Twitter Thread by Josh Michaud

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Beyond the scientific and epidemiological reasons to doubt the lab escape theory of pandemic origin, let's not forget that no US or allied intelligence has emerged with even a whiff of evidence that a lab was the origin by accident or intention.

To believe the lab escape theory you also have to believe the Chinese have mounted a successful, extended campaign to eliminate incriminating evidence and muzzle officials and scientists who knew or might have suspected it came from a lab.

It's a pretty big secret to hold on to, especially for a sizeable group of people that includes an international network of scientists, other workers, and families -- many of whom are not exactly in the secrecy business.

It's been 12 months now of intense pressure on Western intelligence services to uncover that secret. Doesn't have to be a taped confession, slam dunk email, or official document (though that would be handy). It could be indirect evidence or suspicious behavior.

The White House in particular leaned has heavily on US spy agencies to uncover Chinese malfeasance or error. "Trump made clear...his interest in intelligence supporting the theory the virus emerged accidentally from a Wuhan lab" https://t.co/vaZ5fY9UhD

The ODNI said the US will "rigorously examine emerging information and intelligence to determine whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan" https://t.co/TpS6tQppsS

Some of the biggest proponents of the lab leak theory have been US officials, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and senior national security staff. We can be fairly certain had any decent evidence been found it would have been leaked faster than you can say "China virus"

The Administration and Republicans more generally were motivated during an election year to deflect blame for poor pandemic response by linking the pandemic to China's actions. Evidence linking to the lab would have been gold https://t.co/TpS6tQppsS
https://t.co/twqUBqUNq9

We can safely assume a leak would have happened, because the White House/State Dept *did* leak what appears to be all the incriminating evidence they have: a cable from 2018 describing a lack of trained personnel at the Wuhan lab https://t.co/LJ4tG6X47q

For all the pressure it seems that no actual intelligence of substance has turned up. Back in April, the CIA determined that “no signs had emerged that the Chinese government believed the outbreak came from a lab.” https://t.co/vaZ5fY9UhD

There is “no signals or human intelligence backing up the speculation that the lab was the culprit. It also doesn't appear any person or neighborhood connected to the lab became sick at the start of the outbreak” https://t.co/BZpvjfxsxK

Other intelligence services also found no evidence. Australians (with decent capabilities in China): “nothing that we have that would indicate that [a lab] was the likely source”. The theory is based entirely on "open source speculation". https://t.co/LwFbHv9n1M

Five Eyes spy agencies found intelligence “contradicts theory Covid-19 leaked from lab”, concluding “it is highly likely it was naturally occurring and that the human infection was from natural human and animal interaction" https://t.co/fsSxnJfJQQ https://t.co/Qeu8jBblhV

So just be aware if you subscribe to the lab theory you also, by default, think China has successfully hidden all direct and circumstantial evidence supporting that theory from the prying eyes of many highly motivated intelligence agencies.

Possible that China buried all evidence of a lab leak? Sure, we can’t entirely discard the possibility. But the lack of relevant intelligence adds another layer of doubt, on top of the other layers, that lab escape was the source of the pandemic.

I wonder, in fact, if there exists intelligence showing the opposite: Chinese scientists/officials speaking among themselves saying they believe it WAS a natural zoonotic process and have evidence indicating as much

That kind of intelligence probably wouldn’t be leaked (at least not in the U.S.) because it would have served no political purpose. Only speculating.