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Fauci says Redfield's testimony of COVID call was 'unequivocally incorrect'

BY [JARED GANS](#) - 03/09/23 8:25 PM ET

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Anthony Fauci, who led much of the U.S. response to the COVID-19 pandemic, said testimony from former Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director [Robert Redfield](#) that he was excluded from a conference call about the possible origins of the virus was "unequivocally incorrect."

Fauci told Fox News Channel's [Neil Cavuto](#) in an [interview](#) on Thursday that he was not involved in deciding who would be involved in a call he took with a group of evolutionary virologists to discuss the "possibility" that the virus was "engineered."

"He is totally and unequivocally incorrect in what he's saying that I excluded him," he said. "I had nothing to do with who would be on that call."

Fauci, the former director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, made his comments in response to testimony that Redfield gave on Wednesday before a House select subcommittee investigating the COVID-19 pandemic. Republicans serving on the committee focused much of their attention on the theory that the virus escaped from a research laboratory in Wuhan, China, causing the pandemic to start.

Redfield said he believes this theory “based on the biology of the virus itself” more so than the theory that the virus naturally spread from an animal to humans.

Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.), a member of the subcommittee, asked Redfield about a meeting that Jeremy Farrar, the director of the British charity Wellcome Trust, organized of 11 top scientists from five time zones, including Fauci, to discuss the pandemic in February 2020.

She said Fauci responded to an invitation he received for it that he wanted to “keep this group really tight” and keep the discussion “in total confidence.”

Redfield testified that he had multiple conservations in January 2020 with Fauci, Farrar and Tedros Ghebreyesus, the director-general of the World Health Organization, about scientists needing to explore both hypotheses.

Malliotakis asked Redfield why he was “excluded” from the call Farrar organized, and Redfield responded that he was told that they “wanted a single narrative” and he had a different point of view about the origins of the pandemic.

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Fauci told Cavuto that he believes “it is unfortunate” that Redfield made “that absolutely incorrect statement” in a public setting. He said he did not add or remove anyone’s name from the list of who would be included in the call.

Fauci said half of the people who were present on the call believed the origin of the pandemic might have been a lab leak, making his rationale of why he thought he was excluded “invalid.”

“He’s a good guy — I’ve known him for years. I’m just really a little bit disturbed about why he said that, which was completely untrue,” he said, referring to Redfield.

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