

## United States Senate

May 17, 2024

The Honorable Robert P. Storch  
Inspector General  
U.S. Department of Defense Office of Inspector General  
4800 Mark Center Drive  
Alexandria, VA 22350-1500

Dear Inspector General Storch,

I commend you for launching your investigation to trace the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) financial support diverted to China's research labs, as required by Section 252 of the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act.<sup>1</sup> I write to alert you to research records and laboratory samples uncovered during my COVID-19 pandemic origins investigation that are in DoD's custody and meet the prescribed criteria for your work. Because of this, I request you expand your efforts under Section 252 to such records and samples.

The records reveal that DoD purchased thousands of biospecimens from the University of California at Davis (UC Davis) which were collected in China and other countries by EcoHealth Alliance (EcoHealth), Metabiota, and UC Davis as part of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) PREDICT pandemic preparedness research project. DoD's purchase of these biospecimens equates to indirect financial support of the pathogen collection and research in China. Importantly, records in DoD's possession may contain forensic clues and data that should be evaluated for relevance to the pandemic outbreak, if that analysis has not yet been completed.

PREDICT was a USAID epidemiological research program in which UC Davis led EcoHealth and Metabiota to identify and better characterize "pathogens of known epidemic and unknown pandemic potential" in China and other countries using "field sampling, laboratory techniques, and behavioral risk characterization."<sup>2</sup> Blood, urine, saliva and organ and other tissue samples are examples of PREDICT biospecimens collected in China during the years and months immediately preceding the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak.

Specifically, UC Davis agreed to "coordinate and direct shipments of up to 2,000 clinical biospecimens collected by the PREDICT Program in Africa and Asia with supporting metadata in sufficient volume for *in vitro* screening against biodefense pathogens" to U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID).<sup>3</sup> USAMRIID agreed to purchase the samples to evaluate against a wide array of diseases known to be fatal to humans, including Ebola, Marburg, Lassa, Rift Valley fever, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, hantavirus, pan-alphavirus, and pan-flavivirus.<sup>4</sup> USAMRIID's purchase of PREDICT biospecimens from UC Davis may qualify as

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<sup>1</sup> P.L. 118-31, Sec. 252 (Dec. 22, 2023) available at <https://www.congress.gov/118/plaws/publ31/PLAW-118publ31.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://usrtk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Predict-Award.pdf>, Pg 10.

<sup>3</sup> See attached CRADA Cover Sheet, Appendix 1, Page 10.

<sup>4</sup> See attached CRADA Cover Sheet, Appendix 1, Page 10.

indirect DoD financial support of the China pathogen collection and research that meets criteria for your probe.

PREDICT grant records obtained from USAID reveal that EcoHealth, Metabiota, and UC Davis budgeted millions of U.S. taxpayer dollars to support PREDICT work in China to commission scientists, research laboratories, supplies, and travel related to the risky pandemic pathogen collection and research. Commissioned China entities included the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Guangdong Institute of Public Health, East China Normal University, Wuhan University, Chinese Academies of Science Institute of Microbiology, and the Yunnan Institute of Endemic Diseases Control and Prevention.

Attached you will find an endorsed “CRADA - Cooperative Research & Development Agreement,” in which USAMRIID agreed to secretly purchase thousands of biospecimens from UC Davis from December 4, 2018, to December 4, 2019. The CRADA and other USAID-produced records indicate that USAMRIID and UC Davis executed this confidential agreement each year from October 2014 through March 2020.

Detailed, unredacted research records, pathogen and biospecimen data should be available to the DoD Inspector General's office from UC Davis, USAMRIID, EcoHealth, and Metabiota. Additionally, the USAID Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services OIG (HHS OIG) may be able to provide relevant records and assistance.

The biospecimen data in USAMRIID’s custody may contain important forensic clues to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak that should be evaluated if that analysis has not yet been completed. For example, evidence of SARS-like infection was collected in China well before Chinese officials notified the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019, about human infections from an unknown, novel pathogen.<sup>5</sup>

In light of the aforementioned records, I respectfully request that your probe searches for undisclosed, unpublished pathogen and biospecimen collections from research in China that are in DoD’s custody. I also request that all DoD direct or indirect expenditures that supported gain of function research in China are encompassed in your work, to include all contracts arranged for payment through other confidential agreements or CRADAs.

The federal government has not been forthcoming in revealing information related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the dangerous pathogen research it offshored to China. I hope that your efforts to unmask all DoD funding of gain of function research, can remedy those errors. Please see the attached CRADA referenced above. I look forward to following your work.

Sincerely,



Roger Marshall, M.D.  
United States Senator

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/china-health-officials-lash-out-at-who-chief-defend-search-for-origin-of-covid-19>.