, given that it is regarded as the richest country in the world, with an annual GDP per capita of 65,000 US dollars, and population of 320 million people, whereas China is still a developing country with an annual GDP p.c. of 10,000 US dollars and a population of 1.4 billion.

"You cannot honestly – and less scientifically – explain to the world this dismal difference between the US capitalist system's failure to protect its citizens and the economy through control of the pandemic, compared to the efficacy and performance of the Chinese socialist system. So you have to resort to lies and that is what the White House has been

systematically doing since the Trump administration,” the professor says.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, political chief of Afghanistan's Taliban, in Tianjin, China July 28, 2021. Picture taken July 28, 2021.

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Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi meets with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, political chief of Afghanistan's Taliban, in Tianjin, China July 28, 2021. Picture taken July 28, 2021.

The chaotic US withdrawal from Afghanistan has added fuel to the fire: after a 20 year long war against the Taliban*, Washington was forced to retreat and reconcile with the Taliban's takeover of the country. During the US hasty pull-out, the Pentagon left behind a “fair amount” of [weapons](#), [US citizens and former Afghan allies](#).

Following the US withdrawal, Abdul Salam Hanafi, deputy director of the Taliban's office in Doha, Qatar, [called](#) China Afghanistan's “trustworthy” partner, vowed to “take effective measures” to protect Chinese institutions and personnel in the country and signalled a willingness to participate in Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). China [reportedly](#) promised to keep its embassy open and “beef up relations” with Afghanistan.

For its part, [Kabul could offer joint lucrative business projects to China](#), given that the Central Asian state's reserves of lithium, gold and rare earth minerals are estimated as being worth between \$1 trillion and \$3 trillion. The US has long eyed the Central Asian state's mineral wealth with the Pentagon 2010 study dubbing Afghanistan “the Saudi Arabia

of lithium”.

Afghanistan also has an important geostrategic location. Some Republicans presume that Beijing may take over the Bagram Air Force Base, which used to be home to tens of thousands of US troops. According America’s former envoy to the United Nations Nikki Haley, Beijing may use the strategic air base in order to boost its positions in the region and exert pressure on India.

“The Vietnam-like collapse of the US imperialist military presence in Afghanistan symbolises on a world wide scale the implosion of the US strategic dominance in the Eurasian and Indo-Pacific-theaters of operation,” says Dieterich.

He believes that **it also spells “the end of the strategic design for a US global system control**, as it was planned in the ‘American Century’ protocols developed in the most important State Department think tank, the 1947 created Policy Planning Staff by George F. Kennan, the author of the US Cold War containment doctrine against the USSR.” Dieterich notes that it was then revived by the New American Century plans of the Neocons in the 1990’s under George W. Bush.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump speaks during a rally in Cullman, Alabama, U.S., August 21, 2021.

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Fight Between GOP and Dems for Congress & White House

Meanwhile, the US is preparing for a national election battle between the Democratic and Republican Party for control of the legislature in the November 2022 midterm elections, Dieterich notes. This race could probably lay the groundwork for the 2024 presidential elections, according to the academic, who does not rule out “the eventual return to power of Donald Trump”.

“The whole ‘Wuhan Lab Leak conspiracy circus’ is part of the internal power struggle between the Democrats and the Republicans,” he says. “Both political fractions of the US dominant class are jockeying to get the upper hand for the election triumph as a trampoline for the 2024 presidential elections. Trump tries to show that Biden is ‘Beijing complicit’ and Biden tries to show that he is as tough as steel with the ‘Chinese Communists’.”

Given the unfolding internal political struggle and US-China geopolitical rivalry, one cannot expect any reasonably serious answer to the origins of the COVID virus, according to Dieterich. He expects that **the US “will keep pressuring on a world level to make China the scapegoat of an absolutely natural event”**. [“absolutely natural”? — now, that’s a lie, as he contradicts himself in the next paragraph – n. editor]

At the same time, [Beijing is not legally obliged to authorise any new probe](#), either by WHO or any other international institution, on its territory, the academic notes citing China’s refusal to greenlight WHO’s “Second Phase” probe in Wuhan. According to Dieterich, if WHO is really interested in getting to the bottom of the pandemic, it should also inspect Fort Detrick, one of the principal centres of the US army [for biological warfare as well as America’s secret overseas biolabs](#).