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April 30, 2020

The Honorable Mark T. Esper
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Esper:

Thank you for your strong leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic and for your efforts to repatriate Americans abroad, counter adversaries like Venezuela and Iran, and keep our servicemembers safe during this unprecedented crisis. I write to bring your attention to a 2017 grant awarded by the Department of Defense (DOD) to EcoHealth Alliance Inc., an organization that has a history of collaborating with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, which reports suggest may be linked to the epicenter of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In 2017, DOD awarded a \$6.5 million grant to EcoHealth Alliance under Assistance Listing 12.351 – Scientific Research – Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction. The description of this grant is listed as “understanding the risk of bat-borne zoonotic disease emergence in Western Asia.” On March 23, 2020, EcoHealth Alliance received their final payment in the amount of \$1,509,531 for the continuation of their research, which is projected to be completed in October 2022.

As you are likely aware, on April 24, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) cut all grant funding for EcoHealth Alliance after reports circulated that the organization sent US taxpayer dollars to the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It is my understanding that the NIH grant was for research on coronaviruses spread from bats to humans. Given the similarities between EcoHealth Alliance’s NIH research and the description of the 2017 DOD grant, I respectfully request answers to the following questions:

1. Has any portion of DOD funding granted to EcoHealth Alliance or any other DOD grant recipient been given to or used in collaboration with the Wuhan Institute of Virology or any research laboratory in the People’s Republic of China (PRC)?
2. If no, what, if any, steps is DOD taking to determine whether department grant funding was utilized by the Wuhan Institute of Virology or another research laboratory in the PRC?
3. If yes, what is the DOD doing to ensure American dollars can no longer be utilized by the Wuhan Institute of Virology or another research laboratory in the PRC?

Given the Chinese Communist Party's cover up of the global threat posed by COVID-19, it is critical we ensure taxpayer dollars are not being used to support their activities. I appreciate your commitment to our national security, our servicemembers, and their families.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Guy Reschenthaler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress