

The Kim Iversen Show, 1st October 2023

How the „Covid-19 Taskforce“ Was Infiltrated From The Beginning

Kim Iversen

Okay, there are so many subjects I could cover with you but I actually want to start with Covid and the lab leak, and where you started with it in your thinking, and just really dismissing the idea of a lab leak, and then having – you partnered actually with Peter Daszak of Eco Health Alliance to figure out the origins of Covid, and then resulted ultimately in now you thinking that – do you now think it was a lab leak?

Jeffrey Sachs

Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah. Most likely.

Kim Iversen

So, let's start from the beginning. When Covid first emerged and the lab leak theory was being put out there by Donald Trump, and you thought „this is“ – and I agree, that this is – when you're pointing the finger at China, and you're trying to say „they did this to us“, that's ultimately trying to march us into a conflict with China. And so I see the fear in that, and I still worry about that a little bit, but what was your thinking in the beginning, and how did you get to the partnership with Peter Daszak of Eco Health Alliance?

Jeffrey Sachs

Well, yeah, let me give you some context. I was asked by the British Medical Journal, the Lancet, which is a global, very distinguished medical journal, to lead a commission on Covid-19, just a few months after the outbreak began. I have a lot of experience in the public policy side of pandemic diseases, and I was one of the architects of the global fund to fight AIDS, TB and malaria, and I've had a lot of engagement over the years in public health finance and other public health issues. So the Lancet kindly invited me to chair a commission, and I selected about 25 other commissioners from all over the world, people in the world of politics, in the world of public health, of virology, and many areas that are relevant for an epidemic, or in this case, a pandemic, meaning an epidemic that's everywhere in the world. And one of the issues that we needed to look into was where this virus SARS-Cov-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, where it came from? And so I instituted a number of task forces as part of this work, about ten task forces actually, and for the task force on the origins of the virus I asked Peter Daszak to head that task force and assemble a global group of scientists who would be capable of examining the issue of the origin of Covid. So this was around June 2020, about six months basically, after this pandemic had been recognised.

Kim Iversen

Can I ask you, why were you the one asked to figure this out as an economist, why did they come to you?

Jeffrey Sachs

Oh, because the purpose of the commission wasn't just to figure out the origin of the virus, the purpose of the commission was to understand the public policy implications of the first pandemic really of this kind in a hundred years. So this involves urgent financial issues, how to get vaccines or not to people, or medicines, or medical supplies, so how to address the global cooperation or coordination issues involved, and those are areas where I have expertise, and so I was asked not to be the scientist, I'm an economist, I'm a public policy specialist, and so they asked me to help on the broad issues and for each of the areas of concern, for example: how does the virus spread? I got specialists in exactly the epidemiology of the disease, some wonderful people, people from all over the world. In terms of public health measures I got leaders in public health. And on the issue of where the virus came from – one of the many issues of this commission - I assembled a group of virologists, and asked Peter Daszak to head that. Now why Peter Daszak? Peter Daszak was heading something called Eco Health Alliance, that people all came to know afterwards because it really came into the spotlight. It was an organisation that channelled research funds from the US government, tracking in many cases viruses in nature, so going out to places where bats populate the locale, for instance caves in Southwest-China in Hunan province, and looking at the kinds of viruses found there. And I thought, well this is a guy who knows a lot about nature and transmission of viruses, and so he'd be qualified to lead this group. The way that something like this works is, there is a whole task force, they make a report and then there's a commission that is above the task force that takes the commission's report and makes a final report, which is what our commission ultimately did. But around June or July 2020, my own view was that there was a little debate, and there were people saying „this is pretty strange, and this may have been engineered and came from a lab“, but I was reading the scientific literature and the main article appeared in March 2020, an article called „Proximal Origins of SARS-Cov-2“, and it appeared in *Nature & Medicine*. That's a very authoritative journal, and this was an article by authoritative scientists, and it said that this virus, overwhelmingly likely, came from nature and not from a laboratory, and it made several explanations about why it could not have come from a laboratory, and I read it and I believed it. And Tony Fauci referred to this article, and it became, I think, the most read biomedical article of the year, because this was a topic everyone wanted to know, and I read it and accepted it, and when others said this came from a lab I explained to them „you really need to read the background literature on this“, and that's pretty much where I was until the fall of 2020. And then there were discordant notes, more voices saying „you know, this really could be from a lab“, by serious scientists. Well, that's interesting in and of itself, this wasn't a slam dunk, though that first article seemed to say it was a slam dunk, they really went way far in saying, just about nearly irrefutably, „this came from nature“. But I would say still til the end of the year, and on the whole, I thought: „well, there's a debate, but most diseases do come from nature, after all, how many diseases really come from a lab?“. And it was only in 2021 that a couple of things happened to me – well, they happened to everybody. First, certain things started to get released by the Freedom of Information Act, by intrepid reporters who were not in the mainstream, by the way, but *the Intercept*, or *US Right to Know* did wonderful work. Because *the New York Times* was carrying, „this is nature, nature, nature“, and never anything to the contrary. *Science Magazine* was saying „this is

of course from nature, and so forth". But these investigative units used the Freedom of Information Act, and they started to show that there was behind the scenes debate among the experts, that we didn't know about, and this was quite a revelation, actually, that „oh, there were meetings on 1st February 2020, phone calls with Fauci and a number of scientists", and then we started to learn that things were said on those phone calls that were pretty weird, saying „you know, this really looks like it came out of a lab", or „I don't see how nature did this", or „60/40 lab/nature", not at all the public rederic, and kept hidden from us. And at that point, a very wonderful, small group of scientists took me aside and said „we need to give you a tutorial on virology, Mr Sachs, to understand what we are seeing about this", and – very smart people – and they explained at length how they viewed this, and they urged me to go back to Daszak, who was heading the task force, and ask him for his research grant from NIH, not the summary of it, but the full grant. Which sounded plausible to me, because I was starting to see things that I didn't know, such as that Tony Fauci, head of NIH's division on Infections and Allergic Disease, NIAID, was also the head of biodefence for the US – woah! I didn't know that! That's something pretty interesting, that the US Defence Department was putting huge amounts of money through Tony Fauci's unit – well, that raised some question marks. And then, pointing out to me some articles by some virologists all associated with Daszak and others, that said already back in 2005/2006 that Coronavirus was obviously a target for biowarfare, and we needed biodefence, and starting to talk about how this kind of virus could be manipulated as a vector in biowarfare, I said „okay, that's pretty interesting". But then they said to me „you know, this group is doing dangerous research, it's manipulating these viruses – go look at the research". And they showed me the summary, which was posted, but said „go ask Daszak for the full proposal". And when I did ask Daszak, I was blown away by his answer. Because he said to me „Oh Jeff, I can't give you the full proposal, my lawyers say I can't give that to you". And I said „What? Your lawyers? We're a transparent commission, we're trying to investigate this, what do your lawyers have to do with this?". „Oh no, no, no, no, well, this is a under Freedom of Information Act lawsuit and so forth", I said „Peter, I need to read this now. Now." And he said „No, no, I can't give that to you", and I said immediately „Well, then you can't head this taskforce, that's for sure, this is a transparent commission, we are looking for the public will, we're not tied up in lawsuits and we're not going to be tied up in lawsuits. So I told him to step aside and he did, but he remained on the commission but not on that taskforce for a little while. And two more things happened. One was that the rest of that taskforce attacked me, you know, „some foe of science", and „how dare you", and „Sachs, you ignorant, reckless fool, you're buying into this conspiracy theory stuff", and very nasty, from people that I've known for a long time, but the second thing was far more interesting. Which was another Freedom of Information Act, release came, and lo' and behold, the people on the task force are co-investigators with Daszak and they didn't even tell me after I'd asked them repeatedly „do you have any conflict of interest?" – so suddenly I see „My God, this is really bad behaviour. I ask you straightforwardly „do you have any conflict?", they didn't lie, they never answered me until this came out. But they yelled at me. Okay, I don't care about that, except for the fact that the behaviour was disgusting and unprofessional. I immediately disbanded that whole task force. And then the biggest thing happened. The biggest thing of all for all of us. That a whistleblower posted a research proposal on the Defence Department website, of a proposal that had come from Daszak's group, and the scientists associated with him, called the „Diffuse Project Proposal". This is extremely interesting and it gets to the core of the whole issue. And the point is the following: what makes SARS-Cov-2 so infectious, far more infectious than its relative, the original SARS virus? Because the SARS virus which broke out 2003/2004 was put out for a basic reason. It didn't become a pandemic, it was scary, but it was controlled because it wasn't so infectious. And in fact people had to be sick for a long time before they could even transmit it to

other people. So SARS-Cov-2 was really infectious. It had a basic reproduction number of 2.4, which means that on average each infected person of this original Wuhan variety was estimated to infect 2.4 other people. And that's why you get a chain reaction, because as long as that number is bigger than 1, even if you recover, it's 2.4 people that are following up with infection, and they're gonna each infect on average 2.4 people, and so it's a chain reaction. So why is that? And that has to do with how this SARS-Cov-2 genome attacks our cells. And one of the ways that it attacks our cells is that it has a stretch of DNA that is not only unusual in this kind of virus, never before seen in this kind of virus, and that stretch is called a furine cleavage site. And it's never been seen in a sarbecovirus, which is a SARS-like virus in this population of this species of bats. So that's why this virus was weird from the start – because what is that furine cleavage site doing? So Kim, the point is that a whistleblower released the „Diffuse Project“, people can find it online, just google „DARPA diffuse“. And the DARPA „Diffuse Project“ said something mind-boggling: it said that at Wuhan, at this Wuhan Institute of Virology, they have – and it says in the text – more than 180 previously unreported SARS-like viruses. And they're going to test them for how infective they are in humans, and they're going to examine specifically whether they have a furine cleavage site, and if they don't have one they're going to insert one as an experiment to see whether adding the furine cleavage site makes the virus more infectious. Can I say on your show „holy shit“? Because that's what this proposal is. Holy shit. What are you doing? You're going to add a furine cleavage site. Well, if you go back to SARS from 2005, it turns out to be fascinating, especially for an economist going back to learn all these things. Because this idea of the furine cleavage site as being key to whether or not a virus like this would be highly infectious was already tested back in 2005/2006, because an experiment was done originally on the SARS virus – add in a furine cleavage site and – woah, that thing infects human cells much more easily. So the furine cleavage site wasn't some completely bizarre, unknown thing newly discovered in 2020 – it was the object of fascination and interest as a key that would make a SARS-like virus highly infectious. Now think, if you're in biodefence or biowarfare, we don't even know which it is. But that becomes an object of high interest. And the fact of the matter is, there are a few labs in the United States that are part of Tony Fauci's – when Tony Fauci headed NIAID – part of his shop that he has funded heavily for a long time, that exactly were focused on the furine cleavage site. And what these scientists in the United States had done, and they're very clever, they're brilliant scientists, they had figured out how to insert this furine cleavage site, and they had – in fact, one at the University of North Carolina, who's a central figure in all of this – had figured out the following, which is another mind-boggling thing: viruses are defined by their DNA, like we are, and these viruses have 30,000 nucleotides, or base pairs, so-called. And they are RNA viruses, and they have 30,000-long sequences, and those sequences are letters. Those are the nucleotides that make up our DNA and RNA, so they're letters like A,T,G, C, and so on. And what this professor at the University of North Carolina figured out how to do, and it's absolutely ingenious, is you give him a sequence of 30,000 letters, and I mean literally just the letters – he will make a live virus from that. He can take the letters and assemble the DNA, and insert it into a cell to have it produce the rest of the machinery of the virus, recover the virus and have a real infectious virus out of a sequence of letters. And what he can also do is not only take that sequence but say, hm, I'm going to add 12 nucleotides to that 30,000-letter sequence, right in this particular place that we've been studying for many years, and those 12 nucleotides code for the furine cleavage site. And I could put that in. That's what it means in the „Diffuse Project“, to insert the furine cleavage site. So we have a scientist who is so clever that he can take the sequence of letters, turn it into a virus, make that virus as he wants. And he invented a concept as part of this, calls it the reverse genetic system, but he invented a concept of what he calls „The Consensus Virus“. And the consensus virus is: give me 20 SARS-like viruses and I'll look at the first position of

the viruses of the RNA or the DNA, the nucleotide that is the base pair, and 18 of them have a „G“ there, and two of them have an „A“ in that spot. And so the consensus is „G“, so I'm going to take the 20 viruses and I'm going to call the first place a „G“. Now I'm going to do that 30,000 times – your computer can do it quite quickly – and I'm going to take the consensus for the second position, the third position, all the way up to the 30,000 position. And I'm going to then have a sequence of letters that's 30,000 long – no actual virus in nature is exactly what I just did – but it's kind of shmooshing together ten viruses and getting the average of them. And then, because I'm really clever, because I made this reverse genetic system, I'm going to make an actual virus. Of a kind that's never been seen before. Okay. Really, truly, in my view: oh my God! Because this was unsupervised research. And this was the direct intention of this grant proposal. Bingo. Bulls eye. And then we're told the following: that was in 2018 that this proposal was made. And then we're told: that it was turned down, don't worry. And I can tell you absolutely, the fact that a grant proposal is turned down has almost zero to do whether the research is actually carried out. For a lot of grants first of all you submit a proposal to fund things you already did. I'm just telling you, you know, when you put in a grant proposal, maybe 70% – not me, but this is how this biotech world works – you've already done a lot of this research. Now you're trying to get that funded so you can do the next research, so you can get that funded with another grant. So we don't even know whether the work was done previously. But even if it's turned down, you have other grants. You have other research. You have other units. There's another unit, Rocky Mountain Lab, which is kind of wholly owned and operated by Fauci's part of NIH, and it could've done this research. And then suddenly comes a joint article by one of the people at Rocky Mountain Lab and this professor at University of North Carolina, oh, could be coincidence or could be the real deal? Who knows? We don't know for sure, but what we do know is that a few months later we have an outbreak. And the outbreak is really strange, because it has a furine cleavage site in it. And some other things that were part of the research. And it's not years after this thing, it's months after this thing. And then two more things came, if I might: they start talking about the market, the market. This is called the Huanan Market in Wuhan. But this is almost surely where the virus was being spread by shoppers sneezing in the market, rather than coming from the market, because the timing is wrong. The market outbreak occurred in December, but there's so much reason to believe that the original infection in a human was maybe in October, maybe even earlier. And there are many reasons to believe that. And then, just to finish, to bring us up to date – it's a long-winded answer – but, the scientists knew this, of course they knew this, they knew this February 1st 2020, that: holy shit, this could've been a bad mistake and we're not sure. And they didn't tell us that. They did not tell us that, they lied. And the paper, the „Proximal Origins“-paper, is almost tantamount to fraud, from what we know afterwards. I want to watch my words carefully, I'll say „tantamount“, but the authors did not tell us what they believed and what they knew. Because they could never have written a paper – not a scientific paper to say in March – that the overwhelming weight was that it was natural. And we know from slack messages now being subpoenaed and other email messages, they had lots of doubts but they went ahead. Because one of them said, „if it's from a lab we're never going to be able to prove it, so we may as well argue that it came out of nature“. But I think it's darker than that. Because I think that the idea was to hide the American role in this. Kim, it's not even a matter of pointing to China – it's a matter of the United States. The cutting edge research was US research. The assembly and re-assembly of SARS-like viruses was US research. It broke out in Wuhan, but maybe because a virus concocted in US labs and sent by filter paper to Wuhan was being tested against the bats that they held in captivity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, because one idea was to see whether the bats would be infectious to each other in the case of having a furine cleavage site in the sequence. So we don't know – to this moment – where this came from, and I'll give you three kinds of hypotheses: one is that it is natural,

but I think it very unlikely from what we know because nothing has checked out on the natural story and least of all the market place. The second is that this was made basically in the US, by the US, as part of an ongoing research programme by a lot of very clever scientists who believed everything safe and under control. And that – in the design of this – it was being tested in partnership with China, and so there's definitely a China-US partnership, that's the Daszak grants, and that it was being tested in China and accidentally was released from WIV, the Wuhan Institute of Virology. A third possibility is that the research was carried out by US, China, up to the 2018 „Diffuse Project“, it was turned down, and the Chinese went ahead basically on their own to finish the research, which is possible as well. I don't know, of the lab leak, which of those scenarios is more likely. I'm pretty sure – „sure“ is a little strong, but yeah, I'm pretty sure – of the following: that the furine cleavage site pretty surely was deliberately added to a virus, whether in North Carolina, whether in Wuhan, not sure, and that it got out. And who did it, exactly how, we don't know. But it's really wrong to say „well, this is so much more likely to be in nature“, it's really much more likely to be out of a lab. And by the way, when we say „lab leak“ it's important to understand „lab manipulation“ followed by „leak“. It's not just that it was a natural virus that escaped, but a manipulated virus, and then we've got to bring it up to date, because last week was something absolutely extraordinary: a whistleblower within the CIA has told the house oversight committee investigating this that the CIA bribed his team to conclude that this was natural, with – as the house staff said in a press release – with significant monetary incentives. In other words: the CIA bribed its own staff to continue the lying. So this is where we are. It's absolutely a dismaying story. What I can say for sure, now I'm not saying 99.9%, what I can say for sure is that Fauci lied, Francis Collins lied, the US government has lied to us. They may not be sure where it comes from, but they lied about the fact that the evidence was overwhelmingly towards the market cause.