



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 24, 2021

Case No. FL-2021-00033

Gary Ruskin
4096 Piedmont Ave. #963
Oakland, CA 94611

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

As we noted in our letter dated August 24, 2021, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State has identified an additional 10 responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that all 10 records may be released in part. The processing of your request is ongoing.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each document. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Laurel Lum, Trial Attorney, at laurel.h.lum@usdoj.gov or (202) 305-8177. Please refer to the case number, FL-2021-00033, and the civil action number, 20-cv-08415, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeanne Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeanne Miller
Chief, Programs and Policies Division
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:
- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ARMSEXP | Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c) |
| CIA PERS/ORG | Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g) |
| EXPORT CONTROL | Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c) |
| FS ACT | Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004 |
| INA | Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f) |
| IRAN | Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505 |
- (b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Personal privacy information
- (b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:
- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	PRC Narratives of COVID-19
Date:	Fri, 06 Mar 2020 06:53:16 GMT

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~~SBU~~



MRN: 20 BEIJING 454
Date/DTG: Mar 06, 2020 / 060650Z MAR 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PROP, PGOV, PREL, ECON, KPAO, KMDR, KFLU, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 20 Beijing 286
B) 20 Beijing 442
C) 20 Beijing 235
Subject: PRC Narratives of COVID-19

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary:** The PRC propaganda authorities have used several different narrative approaches to news coverage, commentary, and descriptions of China's response to COVID-19. Ensuring that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and PRC government are seen as responsive, in control, and winning against this fight are paramount in positive messages. These positive messages are mixed with neutral and negative messages as well. Neutral stories are more factual, sometimes feature World Health Organization (WHO) information, or describe action China has taken to address the epidemic. The negative stories and attribution of the blame outside of China is a shift as China seeks to rebrand itself as a global leader in the fight against COVID-19, rather than the country where it originated and spread. The COVID-19 virus continues to be intensely monitored and avidly discussed by China's active social media users. By countering negative and neutral PRC narratives with factual, transparent, and authentic information the U.S. Mission in China has successfully reached millions of Chinese netizens seeking information on COVID-19. **End Summary.**

Positive Narratives: China is in a Battle Against the Virus – and Will Win

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese state-run media pushed out many positive narratives and messages about the PRC government and CCP response to COVID-19. These positive narratives continued from earlier in the month to focus on the PRC response to the crisis and how the CCP will win the battle against the epidemic. (Ref A). These positive narratives focused on how the CCP and PRC were responding, Xi's direct role in leading the response, how the PRC is working closely with the international community

and with the WHO, and more broadly narratives that supported trust in the PRC response.

Xi Leads the Fight

3. (U) In February media outlets covered Xi's personal and direct engagement in combatting COVID-19 with photos of visits, *CCTV* coverage of Xi chairing leadership meetings on COVID-19 and focus on scientific research. By early March Chinese news outlets were widely amplifying Xi's direct engagement in combatting the epidemic. For example, on March 2, *Xinhua* covered Xi's visit to the Academy of Military Medical Sciences and the School of Medicine at Tsinghua University in Beijing. *Xinhua* reported that Xi stressed coordination in advancing scientific research on COVID-19, and his interest in vaccines, anti-bodies, medicines and fast testing kits. The PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a statement on March 2 titled, "Xi Jinping Urged Greater Efforts in Scientific Research on Novel Coronavirus Outbreak."

The CCP Cares – Leading Group for COVID 19 Response

4. (U) Media outlets have all widely amplified Premier Li Keqiang presiding over the leading group of China's COVID-19 response with multiple positive stories demonstrating how the PRC government and CCP are improving prevention and control, measures to care for staff working at the frontlines and how the central government and CCP have reacted at the most crucial moments to curb the spread of the epidemic. State-run media also pushed out daily updates with information on infection rates and new cases, with many outlets developing special landing pages or resources in online platforms to push out real-time updates. Good news stories about the PRC response in sending medical teams, building hospitals and stable food supplies were continued.

Working Closely with International Community and Sharing Vital Information

5. ~~(SBU)~~ *CCTV* and other Chinese media outlets widely repeated praise from the WHO on China's "pragmatic and flexible anti-epidemic measures." *The Paper* reported on February 26, "After completing their nine-day inspection in China, WHO experts hailed China's unprecedented responses to COVID-19 and acknowledged China's role in protecting the international community and buying time for other countries to prepare for the outbreak. On the same day, UN General Secretary Guterres also recognized China's efforts to alleviate the negative impact of COVID-19 and its contributions to mankind. Chinese media said, these remarks from WHO and the United Nations truthfully reflect the aggressiveness, speed, and transparency with which China responded to the outbreak. *Guangming Daily* commented on February 26, "It is no exaggeration to say that China's resolute and powerful preventive and control measures, and its outstanding capabilities to lead, respond, organize, mobilize, and implement could not be achieved by other countries. The effectiveness of China's prevention and control work has once again demonstrated the significant advantages of the CPC's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics."

China's Response Gave the Rest of the World Time

6. (U) *People's Daily* cited China's sense of responsibility in a February 22 op-ed saying, "the Chinese speed on the technical, resource, and infrastructure fronts saved precious time for the world to address the virus while limiting the number of countries affected to just 20. The Chinese practice established new benchmarks in global epidemic control, sharing information and working closely with the WHO and countries in an open, transparent, and responsible manner, inviting international experts and

facilitating their visits to Wuhan and elsewhere.” *Guangming Daily* opined on February 28, “the battle against COVID-19 is also a war to defend the world” and that China's response “demonstrates our major power's sense of responsibility.” Many media outlets described China’s response as “shrewd and courageous” and *Guangming Daily* said the lockdown of Wuhan minimized the spread of the virus to other countries. The op-ed claims China’s “timely information sharing saved the world precious time to rise to the epidemic.”

Neutral Narratives Still Promote PRC Goals

7. ~~(SBU)~~ More neutral narratives focused on the epidemic situation in Hubei and around China, as well as the complex issues surrounding the epidemic. Other topics including actions the PRC is taking on wild animals and markets, innovative and new responses to help combat COVID-19, stories about front line responders, and about other cities such as Beijing. Many of these neutral stories focused on actions that the PRC took to control the epidemic and commentary from official state-run outlets noted China’s reaction and response can serve as a model for other countries.

New Innovations Help with Response

8. ~~(SBU)~~ Several Chinese outlets claimed the outbreak “unleashed innovation capacity.” Articles cited AI, drones, big data platforms, and other new technologies as playing an important role in medical diagnosis, delivery of supplies, and meeting people's needs in maintaining a normal life during the crisis. (Ref B and C).

Beijing is Special

9. (U) The *Global Times* reported on February 27 that Beijing is facing mounting pressure in efforts to contain COVID-19 as new confirmed infections surged due to imported cases of infection and cluster outbreaks. Media reports said officials from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed that authorities made the capital the top priority of its epidemic prevention and control work, with measures matching those adopted in Hubei. A WeChat post from the CCP Party School on February 17 featured an article titled, “We Would Never Let Beijing Fail” and discussed the strict measures implemented in Beijing.

Trust PRC Information, Response, and Treatment

10. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese public has actively followed COVID-19 news, with special interest in stories from traditional and social media on what they can do to stay healthy, help their families, and learn from “trusted medical experts.” The CCP leveraged medical experts with established credibility, such as Zhong Nanshan, the doctor to first publicly acknowledge SARS, to convey these messages and push official narratives (Note: (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Note.)

Negative Narratives – Move the Blame

11. ~~(SBU)~~ Negative narratives ranged from disinformation and conspiracy theories to questioning U.S. data and information on cases and transmission in the United States. Even in the midst of the crisis the

official propaganda authorities, MFA spokesperson, and various state-run media organizations continued to critique the United States. Early stories talked about the U.S. "overreaction" and sending diplomats out of Wuhan, while more recent stories claimed the stock market changes in the United States were due to a panic over COVID-19 in the U.S. Other negative narratives compared COVID-19 to the flu, reacted angrily over naming conventions that linked COVID-19 to China or Wuhan, and claimed other international reactions were racist and unfair. As the epidemic spreads to more countries, these negative stories push the blame outside of China as the PRC seeks to rebrand itself as a global leader in the fight against COVID-19, rather than the country where it originated and spread.

U.S. Overreacts – Diplomatic Staff Are Safe, No Need for Bans

12. ~~(SBU)~~ The PRC response echoed in official media, social media, and from the MFA briefing podium negatively portrayed the closure of the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, the evacuation of U.S. citizens from the city, and the departure of Mission China family members due to health concerns. China portrayed U.S. screening and travel restrictions as a "ban" on Chinese from traveling to the United States, calling the U.S. response "excessive." In a key editorial on February 21 *People's Daily* said, "Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pneumonia, the WHO has repeatedly stated it does not recommend countries take any travel or trading restrictions and has called on countries to take convincing measures based on evidence. However, some countries still choose to ignore WHO's professional recommendations by taking excessive restrictive measures." *People's Daily* continued, "Such egoistic acts taken at the expense of others are not conducive to epidemic prevention and control. Rather, they have created panic, disrupted normal international exchanges and cooperation, and negatively affected global air transport market and the world economy."

13. (U) *The Paper* on March 4 opined, "it's worth noting that at the onset of the outbreak, the Trump administration was the first to evacuate expats from China and moved quickly to announce travel bans. As other countries followed suit, China was left hamstrung by what was effectively isolation, and its economy suffered. Had China decided to retaliate by banning all travel from and to the United States and imposing export controls on medical supplies such as masks and medicines, America would have been plunged into the hell of coronavirus." *The Paper* concluded, "Despite the rhetoric of gloating U.S. politicians and attacks by racist U.S. media outlets, China chose not to take advantage of America's plight. It's ridiculous to demand an apology from China given the huge sacrifices the country has made. Instead, the United States should apologize to China for its wrong deeds, and the world is indebted to China for singlehandedly slowing the spread of the virus."

14. ~~(SBU)~~ Later when other countries added restrictions, *Xinhua* opined, "recently some countries have taken necessary border restrictive measures aimed at protecting the health and security of their citizens and foreigners as well as safeguarding regional and global public health security. As long as those measures are science-based, professional and appropriate, they can be understood and accepted."

Show us the Money

15. ~~(SBU)~~ The *People's Daily* in commentary on February 27 commented that while the U.S. Department of State announced it will provide \$100 million in aid to help China and other countries in their epidemic prevention efforts China has "yet to see actual actions." The commentary said, compared to the U.S. government, U.S. businesses, friendly groups, and civil society organizations are much more active. CASS statistics show that the total aid from U.S. companies ranks first, far more than those from

other countries. On Embassy accounts, many netizens continue to ask about the U.S. response to COVID-19, U.S. donations, and specifics on aid to China and to other countries to combat COVID-19.

Americans and Those that Doubt China are Doomed to Fail

16. (U) In early March, the CCP and official media outlets directly responded to critiques of China's ability to weather the COVID-19 production impacts. American politicians that want companies to leave China are doomed to fail was one topline. While the PRC representative to the UN framed the story as "confident Beijing will meet economic goals despite virus." The PRC argued, there is no replacement of China's "highly refined, specialized, high-quality, and efficient supply chain." Media outlets also linked the response to COVID-19 as another reason to trust China's production saying China's achievements in epidemic prevention provide confidence to resume production." The *21st Century Business Herald* in an editorial on February 2 said, "While it is natural for businesses to feel concerned, some American politicians and Western media that always want companies to leave China have taken this opportunity to promote a decoupling policy. But their move is doomed to fail."

Is the U.S. Lying about COVID-19 Numbers in the United States.?

17. (SBU) Chinese media actively pushed questions about the accuracy in U.S. cases and reports of COVID-19 and the speed of the U.S. response. On March 2, the *Beijing News* featured a commentary opining the United States does not know the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S. The fact that the U.S. stock market crashed indicates the market's misgivings about epidemic control outside of China, and lack of trust in the U.S. claimed Chinese media. In addition to official media coverage, Chinese netizens actively debated and discussed information on cases and response in the United States in late February and early March. On March 2, popular comments on *Weitianxia*, a prominent international news Weibo account operated by Sina discussed the CDC release of a COVID-19 patient and testing in the U.S. for COVID-19. The *Global Times* reported on February 27 that Chinese experts said the U.S. might not be able to effectively contain the outbreak of COVID-19, as the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have different perspectives on the situation, and President Trump's priority is still the economic data and the presidential election.

18. (SBU) On March 4 *People's Daily* issued a commentary titled, "The spread of coronavirus in the United States raises concern." In the commentary *People's Daily* highlights concerns over the nursing center in Washington State, public health officials' reactions in the U.S., and claims the U.S. administration acted slowing in testing potential COVID-19 cases. Active debate and discussion on Weibo in February closely tracked and monitored news announcements in the U.S. on COVID-19 response and cases. On social media Chinese netizens criticized the U.S. CDC's measures, debating whether the U.S. system is up to the task of addressing the novel coronavirus outbreak, while also opining that Europe's decision to increase refugee admissions will further help the virus spread. As one Chinese netizen put it, "the 'glorified' countries, without exception, are caught in a panic."

Stock Market Decline Shows U.S. May Not Have Control

19. (U) The *Global Times* opined on February 27 that "panic driven by the possible spread of COVID-19 in the United States has sent the country's stock market plummeting for days." The *Global Times* said, "only actions to combat the virus, rather than words, can save the U.S. stock market from a meltdown and stop it from once again becoming the center of a global financial crisis." The *Global Times* claimed, the market selloff "revealed investor concerns over whether or not the U.S. can bring the situation

under control, particularly as the U.S. CDC confirmed the country's first possible case of community transmission."

Debunking Conspiracy Theories with Rumors

20. ~~(SBU)~~ A key editorial published in *People's Daily* on February 28 claims although the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic first appeared in China, it did not necessarily originate in China. The editorial says in contrast to cautious scientists, some Western politicians and media have made rash assertions and even conjectured a so-called biochemical war to stigmatize China. *People's Daily* continues the drumbeat of "viruses know no borders" and says it is "everyone's duty to defeat ignorance with science, smash rumors with truth, resist prejudice with cooperation, and stop 'political viruses' such as conspiracy theories from causing chaos." Also in late February, Chinese media outlets all widely amplified well-known Chinese epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan saying the epidemic first appeared in China, but it may not have originated from China. This led to active discussions by netizens guessing that Zhong implied it came from the U.S. *Global Times* highlighted the origin story as well by amplifying a joint China-WHO report on February 29. Another popular online rumor that was widely circulated on Weibo and other social media platforms was that the U.S. was responsible for making the virus as either a bioweapon or a way to limit China's rise. While Chinese official media outlets debunked many of these rumors including that the CIA creating the virus, the conversations online were not quickly censored or limited which allowed many different conspiracy theories to circulate.

21. ~~(SBU)~~ **Comment:** Despite anger online and questions about who knew what when, and how the CCP and PRC central government responded, as well as what will be covered-up, the propaganda authorities have managed to maintain a decent level of control. Positive messages on China's response, neutral factual discussion, and negative rumors have all mixed together in official media and online discussions. The CCP central story line that there is a battle and the nation must mobilize to combat COVID-19 seems to continue to have wide popular support. As the virus spreads outside of China, the CCP will continue to paint a rosy picture of the PRC response and how PRC actions helped the world and are a model for China's authoritarian rule and controlled media environment. Anti-American sentiment stirred up by the CCP about U.S. actions were met with mixed results in China. Negative stories and seeking to reframe the COVID-19 story may be part of a global power competition where China is seeking to show that their model of response is effective while actively casting doubts on the U.S. and other open, democratic countries' response.

22. ~~(SBU)~~ In February, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing has posted nearly 75 times on Chinese social media platforms Weibo and WeChat about the COVID-19 virus reaching more than 34.5 million Chinese and generating more than 748,000 engagements, showing that some Chinese audiences are ready and willing to listen to fact-based, transparent reporting provided by the United States. The top post by engagement across Department of State properties the past month was the Embassy's February 8 post on Weibo about how the Department of State assisted in shipping nearly 17.8 tons of medical supplies to China.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING [redacted] (b)(6)

Cleared By: ECON [redacted] (b)(6)

ESTH [redacted] (b)(6)

CONS [redacted] (b)(6)

PD [redacted] (b)(6)

PD [redacted] (b)(6)

Approved By: [redacted] (b)(6)

Released By: POL [redacted] (b)(6)

Info: PD: [redacted] (b)(6)

BEIJING: [redacted] (b)(6)

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Subject:	PRC Making Progress in Race to Develop a COVID-19 Vaccine
Date:	Tue, 25 Aug 2020 08:53:12 GMT

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MRN: 20 BEIJING 1512
Date/DTG: Aug 25, 2020 / 250851Z AUG 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: TSPL, PGOV, PREL, SENV, SHLH, TBIO, TPHY, SCUL, OEXC, KPAO, FDA, HHS, NSF, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: 20 SAO PAULO 390
Subject: PRC Making Progress in Race to Develop a COVID-19 Vaccine

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** Chinese biomedical companies CanSinoBIO, Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech have developed three out of six of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates worldwide that have been approved to begin phase III clinical trials, the final step required by most regulatory organizations to secure official approval for public use. Given the low rate of COVID-19 infection in China, Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech began phase III clinical trials overseas in July, making them the only two Chinese companies to enter the final phase of human testing for a COVID-19 vaccine. Despite not having yet undergone phase III clinical trials, CanSinoBIO's vaccine candidate received one-year special approval for military use from the Central Military Commission (CMC) Logistic Support Department Medical Services Directorate. Sinopharm also began to vaccinate employees of state-owned enterprises and at-risk members of the Chinese public. Some Chinese public health contacts have expressed uncertainty about the potential effectiveness of Chinese vaccine candidates, speculating the coronavirus may mutate over the fall and winter months making it more resistant to vaccine treatments. While senior PRC officials have vowed to share COVID-19 vaccines as "global public goods" – notably with low- and middle-income countries – experience gained during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic showed that high income countries negotiated advanced orders of vaccines, which crowded out low-income countries from the market. Subsequent donations from high-income countries were only made after they had covered their own populations. It remains to be seen if and how China follows through on donating PRC-produced vaccines to other countries while having to cover its own massive population. **End Summary and**

Comment.**Chinese Biomedical Companies Lead in COVID-19 Vaccine Development**

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese biomedical companies are making significant progress in global vaccine development efforts to treat COVID-19. According to the World Health Organization, eight out of over twenty vaccines for COVID-19 currently in human clinical trials around the world are being developed in China. Most of these Chinese vaccine candidates are in phase I and II of clinical trials, although three have already been approved to enter phase III, the final step required by most regulatory organizations to secure official approval for public use. To date, only six vaccine candidates worldwide are in phase III trials. [Note: Phase I trials involve groups ranging from 20 to around 100 patients to check a vaccine for negative side effects. Phase II trials include hundreds of patients who are tested to determine the safety and efficacy of the vaccine. Phase III trials contain thousands of participants who are tested to better understand the effectiveness of the vaccine, the benefits, and the range of possible adverse reactions. End Note.] Four Chinese biomedical companies relied on well-established technology to create inactivated vaccines, which contain killed virus particles meant to induce an immune response in the vaccine recipient. In addition, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was working with Chinese vaccine developer Walvax Biotechnology to explore new technology that could produce mRNA vaccines using a synthetic version of the genetic code that the coronavirus uses to form proteins designed to induce immunity.

CanSinoBIO Developed the First Chinese Vaccine Candidate

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese biomedical company CanSino Biologics Inc (CanSinoBIO) developed the first vaccine candidate against COVID-19 in China – known as Ad5-nCoV – in collaboration with the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, which is subordinate to the PLA Academy of Military Science (AMS) Academy of Military Medical Sciences (AMMS). [Note: Ad5-nCoV is a viral vector vaccine that uses a harmless virus called adenovirus type-5 (Ad5) to carry genetic material from the novel coronavirus (nCoV) into the body to induce an immune response. End Note.] PLA Major General Chen Wei, a top epidemiologist and virologist at AMMS who led the phase I clinical trial for Ad5-nCoV, reported the vaccine candidate results were encouraging and had no "serious" side effects, but admitted more research needed to be done. On March 20, Chen was reportedly the first to be injected out of 108 volunteers. Neutralizing antibodies increased significantly among the 108 participants at day 14 and peaked 28 days post-vaccination. [Note: Neutralizing antibodies are part of the body's immune response that protects against infections. End Note.] Moreover, no serious adverse events were noted within 28 days post-vaccination. However, some vaccine recipients reported mild to moderate symptoms including fever (54 percent), while patients also experienced fatigue (44 percent), headaches (39 percent), and muscle pain (17 percent). Results from phase II trials begun in April with 508 participants from Wuhan found that the Ad5-nCoV vaccine was safe and induced significant immune response of neutralizing antibodies at day 28 in the majority of recipients after a single immunization.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ At that time, CanSinoBIO still needed to broaden its testing pool to conduct phase III trials and determine the effectiveness of the vaccine before it could be licensed for public use in

China. However, the low rate of COVID-19 infections in China made it difficult to conduct large-scale domestic vaccine trials, stated Chinese public health experts. Consequently, CanSinoBio partnered with the National Research Council of Canada in May and was preparing to conduct phase III clinical trials of Ad5-nCoV with Canadian volunteers in the near future. CanSinoBio also entered discussions with Russia, Brazil, Chile, and Saudi Arabia about launching phase III human clinical trials among their populations, said CanSinoBio co-founder and executive director Qiu Dongxu on July 11. On August 9, Saudi Arabia announced phase III clinical trials on around 5,000 people would begin soon using CanSinoBio's vaccine candidate while discussions remain ongoing in the other three countries. Separately, Mexico signed a memorandum with CanSinoBio and Walvax Biotechnology to conduct human testing trials of Ad5-nCoV between September and January 2021, said Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard during an August 11 news conference. On the same day, the PRC National Intellectual Property Administration issued China's first COVID-19 vaccine patent approval to CanSinoBio for Ad5-nCoV. CanSinoBio Executive Director Qiu revealed that 40,000 volunteers would be recruited for upcoming trials and a new factory in China with the capacity to produce 100-200 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines per year by early 2021 was under construction.

Sinopharm and Sinovac Biotech Enter Phase III COVID Trials

5. ~~(SBU)~~ The state-owned China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm) and Sinovac Biotech began phase III clinical trials overseas in July, making them the only two Chinese biomedical companies to-date to enter the final phase of human testing for a COVID-19 vaccine. Sinopharm Chairman Liu Jingzhen told a state-run media outlet in late May that 180 recipients of Sinopharm's inactivated vaccine candidate, including himself, developed antibodies with a 100 percent protective rate against COVID-19 during phase I clinical trials. Following phase II clinical trials on more than 1,000 volunteers, Sinopharm released an official statement in late June saying the vaccine candidate was safe and effective with adverse reactions far lower than other vaccines undergoing trials. Phase III trials were currently underway in the United Arab Emirates with around 15,000 participants as of July 15 using two different inactivated vaccine types. Sinopharm also announced in late July an agreement with Parana Technology Institute (Tecpar) to begin vaccine trials in Brazil soon. In Bahrain, phase III clinical testing was scheduled to begin on August 10 with 6,000 volunteers over the next 12 months, reported the Bahrain Ministry of Health. Sinopharm announced August 20 that Peru, Morocco, and Argentina approved phase III clinical trials on volunteers in their countries. During a July 22 interview, Sinopharm Chairman Liu estimated phase III trials would be completed in three months. [**Note:** Following completion of the phase III clinical trial, the company would need to apply for regulatory approval before the product would be available to the domestic market. **End Note.**] Partnering with Sinopharm, the Beijing Biological Products Institute and the Wuhan Institute of Biological Products both developed two different inactivated vaccines that were expected to be available by the end of December at the price of RMB 1,000 (USD 144). Sinopharm was also preparing to expand its annual production capacity to a combined 220 million vaccine doses.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese vaccine developer Sinovac Biotech also produced an inactivated vaccine candidate called CoronaVac that has entered phase III human testing trials and is projected to begin production early next year. [**Note:** During the outbreak of SARS in 2003, Sinovac was the

only Chinese firm to enter phase I vaccine trials; however, research ended following the SARS pandemic. Sinovac was able to build on this earlier research given the similarity between COVID-19 and SARS. **End Note.**] Sinovac said phase I and II trials for CoronaVac showed favorable immunogenicity and safety profiles, and no severe adverse events were reported. Sinovac Biotech experts noted that two doses of the vaccine candidate were needed to immunize one person, but observed the reduction of neutralizing antibodies 14 days after the vaccination. **[Note:** There are still knowledge gaps about COVID immunity; however, reduction in neutralizing antibodies may suggest a possible waning of immunity over time. **End Note.]** Sinovac Biotech had already begun phase III clinical trials by July in Brazil and committed to sharing 60-100 million doses through a collaboration with São Paulo-based Instituto Butantan (Ref A). Sinovac Biotech CEO Yin Weidong disclosed on July 11 that his company was “actively in discussion with several countries” in Asia, including Indonesia, Turkey, and Bangladesh, about conducting phase III trials and was exploring options to carry out human trials in Europe. Since then, the Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) approved phase III clinical trials on July 22, which were to be conducted by International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) on 4,200 volunteers in seven hospitals specialized in COVID-19 treatment. Indonesian state-owned company Bio Farma also partnered with Sinovac Biotech and began carrying out phase III clinical testing on August 14 that will ultimately involve as many as 1,620 patients in Indonesia. Yin explained that Sinovac Biotech aimed to produce 300 million doses per year.

PRC Authorities Approve Vaccine for Special Use

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Despite not having undergone phase III clinical trials, the Central Military Commission (CMC) Logistic Support Department (LSD) Medical Services Directorate issued one-year special approval for CanSinoBIO’s Ad5-nCOV as a “military-specially-needed drug” on June 25. With this special designation and approval, CMC could begin pharmaceutical production of Ad5-nCoV solely for limited military use among Chinese armed forces. **[Note:** Major General Chen Jingyuan, the Director of the CMC LSD Medical Services Directorate, announced during a March 3 press conference that the Chinese military has reported zero cases among its personnel. **End Note.]**

8. ~~(SBU)~~ With approval from the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, Sinopharm also began inviting employees of state-owned enterprises to take the vaccine. More than 1,000 Sinopharm employees were voluntarily vaccinated without any adverse effect, reported the biomedical company in June. China TravelSky, a Chinese state-owned civil aviation and information technology company, prioritized its research and development (R&D) staff and airport terminal workers for vaccination, but also offered to vaccinate overseas travelers, medical staff members involved in COVID-19 prevention efforts, and residents from medium and high-risk communities in Beijing. Media reports also indicated that PetroChina employees were asked to take the Sinopharm vaccine. Separately, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) Director Gao Fu revealed during a webinar on July 26 that he had been injected with an experimental COVID-19 vaccine. Gao explained, “Everybody has suspicions about the new coronavirus vaccine. If even we didn’t do it, how can we persuade...the public to be vaccinated.” Gao refused to disclose details about the vaccine he took, saying he did not want to

appear to be "doing some kind of propaganda." [Note: Gao coauthored a paper in June on an "inactivated" vaccine candidate developed by SinoPharm leading some to speculate he was injected with the same vaccine. End Note]. However, a few Chinese public health contacts expressed doubts over the effectiveness of Chinese vaccine candidates, speculating that the coronavirus may mutate over the fall and winter months making it more resistant to vaccine treatments. [Note: If this problem were to occur, the impact would not be limited to Chinese vaccine candidates. End Note.]

Senior Chinese Leaders Pledge to Share Vaccines

9. (SBU) Chinese Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping announced on May 18 during a virtual speech to the World Health Organization that China would make its COVID-19 vaccine a "global public good" ensuring it is accessible and affordable in developing countries. Subsequently, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in late July that China pledged a \$1 billion loan to help Latin American and Caribbean countries access COVID-19 vaccines once available during a virtual conference with his Latin American counterparts. China CDC Director Gao also emphasized during a July 31 virtual seminar that the vaccine needed to be shared in low and middle-income countries unable to afford it. On August 24, Premier Li Keqiang Li stated during the third leaders meeting of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) organization that any Chinese-produced COVID-19 vaccine would be provided to Mekong countries "on a priority basis."

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E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, KPAO, KMDR, CDC, HHS, NIH, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: Plague Cases Show China's Crisis Communication Improving, But Public Doubts Remain

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** On November 12, 2019, Chinese health officials announced that two individuals in Beijing had been diagnosed with pneumonic plague, the only form of the disease that can transmit from person to person. Limited initial details from the government, despite media interest, prompted discussion, concern, and rumors online. There was an insatiable public demand for detailed, accurate, and timely information that health authorities were not able to meet in the first few days after the announcement. China's ability to respond to health crises and implement risk communication strategies has improved since the 2003 SARS epidemic, and the government's medical response appears to have prevented further spread of the disease beyond the two patients. However, these plague cases showed communication gaps remain and the public still doubts the timeliness and transparency of government-provided health information. The PRC's general impulse to control information – in this case related to health – can run counter to effective risk communication and may exacerbate the public's suspicion that information is being purposefully withheld. **End Summary and Comment.**

Case History

2. ~~(SBU)~~ On November 3, Beijing's Chaoyang Hospital admitted a married couple with severe pneumonia who had been transferred by ambulance from Inner Mongolia after their symptoms worsened. The hospital diagnosed the patients with pneumonic plague on November 11 and the

Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed the diagnoses on November 12. Authorities then transferred the couple to Beijing's Ditan Hospital for specialized care. China CDC believes the husband likely contracted the disease while working the soil on his farm after a large rodent die-off in the area. Chinese authorities informed the World Health Organization (WHO) on November 13 and on the same day, WHO's Coordinator for Disease Control in China told media that "the National Health Commission is implementing efforts to contain and treat the identified cases and increase surveillance." The binding WHO International Health Regulations state national health commissions should inform WHO within the 24 hours of learning of a suspected plague case. 447 individuals in Beijing were quarantined for medical observation based on their possible exposure to the disease via the infected couple. Health officials notified one American citizen on November 13 that he had been potentially exposed to the plague and subsequently placed him in quarantine until November 20.

SARS Outbreak Highlighted Risk Communication Deficiencies

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Chaoyang Hospital is one of Beijing's primary municipal hospitals and along with Ditan Hospital was involved in the 2003 Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak that resulted in 5,327 cases and 349 deaths in China. The government's initial lack of transparency, including a decision to deny SARS cases had reached Beijing in order to prevent disturbing a National People's Congress meeting taking place in the capital, caused significant public and international doubts regarding China's risk communication transparency. The controversy resulted in the firing of Beijing's mayor and the health minister.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ After the SARS outbreak, WHO revised its International Health Regulations to include risk communication as one of the core capacity areas for national health commissions. Stung by criticism of its SARS response, China's government sought to improve its operating procedures over the following years, including through a capacity building collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC). Beginning in 2006, the U.S. CDC and China CDC launched a Global Disease Detection program to strengthen China's capacity to detect, respond to, and prevent emerging health threats. As part of this program, the United States placed U.S. CDC experts in China to support China CDC in training field epidemiologists to investigate disease outbreak as well as training health officials in risk communication during health outbreaks. U.S. CDC continues to provide technical support to China's Field Epidemiology Training Program (FETP), and in 2015, helped launch a Western FETP to strengthen the epidemiological capacity of underdeveloped provinces, including Inner Mongolia and provinces in western China. FETP graduates were among the responders to the plague investigation.

5. (U) The China National Health Commission integrated communication responses into its public crisis response plans, and the government's actions during the 2013 H7N9 influenza outbreak received praise from the international community, while surveys showed that public trust in government health information had risen. China also scored high on the 2019 Global Health Security Index for risk communication, and its 2014 "Overall Contingency Plan for National Public Emergencies" enumerates communication methods to release information to the public. However, the summer 2018 vaccine scandal in which two Chinese vaccine makers sold poor-quality vaccines for infants, prompting China's drug regulator to review all vaccine

producers in the country, and the April 2019 closing of a hospital for giving fake HPV vaccines to patients, renewed public doubt in the government's ability to manage and share health crisis information in a timely and transparent manner.

State Media Remains Factual...

6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Beijing Chaoyang district government released a short statement the night of November 12, stating that two people had been diagnosed with plague and that, "relevant prevention and control measures have been implemented." Following the statement, major state media outlets, news portals, and social media platforms widely reported and reprinted statements issued by health commissions in Beijing and Inner Mongolia as well as the China CDC. These press reports focused on the low risk of the disease spreading in Beijing and stated there was no need to panic. Many news stories also conveyed medical messages about plague, encouraging the public to take precautions to cut off epidemic transmission. News reports were timely and factual but lacking in detailed information. An op-ed in the November 13 China Daily English edition – the PRC's messenger to external English-speaking audiences – called for the release of timely and transparent information about the plague cases to avoid rumors and the spreading of panic, citing the government's poor response to the 2003 SARS epidemic. Many international outlets also covered the story, often with more sensational headlines.

Social Media Reflects the Public's Demand for Facts and Caution of Rumors

7. ~~(SBU)~~ On Chinese social media, two popular threads of conversation under hashtags related to plague were viewed collectively more than 60 million times. The Embassy's Weibo account released a factual article about plague that was very popular. Many commenters were concerned about the plague and asked other netizens not to spread rumors and not to eat wild animals. Said one, "Do not eat wild animals, bamboo rat and groundhogs all contain pathogens." Many also mentioned the Black Plague in the 13th century. On Weibo, most netizens blamed the plague on those who eat or touch wild animals.

8. (U) Many netizens speculated that Chinese censors controlled social media postings related to plague, as had been reported in international media. Some netizens complained that "cover-ups only make things worse!" Others reacted to reports that Chaoyang Hospital's diagnosing physician had her November 13 social media post about the cases censored and wondered about the health of the doctors treating the patients. Media reported that the doctor, in a since-deleted social media post titled, "Are you afraid of plague? Beijing's pneumonic plague patients first doctors have something to say," described the patients arriving to Beijing on November 3 with severe pneumonia and noting that she originally had trouble diagnosing which pathogen caused the illness, but suspected it was rare. She defended health officials not making an announcement on the patients' conditions sooner, stating that official health notices must be accurate and rigorous, and therefore, "cannot be issued casually."

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BRANSTAD

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6)

Cleared By: ESTH (b)(6)
 CONS (b)(6)
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TAGS: SHLH, CDC, HHS, NIH, PGOV, CN, SENV, PREL, CASC, AMGT, AMED, KPAO, KMDR, ASEC, AID, KHIV, KFLU, KFLO, KFPC, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, KTBT
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C) 19 WUHAN 112
Subject: Mission China COVID-19 Update February 28

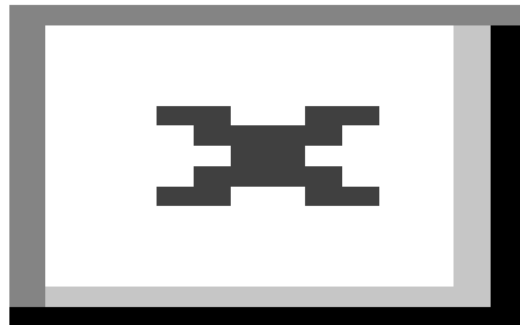
1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 327 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 27, with nine new confirmed cases outside Hubei. This marks the second day in a row that there were fewer new cases in Mainland China than in the rest of the world. In addition, February 27 marked the 10th day in a row that the number of patients discharged from the hospital has exceeded the number of new reported cases. The MFA issued a DipNote on February 27 outlining procedures for how PRC authorities will handle any COVID-19 cases among diplomatic personnel in Beijing. The notice stated that infected personnel would be sent to one of Beijing City's 20 designated treatment hospitals "where they are entitled to the same diagnosis and treatment procedures as the Chinese citizens..." The National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) announced on February 26 that it would cancel the licenses for all facilities raising wild animals for food and strengthen the permitting, review, and supervision of non-food utilization of wildlife. Local governments continued to impose quarantine requirements on travelers from Japan and South Korea and urged vigilance around overseas visitors. The MFA announced that the PRC Embassy in Seoul had donated 25,000 surgical masks for use in Daegu, South Korea. Ports began to return to normal operations, but businesses continued to be challenged by labor shortages, cash-flow issues, and

travel restrictions. Closed management restrictions remained in place across much of the country, but there were signs of further loosening as more roadblocks were removed and roads reopened.
End Summary and Comment.

(U) LATEST UPDATES

2. (U) **Nationwide Cases:** China’s National Health Commission (NHC) reported 327 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 27 as of 24:00, with nine new confirmed cases outside Hubei ([link](#)). The total number of confirmed cases to date rose to 78,824. Another 44 deaths in Mainland China were reported on February 27, bringing total reported deaths to 2,788. With an additional 3,622 patients discharged from the hospital, a total of 46 percent of reported cases have now recovered and been released. February 27 marked the 10th day in a row that the number of patients discharged from the hospital has exceeded the number of new reported cases. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 2,308, with 452 new suspected cases reported on February 27. The number of close contacts under medical observation fell to 65,225.

Figure 1: Daily Change in Number of Current Cases in Mainland China



Note: Due to the change in case definitions for “confirmed cases” and the lack of disaggregated data for clinically diagnosed and lab-confirmed cases from February 15 to 18 in Hubei, data are marked as missing for these dates. The NHC reverted the case definitions to remove the distinction between Hubei and the other provinces for data starting on February 19. Source: NHC and provincial health commissions.

Table: Cases Reported in Mainland China as of End of February 27

Province/City/Region	Active Cases	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Discharged	Newly Discharged
Anhui	170	990	1	6	--	814	50
Beijing	146	410	--	7	2	257	9

<i>Chongqing</i>	169	576	--	6	--	401	17
<i>Fujian</i>	63	296	--	1	--	232	7
<i>Gansu</i>	7	91	--	2	--	82	1
<i>Guangdong</i>	422	1,348	1	7	--	919	46
<i>Guangxi</i>	84	252	--	2	--	166	7
<i>Guizhou</i>	32	146	--	2	--	112	--
<i>Hainan</i>	31	168	--	5	--	132	3
<i>Hebei</i>	38	318	1	6	--	274	13
<i>Heilongjiang</i>	187	480	--	13	--	280	19
<i>Henan</i>	149	1,272	--	20	--	1,103	41
<i>Hubei</i>	36,829	65,914	318	2,682	41	26,403	3,203
<i>Hunan</i>	193	1,017	--	4	--	820	27
<i>Inner Mongolia</i>	32	75	--	--	--	43	5
<i>Jiangsu</i>	125	631	--	--	--	506	12
<i>Jiangxi</i>	144	935	1	1	--	790	36
<i>Jilin</i>	24	93	--	1	--	68	1
<i>Liaoning</i>	27	121	--	1	--	93	1
<i>Ningxia</i>	4	72	--	--	--	68	3
<i>Qinghai</i>	0	18	--	--	--	18	18
<i>Shaanxi</i>	47	245	--	1	--	197	3
<i>Shandong</i>	360	756	--	6	--	390	9
<i>Shanghai</i>	58	337	--	3	--	276	4
<i>Shanxi</i>	26	133	--	--	--	107	3
<i>Sichuan</i>	209	538	4	3	--	326	16
<i>Tianjin</i>	30	135	--	3	--	102	6
<i>Tibet</i>	0	1	--	--	--	1	--
<i>Xinjiang</i>	30	76	--	3	1	43	9
<i>Yunnan</i>	22	174	--	2	--	150	6
<i>Zhejiang</i>	261	1,205	--	1	--	943	62
Total (Provincial Reports)	39,919	78,823	326	2,788	44	36,116	3,637
Total (NHC Reported)	39,919	78,824	327	2,788	44	36,117	3,622

Notes: -- zero cases. Source: NHC and provincial health commissions

3. (U) **MFA DipNote on Protocol for Handling Suspected COVID-19 Cases:** The Protocol Department of China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a DipNote on February 27 outlining procedures for how PRC authorities will handle any COVID-19 cases among diplomatic personnel in Beijing. Per the notice, any infected personnel shall be sent to one of Beijing City's 20 designated treatment hospitals for treatment of COVID-19 cases, "where they are entitled to

the same diagnosis and treatment procedures as the Chinese citizens...” [Note: MFA did not respond to MED’s request for clarification as to whether the Embassy’s Med Unit can take samples in-house and send them to Beijing CDC for testing. The notice was also silent as to the Mission’s request for clarity regarding permission to discharge patients for medical evacuation, and as to the provision of ambulance services. **End note.**] The notice further requests the “understanding and cooperation” of missions in allowing “Chinese professional medical and disease control personnel” to enter diplomats’ residences and embassy facilities to “sterilize the working place” of the infected personnel and “conduct the epidemiological surveys and close contact tracing and management.”

4. (U) For the monitoring of close contacts of infected patients, the MFA DipNote allows missions to decide whether to send personnel to institutional quarantine sites or to conduct at-home quarantine and observation. For at-home quarantine and observation, “Chinese medical and disease control institutions will inform [diplomatic missions] of the deadline, legal basis, and matters needing attention during the medical observation and the contact detail of the responsible medical institution.” Lastly, for diplomatic patients receiving treatment at one of the designated hospitals, the notice stipulates that “personnel from the diplomatic corps and their dependents are, in principle, not allowed to go to the hospital to visit or comfort the patients.” MGT will follow up with the Department and MFA regarding particulars, such as access to Mission China personnel in quarantine or treatment as well as access to residences and facilities for sterilization.

5. (U) **Operating Licenses Revoked for All Wildlife Farms Selling Animals for Food:** China’s National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) announced on February 26 that it would conduct a “thorough stocktaking of all captive wildlife breeding facilities” currently in operation and cancel the licenses for all facilities raising wild animals for food. NFGA also pledged to “comprehensively strengthen the permitting, review, and supervision of non-food utilization of wildlife” ([link](#)). [Note: The announcement follows the decision by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on February 24 outlawing the consumption and trade of wildlife for food. **End note.**] The sudden crackdown on wildlife farms raising animals for food has revealed the immense scale of the industry. According to remarks by NFGA Vice Administrator Wang Weisheng at a February 27 press briefing, as of February 26, authorities had inspected 153,000 captive breeding facilities and 3.5 million markets and restaurants selling wildlife ([link](#)). Regulators have also taken aim at online trading, shutting down 11,000 sellers and removing 1.4 million posts advertising wild animals for sale, according to a representative from the State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR). Wang added that NFGA was in the process of revising the PRC’s Catalogue of Wildlife Species for National Key Protection as well as the national catalogue of species of special ecological, scientific, and social value.

(U) THIRD COUNTRY RESPONSE EFFORTS AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

6. (U) **Local Policies Targeting Foreigners:** The Shenzhen sub-district of Xiangmihu – a popular neighborhood for foreigners – [announced](#) stepped up efforts February 27 to screen South Koreans residing in or returning to the subdistrict, namely at-home self-isolation for 14 days upon return from South Korea. As of August 2019, 533 South Koreans resided in Xiangmihu. Meanwhile, Guangdong provincial authorities began recruiting Korean interpreters.

7. (U) **Korean Arrivals Spark Public Outrage:** The February 26 arrival of 80 Korean passengers on a flight from Seoul sparked public outrage after Chengdu authorities did not require the passengers to self-quarantine. Members of the public reportedly filed complaints with the national State Council, accusing Sichuan and Chengdu authorities of risking public health.

8. (U) **More cities impose quarantine requirements on travelers from Japan.** Suzhou, Kunshan, Nanjing, Changzhou, and Jiaxing are officially requiring people who have traveled recently to Japan to complete a 14-day self-quarantine, according to the Japanese Consulate and notices sent by local governments. Another five cities have given similar informal guidance, including Nantong, Lianyungang, and Jiangyin District in Wuxi in Jiangsu; Xiaoshang District of Hangzhou in Zhejiang, and part of the Shushan District in Hefei, Anhui.

(U) ECONOMIC AND SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT

9. (U) **China to Accelerate Infrastructure Investment to Boost GDP:** Central government departments were accelerating infrastructure project assessment and approval, while local governments have mapped out trillions of RMB worth of investment plans, media reported. A Chinese economist told the *Global Times* that such large investments carry risks but would be effective, likely boosting GDP by 1-1.5 percentage points in 2020. A Ministry of Transportation official told media that China would initiate a flurry of infrastructure projects “ahead of schedule” (*Global Times*).

10. (U) **State Council Convenes High-Level Joint Ministry Briefing to Reassure SMEs:** The central government was rolling out additional fiscal and monetary measures to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) affected by the coronavirus outbreak, senior officials from the People’s Bank of China, Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, State Administration for Industry and Commerce, and the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission briefed to press on February 27. The officials said local governments would be encouraged to waive taxes and administrative fees for targeted SMEs, small commercial banks will issue loans to small businesses at a rate no higher than 4.55 percent, and SMEs that miss payments on utilities will still receive services. The central government encouraged banks to roll over loans due in the period between January 25 and June 30 (*China.com*).

11. (U) **Government Prioritizing Assistance to Hard-Hit Food Service Industry:** The central government will expand credit lines for the \$713.4 billion (5 trillion RMB) food service industry after the COVID-19 epidemic effectively wiped out the industry’s expected business during the Chinese Lunar New Year. In seven days during the holiday period, the Chinese restaurant industry suffered about \$71 billion (500 billion RMB) in losses, and the China Cuisine Association found that the restaurant industry has suffered a 93 percent closure rate of all restaurants during the ongoing outbreak. As of 2018, China had about eight million restaurants and the industry employed 30 million workers (*China Daily*).

12. (U) **Epidemic Control in Beijing Tops Central Government’s Virus Battle:** The central government would prioritize efforts on epidemic prevention and control work, officials from the China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed on February 27. Given Beijing’s dense population and role as a national center for medical services and education, China

CDC chief epidemiologist Zeng Guang cautioned the risk of an outbreak occurring in Beijing remained high. Chinese top leaders have stressed that containing the spread of the virus in Beijing is as important as safeguarding Wuhan (*Global Times*).

13. ~~(SBU)~~ **Guangzhou Ports Operating Normally:** Guangzhou's main ports had resumed normal operations as of late February, according to South China port contacts. Shenzhen's Yantian port was operating normally by February 17, and it handled over 7000 containers February 24, a similar volume compared to a year earlier, contacts noted. Ports across the region had various capacity to handle frozen containers, with 88 percent of reefer plugs available for containers to connect to at Guangzhou ports, 75 percent unoccupied at Xiamen, 68 percent at Shenzhen West, and 51 percent at Yantian. Guangzhou ports announced 30 percent discounts on storage and electricity charges for frozen containers, as well as continued waivers of some dockage fees. Meanwhile, smaller ports across the Pearl River Delta region continued to experience labor shortages and operational delays, contacts added.

14. (U) **Guangdong's Agricultural Production Holds Steady:** Year on year, production was steady, provincial officials said February 27, adding that pork was the only commodity in short supply but that Guangdong targeted a return to near normal output by the end of 2020. In Guangzhou, 85 percent of the city's 600 wet markets were open as of February 23, an industry official told media, adding that "emergency measures" were taken to stabilize supply and guarantee "three meals a day" for residents.

15. ~~(SBU)~~ **Seafood Importers Halt Purchases:** Weak restaurant demand and limited air cargo space prompted some south China fresh seafood importers to halt purchases, including geoduck clams from the U.S. Pacific Northwest, according to contacts. For their part, some Guangzhou poultry importers said they stepped up U.S. orders in February, hoping for a market rebound. With many restaurants and institutional caterers still closed or running at partial capacity, poultry sales prices were lower, and traders said cash flow was tight. Poultry contacts said nearly 100 containers originally bound for Shanghai and Tianjin ports had to divert to Busan or Malaysia, presumably because of congestion, and it was uncertain when the shipments would move. Shipping costs rose about \$1400 per container in February, the contacts added, predicting an additional \$1000 rise in March.

16. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai Back in Business, But Labor and Cash-flow challenges remain:** Eighty-six percent of businesses are operating to some degree, with 90 percent of large companies open, though only 53 percent of small and medium enterprises are back to work, municipal officials told Shanghai-based Consuls General on February 27. They added that electricity use is only 70 percent of pre-crisis levels, indicating that even if businesses are open, productivity has not returned to normal. This could be because of human resource shortages, which officials noted is the largest problem companies face. They added that only 63 percent of workers have returned to their jobs and 60 percent of Shanghai's 10-11 million migrant workers have returned to the city. A lack of operating capital is another major concern for businesses. To address these challenges, Shanghai authorities are working with companies to bring back workers from other parts of China and are working with financial institutions to increase cash flow.

17. (U) **AmCham Members Still Face Labor and Travel Challenges:** An AmCham China

survey of 169 large-, medium-, and small-sized enterprises conducted February 17-10 and released on February 27 found that travel disruptions and reduced staff productivity present the most significant challenges for respondents. Nearly half of respondents expect 2020 China revenues to decrease if business cannot return to usual before April 30, with nearly one-fifth reporting 2020 revenues will decline more than 50 percent if the epidemic extends through August 30. Approximately one-third of respondents say they already face increased costs and significantly reduced revenue. Eighty percent of the companies say they have provided some form of assistance to China to fight the COVID-19 epidemic and another 14 percent are planning to do so.

18. (U) **Shanghai Customs Expands Green-Channel Access:** In order to support industries and companies badly hit by the epidemic and help businesses to resume their industrial, supply, and logistics chains, Shanghai Customs authorities announced February 26 they will expand green-channel coverage from just epidemic prevention and control supplies to more fields, including raw materials, components, machines for resuming production, and items for agricultural use. The clearance of food and daily necessities will also speed up, they said.

19. (U) **Sichuan Industry Up and Running:** As of February 25, 92 percent of Sichuan's 14,560 industrial enterprises had resumed operations and 61 percent of industrial workers have returned to work, according to a government press release.

~~(SBU)~~ SUPPORT FOR U.S. CITIZENS

Guangzhou

20. ~~(SBU)~~ **Passport Workload Down:** In the month since the start of authorized departure, ACS has seen a 50 percent year-over-year reduction in minor passport and consular record of birth abroad adjudications, and a 14 percent reduction in adult passport adjudications. Post expects to see a resulting higher demand later in the year.

(U) INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

21. (U) **PRC Donates Masks to ROK:** MFA Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said February 27 that the PRC Embassy in Seoul had donated 25,000 surgical masks for use in Daegu, South Korea.

~~(SBU)~~ POST OPERATIONS

Beijing

22. (U) **Beijing Maintains Strict Closed-Management Measures:** After the news of an infected ex-convict from Hubei slipping into Beijing, and 10 new cases reported on February 26, Beijing City Vice Secretary said that no residents from Hubei would be permitted to enter the city and that Beijing would continue to enforce strict closed-management measures. According to *Global Times*, local authorities would also begin to "implement all-day inspections" of residential areas. Furthermore, "Local authorities in the capital city are also urged to set up checkpoints at highway entrances to the city to screen incoming people and vehicles" ([link](#)).

23. (U) **Embassy Housing Community Requires Japan/ROK Quarantines:** A residential community housing Embassy community personnel announced February 28 that residents returning from South Korea or Japan are required to observe a 14-day home quarantine. On February 26, the community management said government authorities mandated residents must use a “special pass” to enter or exit until “the threat of coronavirus is over.”

Chengdu

24. (U) **Carries Resume Operations:** Several Chinese carriers announced they will resume operations of some international flights by February 29, including flights to Frankfurt, Cairo, and Tokyo. The only remaining viable direct flight from **Chongqing**, to Bangkok, has been canceled through March 5.

(U) OTHER COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Chengdu

25. (U) **Sichuan Party Secretary Urges Vigilance Around Overseas Visitors:** On February 26, Sichuan Party Secretary Peng Qinghua stressed that epidemic response efforts must not relax despite Sichuan’s downgraded emergency response level. With the virus spreading internationally, Sichuan should carefully monitor the temperatures of foreign visitors, he said.

26. ~~(SBU)~~ **Despite Official Guidance, Closed Management Continues:** District governments are maintaining strict access controls to residential compounds a week after Chongqing announced areas without COVID-19 cases could relax such measures, Canadian diplomats report. All persons arriving in Chongqing must self-isolate for 14 days and undergo daily temperature checks, or report to a government quarantine center if they do not have a permanent address.

27. (U) **Schools to Start Online Classes March 2:** Chongqing announced on February 26 that K-12 schools should begin online classes starting March 2. Post-secondary institutions will remain closed until COVID-19 is effectively under control, authorities said.

28. ~~(SBU)~~ **Small Business Remain Shuttered:** According to an informal survey conducted by Canadian diplomats, local Chongqing business contacts in manufacturing, retail, food service, and entertainment sectors were reportedly quite pessimistic about the possibility of re-opening, with only one of eight businesses having done so to date.

29. (U) **Guizhou to Go Back to School:** Guizhou province has announced that junior high and high school students will resume classes starting March 16.

Shanghai

30. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai to Remain at Emergency Alert Level 1:** Shanghai officials told Consuls General (CGs) on February 27 that because Shanghai is still in an inward migration phase, is more urban, and has a higher public transportation utilization rate than the other areas of East

China, the city does not have immediate plans to reduce the emergency alert level down from the current level. [Note: Jiangsu and Anhui have reduced their alert level from 1 to 2 and some areas in Zhejiang have reduced their alert levels. End note.]

31. ~~(SBU)~~ **Shanghai Expanding Medical Services and Sharing Experience with COVID-19 Treatment Success:** Medical services, including most routine services, are available throughout Shanghai through appointments, the Director of Shanghai's Health Commission told Shanghai-based Consuls General on February 27. He emphasized that complex, non-COVID-19 related cases from elsewhere in China are being sent to Shanghai for treatment and surgery. Separately, Shanghai's COVID-19 treatment methodology has attained a high success rate at preventing cases from escalating from mild to severe, he said. The Director noted Shanghai is sharing its experience with other areas. Officials announced the Shanghai CDC and 16 district offices in the city can perform rapid testing and fever clinics are now able to start treating COVID-19 patients prior to the patient being transferred to a central hospital.

32. (U) **QR Code for Shanghai Metro and Buses Goes into Effect, City Tries to Manage Passenger Numbers:** Shanghai's new QR code for Metros and buses goes into effect today. The system allows passengers to voluntarily scan a QR code and enter their phone number, enabling authorities to contact them if someone who rode in the same car, at the same time, later tests positive for COVID-19. A similar code was launched for taxis on February 21. The city is also increasing attempts to reduce crowding at busy metro stations. Transportation authorities told CGs on February 27 that their goal is to reduce the passenger density of public transportation to 60 percent of pre-crisis levels.

Shenyang

33. (U) **Heilongjiang Cities Remove Roadblocks:** Hegang lifted restrictions on all private vehicles, as well as roadblocks and checkpoints on main roads, to facilitate smooth flow of traffic. Qiqihar announced that checkpoints in villages will gradually be lifted, and Qitaihe, Heilongjiang's second smallest city in terms of population, reopened one of its main highways. Jixi, which recently implemented a strict 24-hour watch system at all checkpoints, also said that roadblocks between low-risk villages will be removed.

34. ~~(SBU)~~ **But Public Transportation Remains Idle in Many Places:** While many Heilongjiang cities are starting to lift onerous checkpoints and disruptive roadblocks, residents across Heilongjiang complain that public transportation system has not yet fully resumed. On Weibo, Heilongjiang residents living in small cities lamented that they were "stuck" in rural areas and had no way of getting to the cities. In Yichun, none of the city's public transportation system had resumed, a contact told ConGenOff. In Shuangyashan, it was reported that only a few buses operate during certain times of the day.

35. (U) **Jilin Ready for Spring Plowing:** In response to Premier Li Keqiang's emphasis on the importance of facilitating spring plowing and farming preparation, Jilin officials said that the province is committed to guaranteeing loans and funds for farmers, as well as supporting agricultural enterprises resume production as soon as possible. So far, out 15 pesticide production companies in Jilin, 14 has resumed operations. Officials noted that Jilin had already purchased

32.66 billion kilograms of grain, a 6-billion-kilogram increase from previous year.

36. ~~(SBU)~~ **Liaoning Maintains Closed Management in Residences:** Contacts throughout Liaoning say that there has not been a significant change to closed management in residences despite Liaoning downgraded emergency alert level from 1 to 3. Most contacts in Shenyang and Dalian report that same measures, such as checking temperature and allowing only entry/exit access point, remain in place. Supermarkets throughout Shenyang still check for temperatures, and some Shenyang apartments continue to issue entry/exit passes for residents. Virtually all residences forbid delivery personnel from entering the compound. However, contacts in Fuxin city said restrictions seem to have somewhat relaxed, noting that few apartment complexes now permit entry of non-residents and no longer check body temperatures.

37. ~~(SBU)~~ **Liaoning Reopens Toll Stations and Expressways:** All Liaoning toll stations are now fully open. No fees will be charged at any toll station. Authorities will register vehicles entering from high-risk areas, and vehicles transporting PPE and other daily supplies will not be inspected. All of Liaoning's 293 expressways were also reopened. Shenyang FAO told ConGenOff that except for vehicles coming from other provinces, Liaoning residents traveling within the province will not be stopped for inspection. A contact (b)(6)

(b)(6) told ConGenOff that opening toll stations and highways have greatly reduced burdens on delivering products.

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Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING:Multiple Mission China Drafters

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CONS;
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Date:	Fri, 20 Nov 2020 17:01:35 GMT

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TAGS: ECON, SHLH, PREL, ETRD, KNCV, UN, WHO, WTRO, CDC, HHS, FDA, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) [20 GENEVA 928](#)
B) [20 GENEVA 944](#)
C) [20 GENEVA 692](#)
Subject: Geneva: WHO Shares Names of Experts Investigating the Origins of COVID-19 but Provides Few Other Details

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Key Points:**

- At WHO's weekly member state briefing November 19, WHO responded to the Ambassador's request to identify the international experts convened to investigate the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- WHO provided the names of 10 international experts (one American) who are working with 10 Chinese experts, but did not say when the international team would be able to enter China, how involved FAO and OIE were in the drafting of the Terms of Reference as required by Member States, and who approved the TORs.
- The Chinese Ambassador reiterated China's efforts to collaborate with WHO, while noting evidence of SARS-CoV-2 in sewage samples in Europe prior to the outbreak in Wuhan as well as recent SARS-CoV-2 samples found in frozen food imported to China.
- WHO committed to provide member states with regular updates on the origins investigation in response to requests for transparency from the United States, European

Union, UK, Ukraine, and Canada.

- The ACT-Accelerator (ACT-A) Facilitation Council co-chairs made another appeal for financing, echoing arguments made in the first week of November (refs A, B)
2. ~~(SBU)~~ Following through on Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus's commitment on November 5 to brief member States regarding the WHO-China investigation into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, WHO staff scheduled a briefing for member states to provide details on November 19 regarding the international team's progress and next steps. Dr. Peter Ben Embarek, WHO's Programme Manager for Monitoring Nutritional Status & Food Safety Events, noted WHO's initial trip to China in February 2020 followed by the origins investigation advance team's visit for 3.5 weeks in July and August to develop the Terms of Reference for the origins investigation (TORs), identify knowledge gaps, and review work already done by Chinese authorities. The team of experts, which consists of 10 Chinese experts and 10 international experts (names of experts provided below), have met virtually to begin assessing data provided to them by the People's Republic of China (PRC).
 3. ~~(SBU)~~ Embarek provided the attached presentation which includes information concerning animal investigations related to SARS-CoV-2. The presentation notes out of 366 dead animal samples from the Wuhan seafood market, none tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, while out of 842 environmental samples, 69 tested positive. Chinese authorities have shared similar results from studies that failed to identify SARS-CoV-2 in wild, farm, and domestic animals. (**Note:** These studies confirm that the Wuhan market was substantially contaminated, but do not provide any leads on potential animal reservoirs. Regarding human transmission, the WHO presentation indicates that 106 clinical cases prior to January 10 have been identified, but provides no information about any studies tracing early human-to-human transmission or attempting to identify "patient zero." **End Note**)
 4. ~~(SBU)~~ The WHO presentation includes information regarding possible links to COVID-19 spread through frozen food products, as evidenced in the recent case in Tianjin. WHO commented that the frozen food case was a rare event. WHO also reported the recent spread of COVID-19 through mink farms in Denmark resulting in Denmark culling 17 million mink. WHO indicated that similar mink outbreaks had been reported in Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. (**Note:** While these studies regarding transmission through frozen food products and through mink farms are not directly linked to the original outbreak in Wuhan, China, WHO suggested that transmission of SARS-CoV-2 could occur in many different ways and regions. **End Note**)

China Points to non-Chinese Origins of COVID-19...

5. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese Ambassador claimed China's active support for "the WHO-led, global scientific collaboration to identify source of the virus." Despite China's significant efforts to contain the pandemic, the Chinese Ambassador continued, China has prioritized cooperating with the international team of investigators and the WHO. He noted the team met virtually on October 30 to discuss and share information on environmental studies, animal intermediate hosts, and transmission routes of COVID-19. The Ambassador highlighted the recent outbreak

of COVID-19 transmitted through imported cold-chain products including in Tianjin. He also referred to studies suggesting SARS-CoV-2 transmission outside of China prior to the outbreak in Wuhan. As a result, he concluded, identifying the source would be a time-consuming and complicated endeavor which required patience and ongoing collaboration with scientists around the world.

...as Member States Call for Increased Transparency, Urgency, and Reporting from the Investigation

6. ~~(SBU)~~ Other Member States expressed concern about the lack of transparency and clarity on the timeline for the origins investigation. The UK Ambassador requested more regular updates to Member States either through the weekly briefings or governing body meetings, while also questioning when the international team would make its first field visit. The UK also asked how the investigating team would collaborate with the International Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response (IPPR) and asked when details on Phase 2 of the origins investigation would be shared.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Ambassador Bremberg underscored U.S. concerns that the Phase 1 study did not involve the international team working on the ground with Chinese counterparts, which falls well short of Member State expectations laid out in resolution WHA 73.1. The Ambassador requested information on how the experts' input into scientific process and analyses was incorporated into the TOR, and how WHO would guarantee the Phase 1 data was complete and transparent. The Ambassador also expressed concern that the members of the international team had not been shared, noting to our knowledge there had been no other WHO expert panel shrouded in such secrecy. He noted this prevents both member States from assessing the expert team's qualifications, limits transparency thus jeopardizing the credibility of any report, and prevents the international experts from collaborating freely with other scientists around the world.

8. ~~(SBU)~~ The European Union expressed similar questions and concerns regarding the lack of transparency to the investigation, and questioned whether WHO was following the one-health approach outlined in WHA 73.1. The EU noted the importance of ensuring the FAO and OIE were integrated into the investigation and asked how WHO was coordinating with them. The EU also responded to China, calling China's restrictive trade measures on frozen foods from Europe due to the Tianjin outbreak disproportionate, not based in science, and stating the EU would take their case to the World Trade Organization. The EU also questioned why Chinese press and the government continued focusing on one study in Europe which may have found traces of SARS-CoV-2 in sewer systems prior to the Wuhan outbreak, and asked China if it was doing any research into sewage samples in its own country as part of its investigation.

WHO Shares Names of International Investigators, but Avoids Details on the Details

9. ~~(SBU)~~ In response to Member State questions, WHO committed to providing regular briefings to Member States and shared the names of the ten international experts on the investigation team. On the lack of any field investigations from the international team, Mike Ryan, WHO's Executive Director for the Health Emergencies Preparedness and Response

Programme, stated the Phase 1 research was standard in any outbreak, and WHO normally relies on national authorities to conduct the Phase 1 investigation to identify “patient zero.” Ryan hopes to have the international team visit China and, WHO continues work with the Chinese government to finalize dates, but Ryan was unable to offer any specific timeline.

10. ~~(SBU)~~ On initial results from the investigations, Ryan stated the initial cluster of cases around the Wuhan seafood market is a clear early indicator, but there could be other original sources of the virus. Many of the first cases of COVID-19, Ryan continued, were not associated with the market itself, and there was likely human-to-human transmission prior to the identification of the cluster at the market. Along with severe hospitalized cases in December, 2019, there must have been additional milder or asymptomatic cases. Ryan used the mink-to-human outbreak as an example of animal-to-human transmission that occurred in multiple countries around the same time to demonstrate the complexity of determining a single origin source. Ryan noted the WHO team has been in regular contact with OIE and FAO during the July/August trip and after, but he did not share to what extent those organizations were involved in approving the TORs.

11. ~~(SBU)~~ Peter Ben Embarek, WHO’s Programme Manager for Monitoring Nutritional Status and Food Safety Events, informed Member States that WHO had not released the names of the experts until they had a firm commitment from each one, given the time required. Embarek stated there are ten Chinese experts and ten international experts working together, and he read the list of ten experts (**Note:** WHO received nominations for the expert team from Member States and the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) from which WHO selected the international team which China accepted in October (ref C). **End Note:**

- Thea Fisher (Nordsjællands Hospital, Denmark)
- John Watson (UK, Department of Health)
- Marion Koopmans (Netherlands, Erasmus Med Center)
- Dominic Dwyer (Australia, Westmead Hospital)
- Vladamir Dedkov (Russia, Institut Pasteur)
- Hung Nguyen (Vietnam, International Livestock Research Institute)
- Fabian Leendertz (Germany, Robert Koch Institute)
- Peter Daszak (USA, EcoHealth Alliance)
- Farag El Mubasher (Sudanese, working in Qatar’s Ministry of Health)
- Ken Maeda, (Japan, Dept of Veterinary Science)

ACT-A Still Seeking Urgent Funding

12. ~~(SBU)~~ The co-chairs of the ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council, ministers from Norway and South Africa, summarized the work of the Facilitation Council and repeated their appeals for funding. Recent pledges raised nearly one billion USD, but the ACT-A still needs US\$4.5 billion by the end of the year and nearly US\$28 billion in total. The co-chairs are preparing for a third Facilitation Council meeting in January or February of 2021 where they hope to secure the US\$4.5 billion. The co-chairs, as well as the UK, stated more support was needed from major G7 and G20 economies, and the UK noted ACT-A would be a focus of their 2021 G7 chairmanship. The co-chairs also noted the impressive results from Pfizer and Moderna on their

COVID-19 vaccines required urgent action to ensure those and other products could be delivered equitably through the ACT-A. The co-chairs shared much of the same economic and political argument for funding as in briefings in early November (ref A, B).

13. ~~(SBU)~~ Comment:

(b)(5)
End Comment.

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Signature: BREMBERG

Drafted By:
Cleared By:

GENEVA;
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Advancing global understanding of the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus & Human/Animal interface COVID-19 issues

*Member States briefing
19 November 2020*



**World Health
Organization**

- **February WHO mission to China:** Recommendation to investigate the source of the virus.
- **World Health Assembly 73 May 2020:** Adopted Resolution 73.1 on the COVID-19 response requesting WHO: *“to continue to work closely with the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and countries, as part of the One-Health Approach to identify the zoonotic source of the virus and the route of introduction to the human population, including the possible role of intermediate hosts, including through efforts such as scientific and collaborative field missions, which will enable targeted interventions and a research agenda to reduce the risk of similar events occurring, as well as to provide guidance on how to prevent infection with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV2) in animals and humans and prevent the establishment of new zoonotic reservoirs, as well as to reduce further risks of emergence and transmission of zoonotic diseases”*
- **WHO advanced mission July-August 2020 to China:** To develop terms of references for an international multi-sectoral mission to support additional studies and investigations into the source of the virus.



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SARS-CoV-2 virus origin: International team & studies in China

- WHO deployed and advance team in July-August 2020 to China with 3 objectives:
 - 1) To review work and studies already undertaken in the country;
 - 2) to identify knowledge gaps; and
 - 3) to develop terms of references for an international multi-sectoral mission to support the development and conduct of additional studies and investigations into the source of the virus.
- Terms of reference for studies to be undertaken and the composition of an international team to support the work in China have been agreed.
- ToRs includes a epidemiological studies around the initial cases and the market in Wuhan and more long term targeted studies in human and animal populations



Meetings of the international team – China updates

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- Members of the International Team have started meetings the members of the Chinese Team. It gave an opportunity for the international Team to get updated on the results of past studies done in China.

1) Epidemiological studies :

Of the 106 detected clinical COVID-19 cases until 10 January 2020, 81 cases were associated with the Huanan market (76% of all cases) with 57 of them workers at the market, working at 36 different stores.

- Three scenarios for the introduction of the virus to the Wuhan wholesale market are likely:

1. Introduction via live animals;
2. Introduction via a human case with subsequent human to human spread ;
3. Introduction via product(s) contaminated with the virus.



**World Health
Organization**

2) Investigations at the Wuhan wholesale market:

None of the 366 dead animal samples (17 species, 156 animals) from the market tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. Of the 842 environmental samples, 69 tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

- These findings are in line with the human epidemiological investigation results showing the market was substantially contaminated and played a role in the event.

3) Wild animal studies (serology):

Sera of 110 wild animal species, were analyzed. 7084 samples from 11 provinces from 2015-2019 were found negative for SARS-CoV-2. 1000 additional serum samples collected in 2020 from different provinces were also tested negative.

Meetings of the international team – China updates

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4) Domestic and farm animals:

18,708 domestic animal samples, including pigs, ox, poultry, dogs and cats, from 10+ provinces were all tested negative for SARS-CoV-2.

Additional studies to focus on farmed animals including cattle, pigs, goats, ducks, sheep, cats, dogs, minks, foxes, racoon, geese and chicken.

China has had no report of animal to human transmission from mink populations.

5) Food products and food safety

Out of approx. 900 000 samples of imported frozen food products, SARS-CoV-2 was found on few food and food packaging. Live virus was isolated from samples from food packaging.

On at least one occasion, food handlers were reported to have been most likely infected from handling frozen food products.

While a rare event, it could play a role in the reintroduction of the virus in areas/countries who have controlled the domestic transmission of the virus in the human population.



**World Health
Organization**

▪ **Animal studies :**

- Ferrets, mink and cats can get infected and can transmit the virus.
- Outbreaks in Mink farms in Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Spain Sweden, and USA.
 - Mink are susceptible and can transmit the virus to other minks as well as to humans (Netherlands and Denmark).
 - Virus mutation rates in mink appears to be more intense than in humans reflecting an adaptation to mink.
 - Mink virus variants detected in Denmark in humans triggering a total cull of the 17 M mink population in the country.
 - Mink virus variant detected in human in another 6 countries.
 - Denmark and Netherlands experience show the difficulties of preventing the virus spread between farms and the difficulty of preventing spill over from mink to humans.



21 projects underway supported by WHO. These research projects cover:

- Animal susceptibility studies
- Virus behavior and dynamic in animals.
- Animal surveys in different regions
- Understanding drivers for animal trade for food
- Improving traditional food markets
- Persistence studies of the virus on food surfaces
- Feeding studies
- Better understanding of recent reports of positive human and sewage samples from different countries dating in 2019



Questions?



From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	Geneva/WHO: Tedros Sidesteps Joint Mission Queries, Pleads for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response funds in February 19 Briefing (Coronavirus Reporting 4PPO)
Date:	Fri, 21 Feb 2020 14:53:44 GMT

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E.O.: 13526
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Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: Geneva/WHO: Tedros Sidesteps Joint Mission Queries, Pleads for COVID-19 Preparedness and Response funds in February 19 Briefing (Coronavirus Reporting 4PPO)

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Key Points:**

- At a February 19 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) briefing for Member States, World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros announced these COVID-19 briefings will be weekly.
- WHO sidestepped questions from Member States on the WHO joint mission team's experts, work, and expected outputs.
- Tedros pleaded for more rapid funding of the WHO's \$675 million COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) resource request, noting WHO had only received \$1 million out of the requested \$61.5 million needed for WHO. He underscored the need for balanced investments between immediate public health preparedness and response and longer-term priorities like vaccine development. (<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/strategic-preparedness-and-response-plan-for-the-new-coronavirus>)
- WHO presented new "Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response" (attached) to complement the SPRP.
- WHO reiterated the need for Member States to report additional travel restrictions to WHO and presented conclusions indicating that travel restrictions may create time for

additional preparedness efforts during the containment phase of an outbreak. The Chinese Ambassador urged countries to avoid “overreactive and excessive” measures restricting travel and trade.

WHO sidesteps requests for more information on WHO joint mission team in China

2. ~~(SBU)~~ World Health Organization (WHO) Director General Tedros held a COVID-19 briefing for Member States on February 19, 2020, stating at the outset that such events would be held weekly. Tedros announced that the WHO joint mission of experts currently on the ground was working with their Chinese counterparts to look at severity and transmissibility of COVID-19, as well as the efficacy of Chinese response measures. Tedros did not provide any information on the team’s access, work, or preliminary findings, but said only that the team was “fully empowered.” WHO did not respond to Member State questions about how the mission team members were selected or who they were. Dr. Tedros provided only a list of home institutions for the international members of the joint team (which is comprised of 12 international experts and 12 Chinese experts). According to WHO, the international experts include specialists in epidemiology, virology, clinical management, outbreak control and public health from: the National University of Singapore, Saint Petersburg Pasteur Institute, National Institute of Infectious Diseases (Japan), Seoul National University College of Medicine (Republic of Korea), Nigeria Centre for Disease Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH), Russian National Medical Research Center of Phthiopulmonology and Infectious Diseases, and the Robert Koch Institute (Germany).

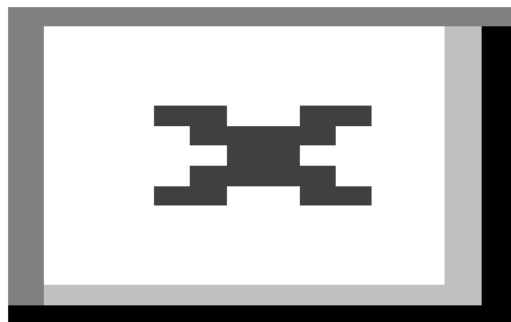
Tedros pleads for more rapid funding, balanced investments

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Tedros repeatedly expressed concern about the slow response to funding the WHO’s \$675 million Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) resource request, 90% of which Tedros said is for country-level priority public health measures to prepare for and respond to COVID-19. Tedros said that WHO had only received \$1 million toward the SPRP request and expressed frustration at the slow pace of pledges moving to funds on hand. He noted that WHO had already spent \$9 million from the WHO’s Contingency Fund for Emergencies to respond to COVID-19. The DG and other WHO representatives uniformly underscored the need for balanced investments and cautioned against overinvesting now in long-term efforts like vaccine development to the detriment of investment in immediate public health preparedness and response needs, particularly in countries with high-risk and weak health system capacity. WHO presented a new 17-page draft supporting document, “Operational Planning Guidelines to Support Country Preparedness and Response” (attached), which supplements the broad strategic actions identified in SPRP and provides action checklists, performance indicators, and line-item cost estimates for country-level preparedness and response actions. WHO noted the role of the recently activated U.N. Crisis Management team to rapidly establish global/regional coordination and operational support platforms and to work with high-risk/high vulnerability countries. WHO also cited that the Joint External Evaluation (JEE) process and the 2018 State Parties Self-Assessment Annual Reporting Tool (SPAR) are “bearing fruit” as countries and regions assess their vulnerability and strengths for addressing a COVID-19 outbreak.

4. ~~(SBU)~~ Tedros warned that the world has “a window of opportunity...we must not squander.” Tedros said that WHO’s “greatest concern is in Africa” and other developing countries with weak health systems, and that thanks to WHO’s efforts, 40 labs in Africa and 29 labs in the Americas would be able to diagnose COVID-19 by the end of this week. In addition, Tedros said that WHO shipped supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) to 21 countries and would ship PPE to another 106 countries in the coming weeks. The DG underscored that “without resources, especially for countries with weaker health systems, we’ll miss the window of opportunity and have a crisis on our hands.”

Travel restrictions

5. ~~(SBU)~~ WHO once again reiterated the International Health Regulations (IHR) Article 43 requirements, reminding Member States that they are obliged to report the rationale for any additional measures that significantly interfere with travel/trade to WHO within 48 hours of implementation. WHO said that 35 airlines from 23 countries had suspended service to/from China but acknowledged that most of these decisions were made by private companies and thus not under IHR purview. Twenty-eight countries reported additional measures – such as official advice against travel to China, flight suspensions, denial of entry to travelers from China, and 14-day quarantines – to WHO, 22 of which included some form of entry ban. The two most common public health rationales for such measures were (1) vulnerability/limited country capacity to respond, and (2) unknowns about the new disease’s epidemiology (including transmission characteristics). In a private exchange with Mission staff after the briefing, WHO staff said that WHO had only gone back to a few Member States and asked them to reconsider their additional measures. No Member State contacted changed their approach as a result of these discussions. (**Note:** Under IHR, WHO does not have a mechanism to force states to withdraw or change any of their national public health measures. **End Note.**)



6. ~~(SBU)~~ WHO concluded that travel restrictions may create time for additional preparedness

efforts during the containment phase of an outbreak. (**Note:** WHO's January 30 PHEIC declaration noted that the epidemic was in the containment phase. 22 countries reported additional travel measures to WHO between January 31 to February 6, with an additional 6 countries reporting such measures to WHO between February 6-12. **End Note.**) In their review of the effectiveness of past travel restrictions, WHO concluded that: (1) travel restrictions during the H1N1 epidemic delayed the outbreak's peak by three days and international spread by one week; (2) flight suspensions in 2014 delayed Ebola's spread by one week; and (3) China's internal travel bans delayed international spread of COVID-19 by about three days. In the February 19 WHO SitRep, WHO presented modeled data on the impact of travel restrictions on transmission noting that to be effective travel restrictions should be paired with other public health interventions, such as early case isolation, other forms of mobility restrictions, social distancing, and population-level behavioral changes.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese Ambassador repeated the now-familiar talking point that China is acting "always in the spirit of transparency, responsibility, and collaboration with the international community" and echoed Tedros's language on the need to "seize this window of opportunity" to end the epidemic. He expressed China's hope that all parties follow WHO travel guidance and avoid "overreactive and excessive" measures restricting travel and trade. The Ambassador emphasized that China's response to COVID-19 had made full use of the "advantages in the Chinese system of surveillance, research and development, [and] public opinion guidance," among other areas, and said that this hard work has meant that "the situation is now changing positively," as the number of new confirmed cases per day outside Hubei province had decreased for 15 consecutive days. However, he also cautioned against complacency.

New China CDC data: 19% cases severe/critical, 2.3% fatal

8. ~~(SBU)~~ WHO presented new epidemiological data and analysis from China CDC showing an ongoing lag between the date of symptom onset (which according to these data peaked around January 26) and the date of diagnosis (which peaked around February 5). The same analysis from China CDC found that the epidemiological curve and timeline for 3,019 infected healthcare workers in China was similar to that of the general public, and that 14.6% health worker cases were severe or critical, with a 0.3% fatality rate among health workers. The latest China CDC analysis of 72,314 cases also indicated that 81% of COVID-19 cases were mild, 14% severe, and 5% critical, with 2.3% fatality rate (0.6% fatality rate in China outside Hubei, and 0.3% fatality rate outside China). China CDC assessed that 1.2% of COVID-19 infections were asymptomatic. WHO noted that those hospitalized with COVID-19 tend to be hospitalized for a long time – 19 or more days.

9. ~~(SBU)~~ **Comment:**

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Comment.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature: BREMBERG

Drafted By:

Cleared By:

Approved By:

Released By:

Attachments:

GENEVA;

HHS/OGA;

MEPA;

POL-ECON;

EXEX;

GENEVA;

WHO COVID-19 Operational Planning Guidelines.pdf,
20200219_WHO_COVID-19 MS Briefing slides.pptx

(b)(6)

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~~SBU~~

Sender:	"SMART Archive" <>
Recipient:	SMART Core <>

Update on COVID-19

19 February 2020

Evolution of the COVID-19 outbreak (31 December 2019 – 18 February 2020)

<p>Dec 31, 2019 Cluster of 27 pneumonia cases of unknown origin with 7 severe cases reported to China National Health Commission</p>	<p>Jan 11, 2020 First fatal case in China</p>	<p>Jan 13, 2020 First confirmed case in Nepal</p>	<p>Jan 19, 2020 First confirmed case in Republic of Korea</p>	<p>Jan 23, 2020 First confirmed case in Singapore Shutdown of Wuhan City</p>	<p>Jan 26, 2020 First confirmed case in Canada</p>	<p>Jan 28, 2020 First confirmed case in Germany</p>	<p>Jan 29, 2020 First confirmed cases in UAE, Finland and Italy</p>	<p>Jan 30, 2020 2nd Emergency Committee – WHO declares a PHEIC First confirmed cases in India and Philippines</p>	<p>Feb 5, 2020 First cases announced on Princess Diamond cruise ship</p>	<p>Feb 14, 2020 First confirmed case in Egypt</p>
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<p>Jan 8, 2020 First confirmed case in Thailand</p>	<p>Jan 1, 2020 Huanan Seafood Wholesale market closed</p>	<p>Jan 12, 2020 Whole genome sequenced with WHO</p>	<p>Jan 14, 2020 First confirmed case in Japan</p>	<p>Jan 20, 2020 Infection in HCWs reported First confirmed case in USA China confirms human to human transmission</p>	<p>Jan 22-23, 2020 1st Emergency Committee</p>	<p>Jan 24, 2020 First confirmed cases in France and Viet Nam</p>	<p>Jan 25, 2020 First confirmed cases in Australia and Malaysia</p>	<p>Jan 27, 2020 First confirmed cases in Cambodia and Sri Lanka WHO Director General in China</p>	<p>Jan 31, 2020 First confirmed cases in Russian Federation, Sweden and UK</p>	<p>Feb 1, 2020 Index case on Princess Diamond cruise ship confirmed in Hong Kong</p>	<p>Feb 2, 2020 First fatal case outside China</p>	<p>Feb 4, 2020 First confirmed case in Belgium</p>	<p>Feb 15, 2020 Case confirmed from Westerdam cruise ship</p>
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Current situation (as of 19 Feb, 6AM Geneva time)

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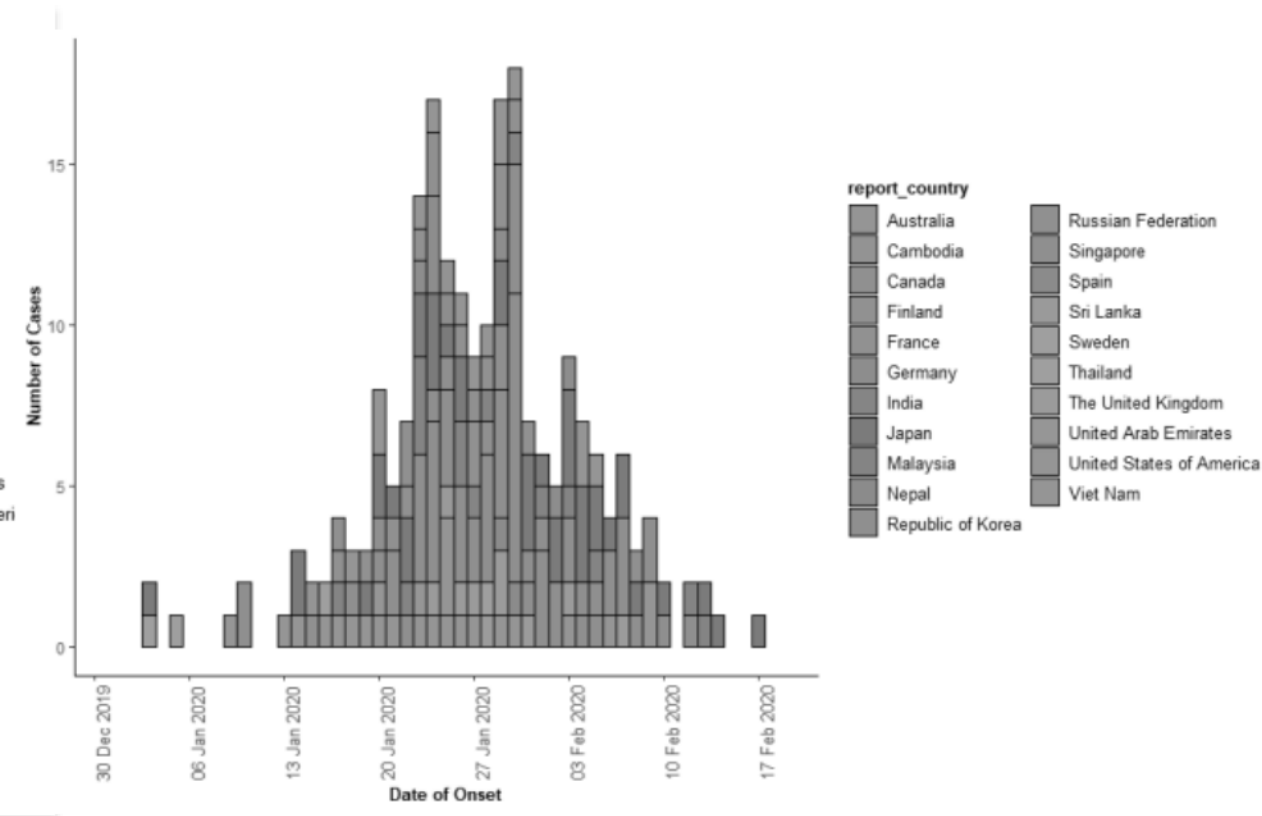
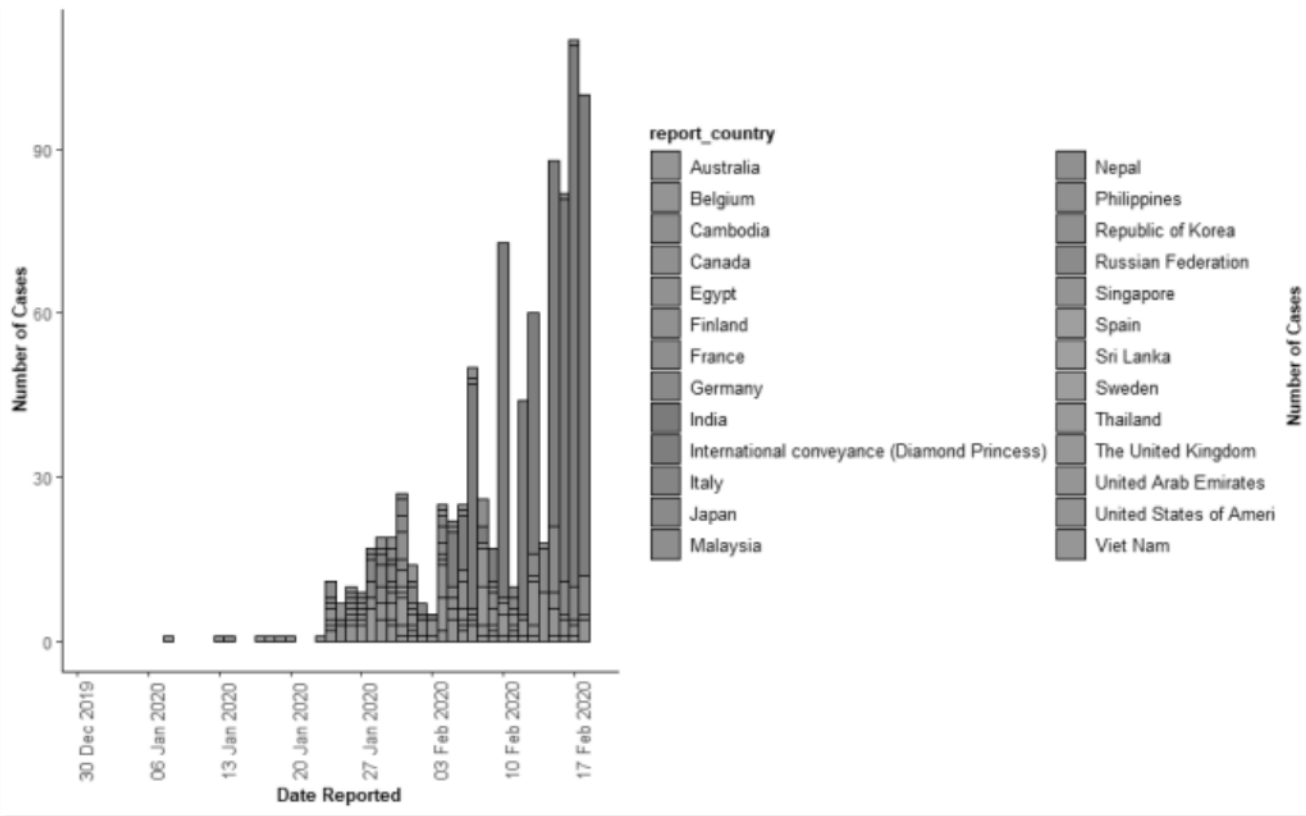
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Updates from last 24 hours
China: 1,751 new confirmed (lab+clinical) cases: 97% (1,693) cases from Hubei 136 new deaths: Hubei(132), Heilongjiang(1), Shandong(1), Guangdong(1), Guizhou(1)) 1,185 new suspected cases
Outside China: 114 new confirmed cases: International conveyance (Diamond Princess Cruise Ship)(88), Republic of Korea(15), Japan(7), Singapore(4)

Between 31 Dec 2019 - 19 Feb 2020
75,197 confirmed (lab+clinical) cases
2,009 deaths
China 74,279 confirmed (lab+clinical) cases 11,977 severe cases 2,006 deaths: 96% in Hubei
Outside China 918 cases from 25 countries 3 deaths: Philippines (1), Japan(1), France(1)

Reported confirmed cases outside China (as of 19 Feb 6AM)

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Number of cases based on date of report

(n=918)

Number of cases based on date of onset

(n=218)

Days since last case

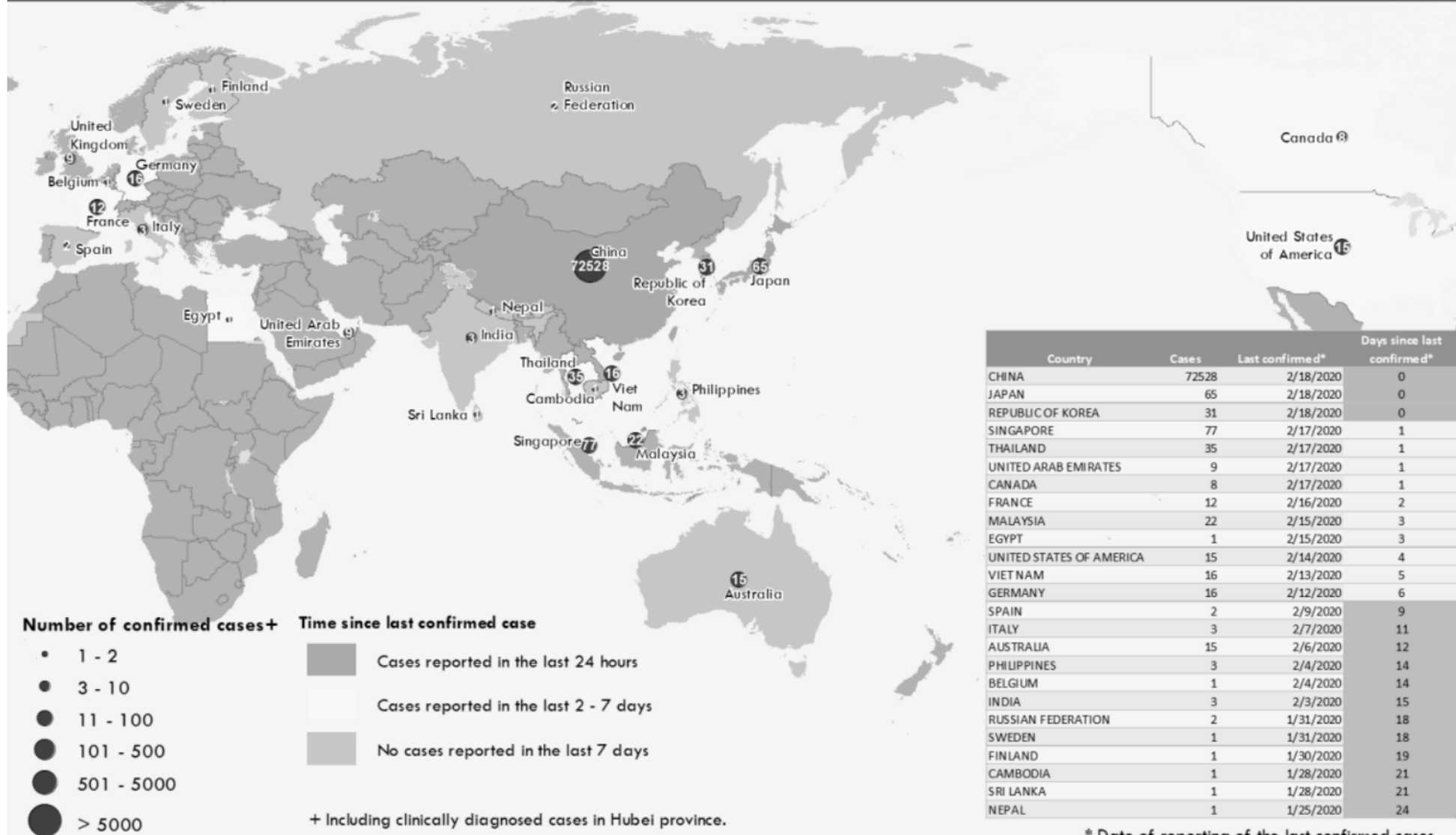
Distribution of COVID-19 cases as of 18 January 2020

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Epidemiologic curve COVID-19 by onset and diagnosis date

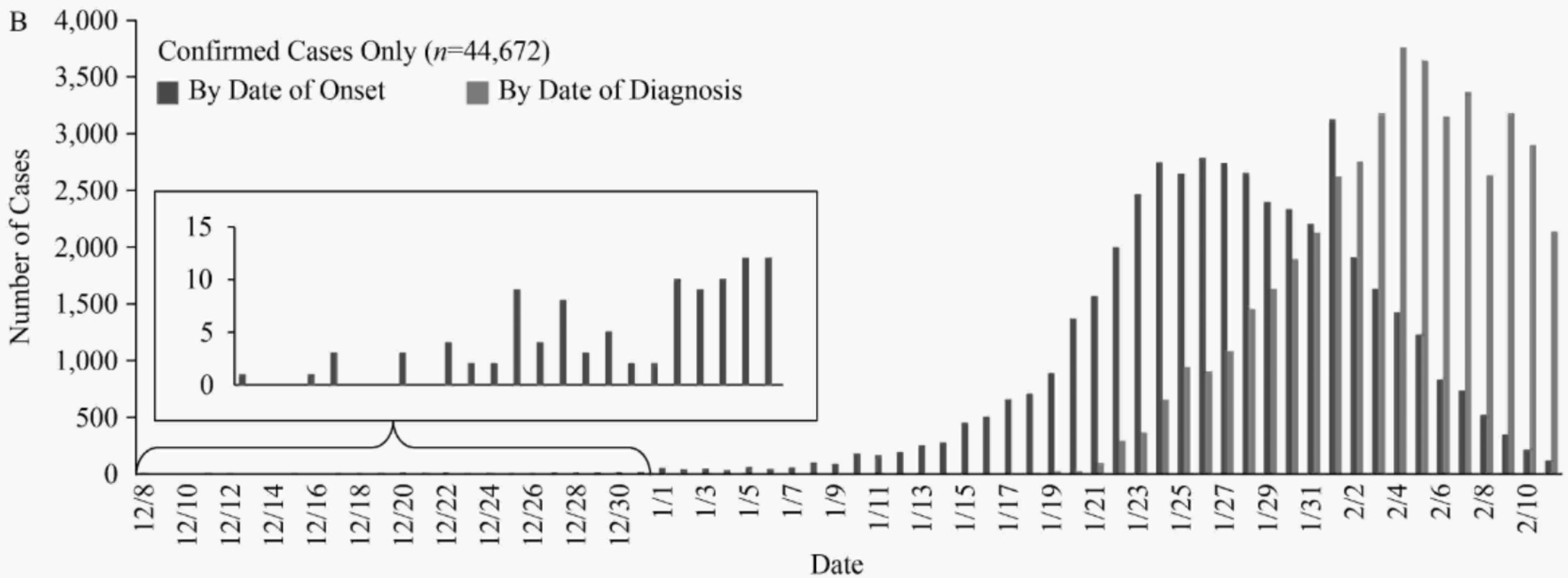
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World Health Organization

Source: China CDC Weekly submitted 14.02.20

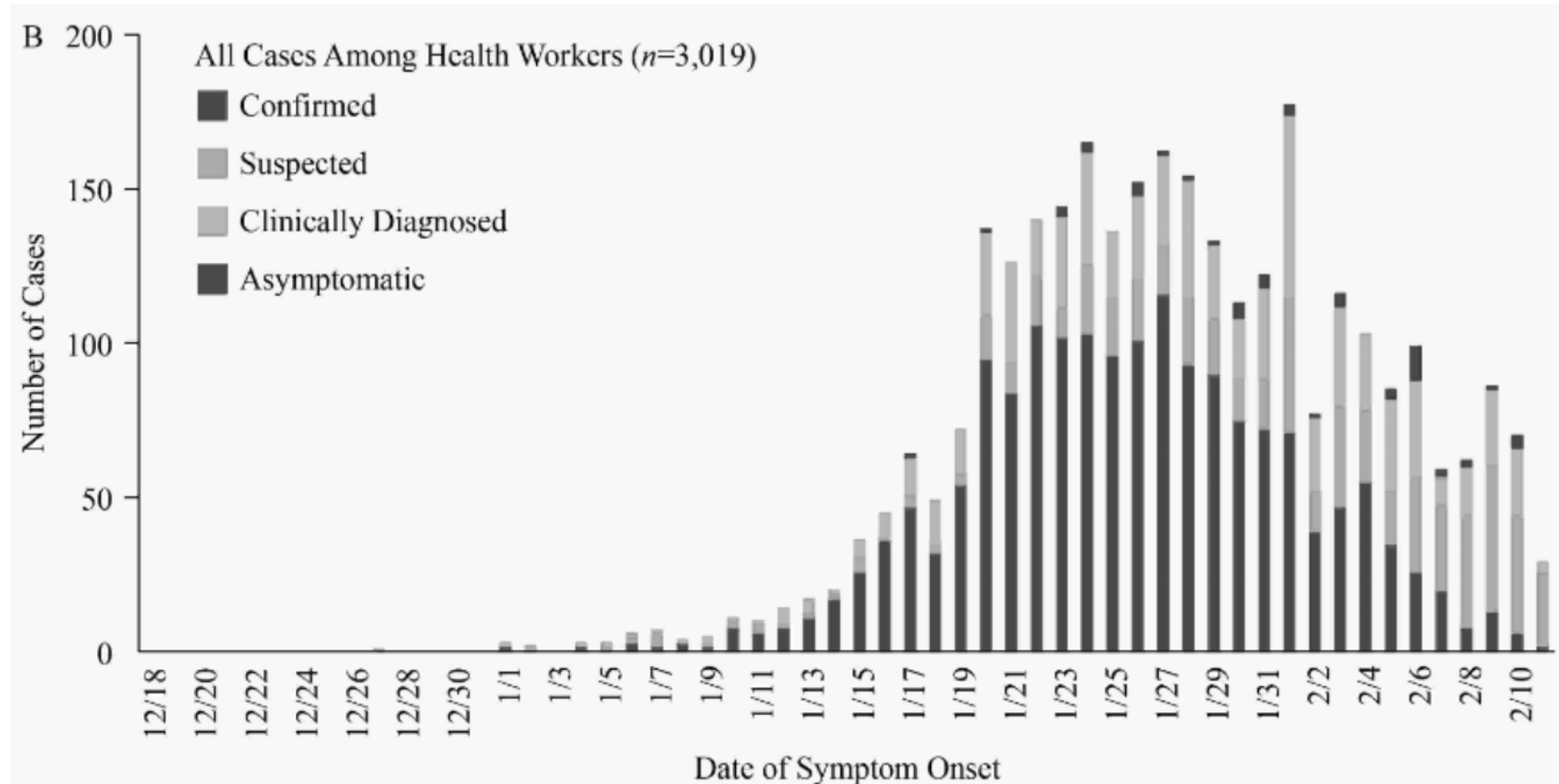
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Latest analysis by China CDC – health workers infected in China

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- 3,019 cases among health workers Includes lab-confirmed, clinically diagnosed, suspected, asymptomatic 14.6% of health workers cases severe or critical Lab-confirmed: 1,716 0.3% case fatality rate (CFR)



Latest analysis by China CDC - Severity [n=72,314]

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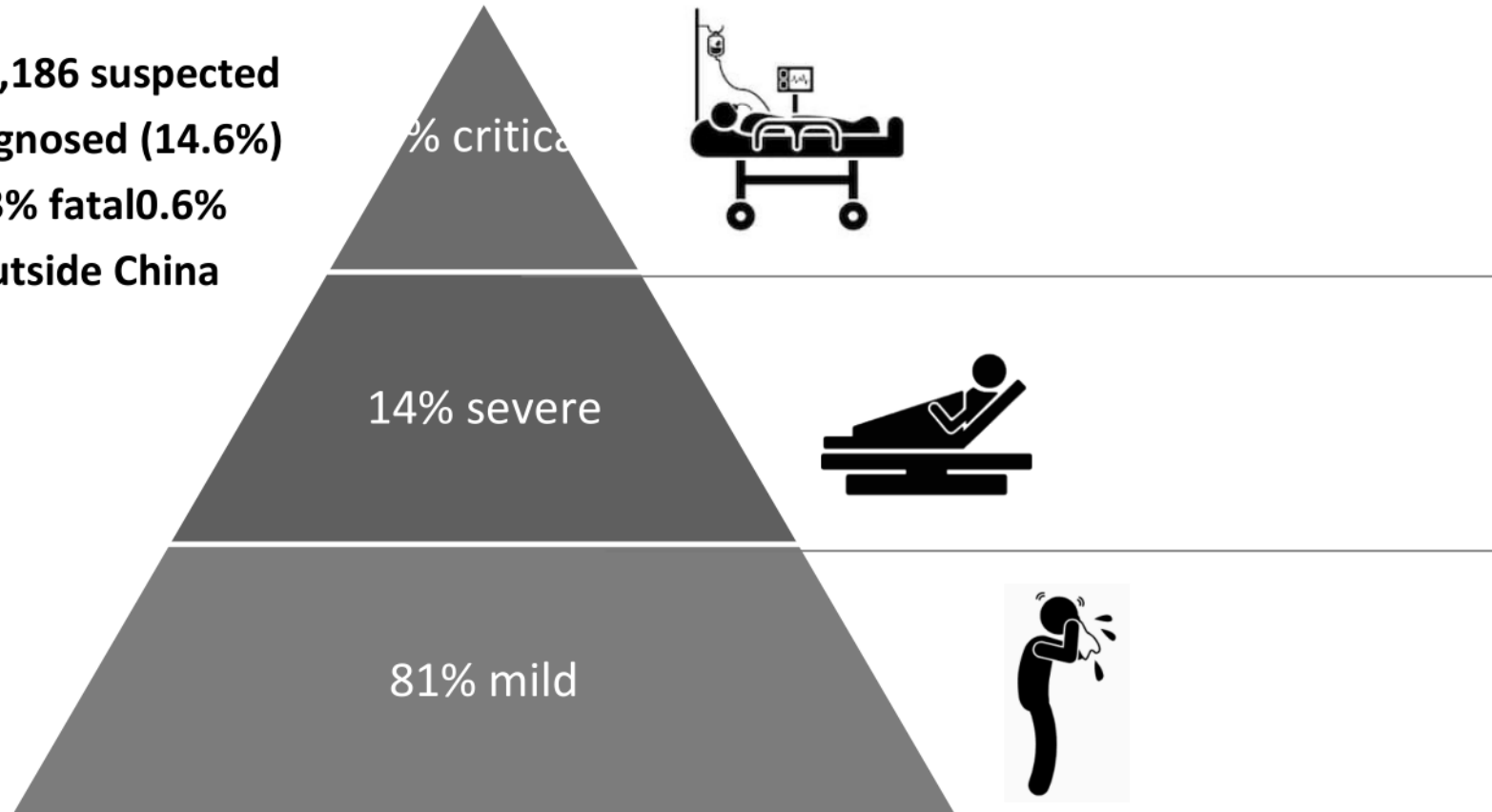
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- 44,672 confirmed (61.8%) 16,186 suspected (22.4%) 10,567 clinically-diagnosed (14.6%) 889 asymptomatic (1.2%) 2.3% fatal 0.6% China, outside Hubei 0.3% outside China



World Health Organization

Source: China CDC Weekly submitted 14.02.20

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- Health workers are at the front line of the outbreak response and are exposed to hazards that put them at risk of infection. Health workers at risk of infection with coronavirus include: ambulance staff, reception staff, health assistants, nurses, doctors, laboratory workers, cleaners. Specific guidance and tools are being developed to protect health workers in different settings: use of PPE, biosafety in laboratories, HCW risk assessment tool. Health workers have rights, roles and responsibilities that will help protect them from infection. <https://www.epi-win.com/all-resources/rights-roles-and-responsibilities-of-healthcare-workers>

Priorities for stopping transmission and mitigating global impact

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- **Limit human-to-human transmission**
Reduce secondary infections among close contacts and health care workers
Prevent transmission amplification and super spreading events
Prevent further international spread
Identify, isolate and care for patients early
Equip countries to detect, isolate and care for infected patients
Provide optimized care
Reduce transmission from animal source
Identify animal source(s) and limit exposure
Address critical unknowns
Clinical severity, extent of transmission and infection, treatment options, diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines
Communicate critical risk and event information to all communities & counter misinformation
Minimize social and economic impact through multisectoral partnerships

WHO technical guidance to support countries (translated into 6 UN languages)
Surveillance and case definitions
Laboratory testing
Clinical management
Infection prevention and control
Home care
Risk communication & community engagement
Country readiness
Disease commodity package
Reducing risk of transmission from animals
Use of masks
Mass gatherings
Points of Entry guidance
Investigation protocols

COVID-19 Operational planning guidelines for country plans

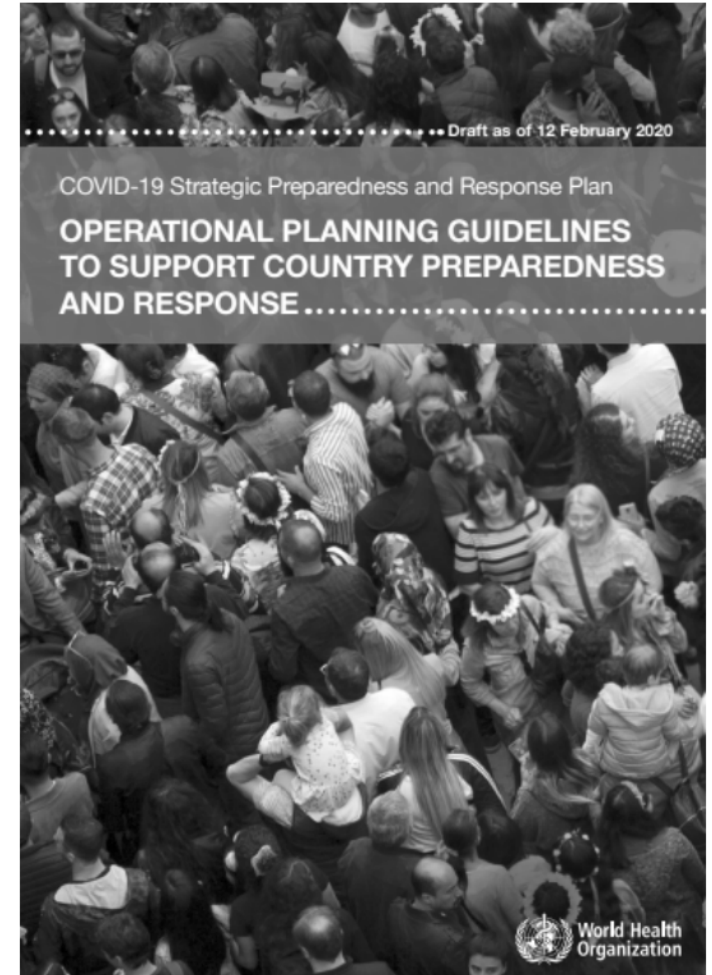
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- Practical guidance for UN Country Teams and partners for developing country plans to prepare for and respond to COVID-19, in line with Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP) guidelines released Feb 12 Initial focus on low capacity countries with: high-risk of imported cases, or imported cases and preparing for local transmission of up to 100 cases



Next steps for public health response

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1. UN crisis management team activated to rapidly establish global/regional coordination and operational support platforms
Work with UNCT to support high risk/high vulnerability countries to:
Identify appropriate coordination mechanism and key technical/operational partners at country level
Map existing pandemic preparedness capacity/programmes and key gaps based on needs outlined above
Engage with country level partners including UN country team and local donors to rapidly scale support to national systems to address key gaps
Establish monitoring mechanisms for key performance indicators
Accelerate priority research and innovation

Additional health measures under Article 43 of the IHR – provisions for WHO and for the State Parties

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PUBLIC HEALTH EVENT

WHO DG actions: Public health advice or Temporary Recommendations if PHEIC NON-BINDING

State Parties may implement additional health measures. If significantly interfere with intl traffic (>24h)

SPs **obliged** to report to WHO on measures and rationale within 48h of implementation

WHO assesses information provided. WHO may request SPs to reconsider measures if not justified

Measures continue despite lack of justification

Measures reversed

SPs **obliged** to reconsider additional health measures within 3 months

DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION BY WHO

WHO monitors for risk assessment purpose. WHO may request rationale

WHO obliged to share with other SPs -> EIS announcement on: Additional measures. Public health rationale

WHO obliged to report annually to WHA -> overall summary of: Additional measures. Public health rationale

General overview of travel measures in relation to COVID-19

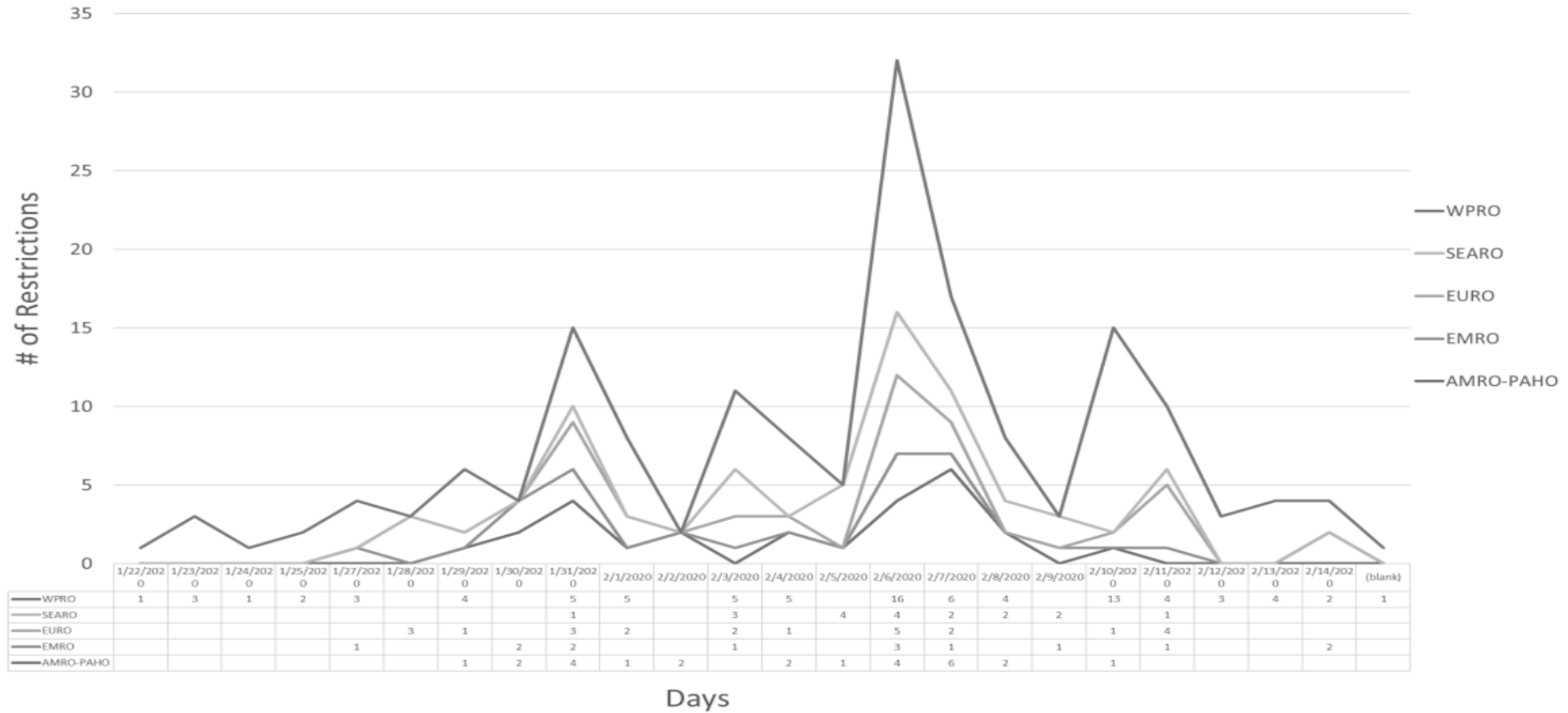
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of Travel Restrictions (ALL Types) by Day and WHO Region
1/22/2020-2/14/2020



Types of measures from 28 official reports

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- 22/28 countries some form of entry ban Some countries only temporary measures Types of measures that countries have reported, include: Avoid unnecessary travel, advice not to travel to China Flight suspension Deny entry of travellers from China Quarantine for 14 days (for repatriated, business and residents) Some countries implement multiple measures

of Justifications by Type

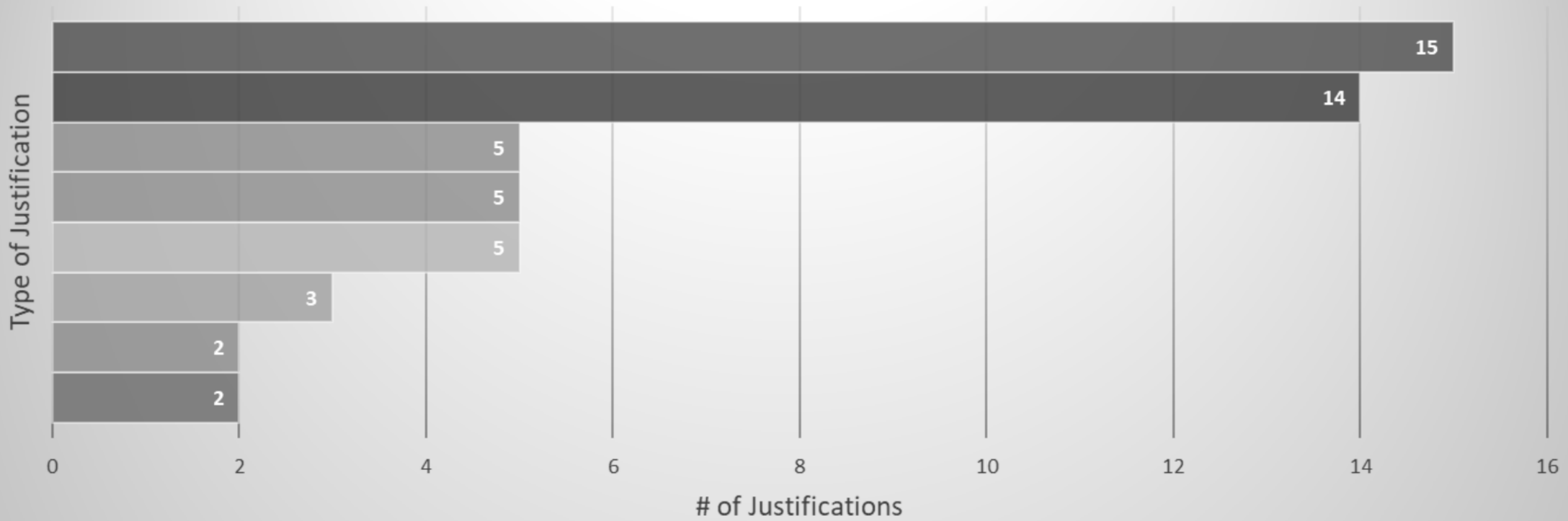
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- Vulnerability and/or Limited country capacity
- Disease Epidemiology
- WHO PHEIC Declaration
- Public anxiety & SafetySecurity
- Virus Characteristics
- Economic Impact
- Unavailability of Treatment
- Spread Prevention

Outbreak phases, WHO advice on international travel, and official reports on additional health measures

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January 10 2020 WHO issued first travel advice: advises against travel or trade restrictions based on currently available information ; and self-protection measures for international travelers

January 22-23 First meeting of EC- WHO advice against travel or trade restrictions

January 24 2020 WHO issued second travel advice: recommends exit screening in China, and balanced wording on comprehensive entry screening

January 27 WHO issued third travel advice: clarifies entry screening procedures

January 30 2nd Emergency Committee – PHEIC – no restrictions of international travel or trade
Containment phase

February 6 First EIS Circular letter

February 12 Second EIS

January 20 China reported H2H

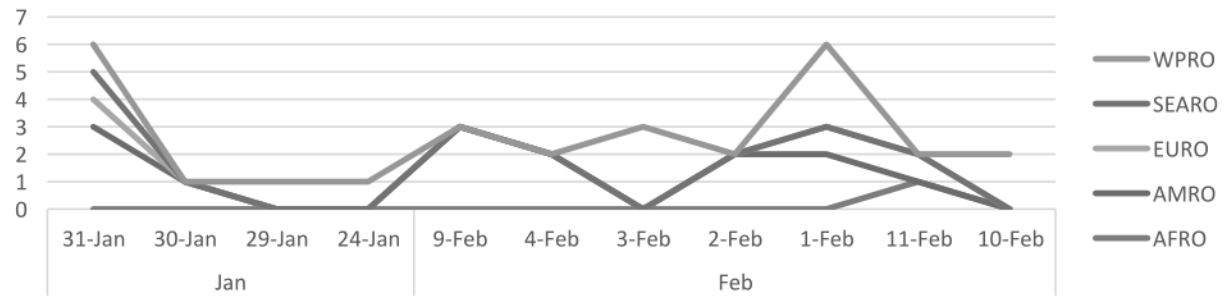
January 23 Wuhan travel ban (internal and international)

January 31 – to February 6 Peak of travel measures – 22 countries reported to WHO: AFR – 0; AMR – 10; EMR – 0; EUR – 2; SEAR – 1; WPR – 9

February 6 - 12 Additional 6 countries reported to WHO: AFR – 1; AMR – 3; EMR – 0; EUR – 2; SEAR – 0; WPR – 2

December 31 2019 China notified WHO

December 8, 2019 Likely beginning of the outbreak in China



Evidence on effectiveness of travel restrictions

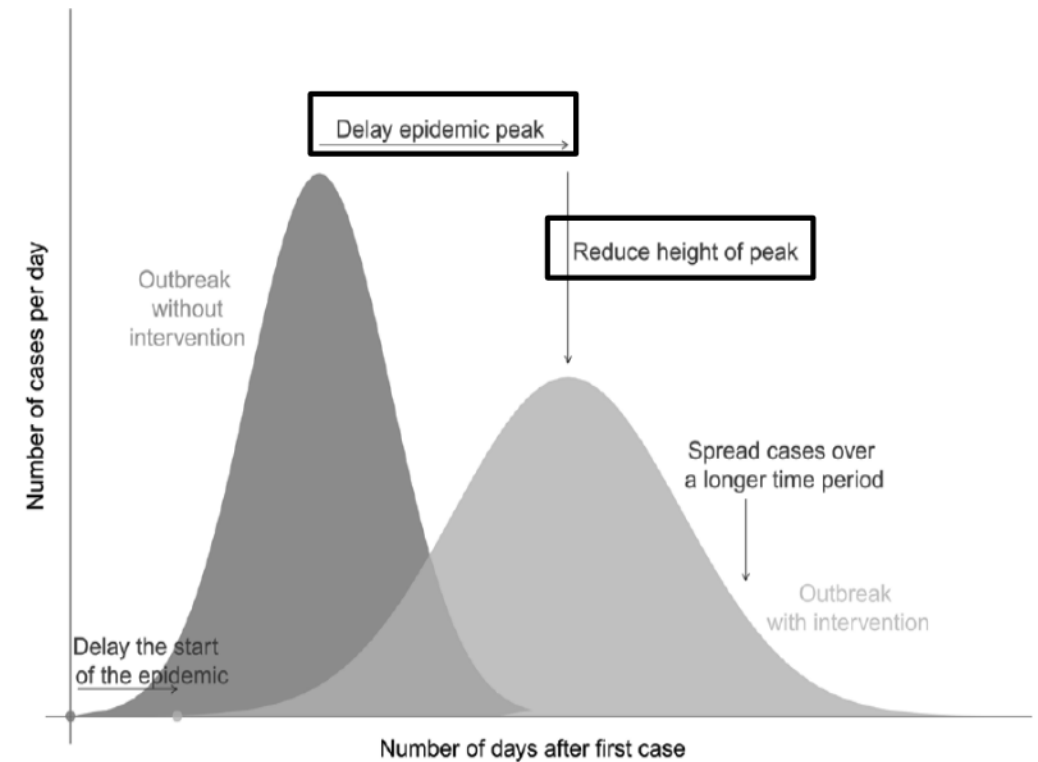
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- Pandemic influenza H1N1 - systematic review (15 studies): delay by 3 days the peak of the outbreak and by a week the international spread; reduce the height of the peak after 10 days restrictions are not effective anymoreEbola 2014– modelling: flight suspensions delay the spread by a weekCOVID -19 – modelling (2 studies):China travel ban delayed the international spread by 2.91 days



objectives of travel “restrictions”, early on during an outbreak: not to halt the epidemic but to delay the peak or reduce the height of the peak, so that to avoid public health response being overflowed.

From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	DOS Clearance on CDC-China MOU
Date:	Fri, 04 Nov 2016 19:07:31 GMT

UNCLASSIFIED

MRN: 16 MDA 22612
Date/DTG: Nov 04, 2016 / 041907Z NOV 16
From: (b)(6)
Action: (b)(6) ROUTINE
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, TBIO, CN
Subject: DOS Clearance on CDC-China MOU

Good afternoon (b)(6)

(b)(5)

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Drafted By: OES_EX: (b)(6)
Approved By: OES-DRL/EX: (b)(6)
Released By: OES_EX: (b)(6)
Attachments: MOU_China_US_CDC Sept 21 -L-.doc

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Sender:	"SMART Archive" <>
Recipient:	SMART Core <>

**Memorandum of Understanding
Between the
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
and the
United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

SECTION I

(b)(5)

SECTION II

(b)(5)

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SECTION III

(b)(5)

SECTION IV

(b)(5)

SECTION V

(b)(5)

SECTION VI

(b)(5)

Signed at _____, on [date], 2016, in both the English and Chinese language.

(b)(5); (b)(6)

Chinese Center for Disease Control
and Prevention

US Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention

From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	China: USAID Administrator Smith Leads First Annual USAID-MOFCOM Dialogue
Date:	Tue, 10 May 2016 11:24:23 GMT

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~~SBU~~



MRN: 16 BEIJING 1578
Date/DTG: May 10, 2016 / 101122Z MAY 16
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: EAID, ECON, EAGR, ECIN, EFIN, PGOV, PREL, SHLH, TSPL, KORB, KHIV, KGHI, UNGA, TRSY, HHS, CDC, AID, COM, UNDP, AU-1, TL, SL, LR, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 16 DILI 122
B) 15 BEIJING 3682
C) 15 STATE 84498
Subject: China: USAID Administrator Smith Leads First Annual USAID-MOFCOM Dialogue

1. (U) **Summary:** The United States and China agreed to enhance collaboration on global health and food security, deepen coordination on humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and finalize financial support for multilateral organization projects during the U.S.-China Development Cooperation Dialogue held in Beijing on April 28. Co-chaired by USAID Administrator Gayle Smith and Vice Minister of Commerce Zhang Xiangchen, the Dialogue fulfilled a commitment of the U.S.-China Development Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding signed during President Xi Jinping's September 2015 state visit. The tone throughout the Dialogue was positive and constructive, with interlocutors from both sides able to substantively discuss a range of development ideas and proposals. The Chinese side brought a full interagency complement, including representatives at the Deputy Director General (DDG) level and above from the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture, the National Health and Family Planning Commission, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the China Earthquake Administration, and the Office of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs (an influential Communist Party policy team). The U.S. interagency was represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of State, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of the Treasury, and the U.S. Embassy Beijing Economic Section. The Dialogue

was divided into a half-hour one-on-one pre-meeting between the Administrator and Zhang, followed by a three-hour morning session led by the co-chairs and a lunch hosted by Zhang. The Dialogue concluded with a three-hour afternoon expert-level session chaired by USAID Assistant to the Administrator (AA) for the Bureau of Policy, Planning and Learning Wade Warren and Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) Department of Foreign Aid DDG Liu Junfeng.
End summary.

2. ~~(SBL)~~ **Comment:**

(b)(5)

End comment.

(b)(5)

Co-Chairs Lay Out Development Philosophies During Opening Remarks

4. ~~(SBL)~~ Zhang highlighted President Xi's emphasis on South-South cooperation during his

opening remarks, noting that China was set to inaugurate the “South-South Cooperation Institute” on April 29 at Beijing’s prestigious Peking University, which he said China hoped would become a “Kennedy School of Government” for China. Justin Yifu Lin, former World Bank Chief Economist, would lead the new Institute, Zhang reported. China’s core philosophy of development assistance “raised, agreed, and led” by recipient countries remained paramount, as did China’s principle of non-interference in internal affairs, he said. Smith touched on five areas framing the U.S. approach to development in her opening remarks, including: (1) the importance of leveraging private capital to promote development and economic growth, such as in the Power Africa initiative; (2) the need for evaluation and data-driven approaches to improve development assistance efficiency, impact and transparency; (3) amplifying development impact through collaboration with the private sector, universities, research institutions and others; (4) making use of science and innovation to address complex development challenges; and (5) the importance of capacity-building in facilitating the delivery of development assistance.

(b)(5)

6. ~~(SBU)~~ China expressed interest in cooperation on public health capacity building in West Africa, especially in Sierra Leone and Liberia, representatives from MOFCOM, the National Health and Family Planning Commission (NHFPC), and the China CDC all reported. MOFCOM DDG Liu noted that China would build a Tropical Disease Research Center in Sierra Leone, which China hoped would become the basis for a national public health institute in the country, and would send a team of technical experts to Sierra Leone and Liberia in May and asked that they meet with U.S. experts while in the region. NHFPC DDG Feng Yong said China was willing to expand scientific collaboration and second staff to U.S. projects in order to better understand Africa’s health situation and how the United States implements health assistance programs.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese side was less committal on cooperation to improve broader global health architecture. HHS DAS Mitch Wolfe encouraged China to increase participation in Joint External Evaluations (JEE) to help countries achieve the WHO’s International Health Regulations, noting the United States had funded almost all JEEs so far, and 60 more are expected next year. Zhang replied in general terms, emphasizing that China would like to learn and participate in order to push the global public health system to improve. In response to a request from the Administrator that China considerably increase its financial commitment to the

Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, Zhang replied that China would continue to provide funding but did not commit to a specific amount. The Administrator also urged China to incorporate multidrug and extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis into the G-20 agenda. Zhang promised to discuss the proposal with China's G-20 team and offer a response.

Food Security: Progress on Timor-Leste; Open to Exploring Africa Collaboration in Principle

8. ~~(SBU)~~ Both sides expressed satisfaction with the recent progress achieved on aquaculture collaboration in Timor-Leste and agreed to dispatch teams quickly to press forward with implementation on the ground (REF A). The Chinese side stressed that trilateral cooperation in Timor Leste could serve as a pilot experience for cooperation in Africa. Ministry of Agriculture DDG Zhao Weining explained that China's international cooperation on food security was mostly on a South-South basis. He touted China's long-standing strategic alliance with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to support tripartite cooperation in developing countries, as well as China's \$80 million contribution to the FAO-China South-South Cooperation trust fund. During her intervention, the Administrator encouraged joint support to the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), and on trilateral collaboration in Africa including climate-smart agriculture. Throughout both the morning and the afternoon sessions, the Chinese side expressed interest in collaboration on climate-smart agriculture, but asked for more information before concrete cooperation could proceed. The Chinese side stressed the need to agree to a precise definition of climate-smart agriculture, questioning both whether certain countries were at the right stage of development to initiate such projects and Chinese ability to provide such assistance at this time. The U.S. side promised to share more detailed information and noted the need to demonstrate progress as this was an agreed-upon outcome from President Xi's state visit. The Chinese side offered no substantive response to earlier U.S. proposals for collaboration in Senegal, Liberia, and/or Malawi. During the afternoon session, the U.S. side pressed China to provide a substantive response to these proposals before the end of May, although MOFCOM was non-committal on timing.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Recovery: Deepening INSARAG Cooperation; Delegation to World Humanitarian Summit Not Decided

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Administrator encouraged China to participate in the May World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, as well as in the UNGA Refugee Summit that the United States will host. She also highlighted that the effects of El Niño in parts of Africa and Latin America had been worse than anticipated, and encouraged China to increase contributions. In response, Zhang emphasized that President Xi said China would demonstrate responsibility and action by providing humanitarian assistance in warzones and areas of suffering. Zhang stressed China's commitment to assisting countries affected by El Niño, citing approximately \$88 million in support for Ethiopia, Somalia, and nine other African countries via direct food aid and a \$10 million donation to the World Food Programme. Both sides highlighted strong existing cooperation between USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the China Earthquake Administration, and decided to continue cooperation via the International Search

and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). On the World Humanitarian Summit, China agreed it was an important initiative and said the Chinese delegation was not yet decided. AA Warren laid out three U.S. priorities for the World Humanitarian Summit: (1) highlighting concerns about increasing violations of international humanitarian law; (2) ensuring that UN relief agencies work together more effectively and efficiently; and (3) focusing on the nexus between development and humanitarian assistance. In response, working-level MOFCOM officials recited talking points on the need for humanitarian assistance to comply with the UN Charter; respect sovereignty; address host country needs; avoid militarization; and focus on capacity-building.

(b)(5)

Strengthening Communication and Next Steps

11. ~~(SBU)~~ Throughout the morning and afternoon discussions, the U.S. delegation stressed the need to improve communication, both in capitals and in the field. New and direct methods of communication and contact points were established at the working level in many areas. The co-chairs of the afternoon session agreed that both sides would develop summary meeting notes which they would share promptly with each other after reporting to the Administrator and Vice Minister to ensure a common understanding of areas of consensus. Both sides agreed that the outcomes from the Development Dialogue could form the basis for outcomes language for the upcoming U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue.

Participants

12. (U) The following individuals represented the U.S. and Chinese delegations:

U.S. Delegation

- Gayle Smith, USAID Administrator
- (b)(6) USAID (b)(6)
- (b)(6)

- (b)(6) USAID (b)(6)
- (b)(6) USAID (b)(6)
- (b)(6) USAID
- Mitchell Wolfe, HHS Deputy Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs
- Rebecca Martin, CDC Director for the Center for Global Health
- (b)(6) U.S. Embassy Beijing Economic Minister Counselor
- (b)(6) U.S. Embassy Beijing USAID Counselor
- (b)(6) U.S. Embassy Beijing USAID Counselor
- (b)(6) U.S. Embassy Beijing Deputy Financial Attaché
- (b)(6) U.S. Embassy Beijing, HHS Attaché
- (b)(6) (b)(6)
- (b)(6) AID (b)(6)
- (b)(6) Embassy Beijing Economic Officer
- (b)(6) Department of State Office of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

Chinese Delegation

- Zhang Xiangchen, Vice Minister of Commerce
- Liu Junfeng, Ministry of Commerce, Department of Foreign Aid, Deputy Director General
- Yang Yingming, Ministry of Finance, Department of International Economic & Financial Cooperation, Deputy Director General
- Wang Xu, Ministry of Commerce, Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs, Deputy Director General
- Xu Dongming, Office of the Central Leading Group on Financial and Economic Affairs
- Wang Yu, Director General of the China Center for Disease Control
- Zhao Weining, Ministry of Agriculture, Department of International Cooperation, Deputy Director General
- Feng Yong, National Health and Family Planning Commission, Department of International Cooperation, Deputy Director General
- Wang Manda, China Earthquake Administration, Department of Science & Technology and International Cooperation, Deputy Director General
- Wang Qing, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs, Counselor
- Liang Hong, Ministry of Commerce, Department of International Trade and Economic Affairs, Division Director

13. (U) USAID Administrator Smith’s office cleared this cable.

Signature: BAUCUS

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6) EAP/CM); (b)(6)

Cleared By: FinAtt: (b)(6)

ECON:
CDC:
USAID:
USAID:
USAID:
USAID:
HHS:
ECON:
BEIJING:

Approved By:

Released By:

Info:

DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; ATLANTA GA, CDC *ROUTINE*;
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA
WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DEPT OF
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Sender:	"SMART Archive" <>
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From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	China Virus Institute Welcomes More U.S. Cooperation on Global Health Security
Date:	Thu, 19 Apr 2018 05:52:56 GMT

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MRN: 18 WUHAN 38
Date/DTG: Apr 19, 2018 / 190551Z APR 18
From: AMCONSUL WUHAN
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, PGOV, CN, PREL, TBIO, KGHI, CDC, EAID, KHIV, IN, JP, TW, TSPL, PINS, SENV
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 18 BEIJING 138
B) 17 BEIJING 2458
C) 11 MUMBAI 630
D) 17 TOKYO 716
E) 13 SEOUL 790
Subject: China Virus Institute Welcomes More U.S. Cooperation on Global Health Security

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary with Comment:** China's Wuhan Institute of Virology, a global leader in virus research, is a key partner for the United States in protecting global health security. Its role as operator of the just-launched Biosafety Level 4 (or "P4") lab -- the first such lab in China -- opens up even more opportunities for expert exchange, especially in light of the lab's shortage of trained staff (Ref A). [redacted] (b)(5)

[redacted] (b)(5)

[redacted] (b)(5) **End Summary with Comment.**

2. (U) Wuhan Institute of Virology researchers and staff gave an overview of the lab and current cooperation with the United States to visiting Environment, Science, Technology and Health Counsellor Rick Switzer and Consulate Wuhan Consul General Jamie Fous in late March. In the last year, the institute has also hosted visits from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Science Foundation, and experts from the University of Texas Medical Branch in

Galveston. The institute reports to the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing.

P4 Lab is Open and Transparent, Officials Emphasize

3. ~~(SBU)~~ The Wuhan P4 lab, referring to labs with the highest level of safety precautions, became fully operational and began working with live viruses early this year. Institute officials said they believed it is the only operational P4 lab in Asia aside from a U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-supported facility in Pune, India (Ref C). China plans to stand up a second P4 lab in Harbin. Institute officials said Japan's biosafety labs are "old" and lack cutting-edge equipment, so they consider Japan's labs to be "P3 Plus" (*Note: the Japanese government says it has one P4-level lab in the Tokyo suburbs, though its activities are limited, and Japan is building a new P4 lab in Nagasaki, see Ref D. Taiwan operates at least one P4 lab. South Korea was close to opening a P4 lab as of last year, see Ref E. End Note.*) Wuhan's lab is located about 20 miles from the city center in Zhengdian district, and the institute plans to gradually consolidate its other training, classroom and lab facilities at that location.

4. (U) Officials described the lab as a "regional node" in the global biosafety system and said it would play an emergency response role in an epidemic or pandemic. The lab's English brochure highlighted a national security role, saying that it "is an effective measure to improve China's availability in safeguarding national bio-safety if [a] possible biological warfare or terrorist attack happens."

5. ~~(SBU)~~ Institute officials said there would be "limited availability" for international and domestic scientists who had gone through the necessary approval process to do research at the lab. They stressed that the lab aimed to be a "worldwide, open platform" for virology. They said they welcomed U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) experts, noting that the Chinese Academy of Sciences was not strong on human disease expertise, having only focused on it in the last 15 years, after the SARS outbreak. A Wuhan-based French consulate official who works on science and technology cooperation with China also emphasized that the lab, which was initiated in 2004 as a France-China joint project, was meant to be "open and transparent" to the global scientific community. "The intent was to set up a lab to international standards, and open to international research," he said. French experts have provided guidance and biosafety training to the lab, which will continue, the French official said. Institute officials said that France provided the lab's design and much of its technology, but that it is entirely China-funded and has been completely China-run since a "handover" ceremony in 2016.

6. (U) In addition to French assistance, experts from the NIH-supported P4 lab at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston have trained Wuhan lab technicians in lab management and maintenance, institute officials said. The Wuhan institute plans to invite scientists from the Galveston lab to do research in Wuhan's lab. One Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher trained for two years at the Galveston lab, and the institute also sent one scientist to U.S. CDC headquarters in Atlanta for six months' work on influenza.

NIH-Supported Research Revises SARS Origin Story

7. (U) NIH was a major funder, along with the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), of

SARS research by the Wuhan Institute of Virology's Shi Zhengli and Cui Jie. The researchers spent five years of investigation and genome sequencing to show that a population of bats in a cave in Yunnan Province harbored a virus with all the "building blocks" of SARS. This lends weight to the theory that SARS originated in bat populations before jumping first to civet cats (likely via bat feces) and then to humans, after people transported the civet cats from Yunnan to Guangdong Province animal markets. The results were published late last year in *Nature* and other publications. Shi said that U.S. scientist Peter Daszak, a leading expert on emerging diseases and president of the New York-based EcoHealth Alliance, was a "strong partner." Daszak's team has provided support in statistical modeling to assess the risk of more coronaviruses like SARS crossing over to human populations.

Ready to Help with the Global Virome Project

8. (U) Institute officials expressed strong interest in the Global Virome Project (GVP), and said Chinese funding for the project would likely come from Chinese Academy of Sciences funding already earmarked for One Belt, One Road-related initiatives. The GVP aims to launch this year as an international collaborative effort to identify within ten years virtually all of the planet's viruses that have pandemic or epidemic potential and the ability to jump to humans. "We hope China will be one of the leading countries to initiate the Global Virome Project," one Wuhan Institute of Virology official said. China attended a GVP unveiling meeting in January in Thailand and is waiting for more details on the initiative. The officials said that the Chinese government funds projects similar to GVP to investigate the background of viruses and bacteria. This essentially constituted China's own Virome Project, officials said, but they noted the program currently has no official name.

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Wuhan Institute of Virology's Shi Zhengli is the China Country Coordinator for the USAID-funded PREDICT project, which is designed to show "proof of concept" and be a forerunner to the Global Virome Project. Li Hongying, with the EcoHealth Alliance (a New York City-based NGO that is working with the University of California, Davis to manage the PREDICT project), recently planned to visit Wuhan to meet with Shi. Li noted that China has expressed interest in building the GVP database, which would put China in a leadership position. Other countries have confidence in China's ability to build such a database, but are skeptical on whether China could remain transparent as a "gatekeeper" for this information, she said. Li expressed frustration with the slow progress so far in launching GVP, noting that the effort lacked funding sources, needed to hire a CEO, and would have to boost its profile at G7, G20 and other high-level international meetings.

U.S.-China Workshop Explores Research Partnerships

10. (U) The Institute also has ongoing collaboration with the U.S. National Science Foundation, including a just-concluded workshop in Shenzhen, involving about 40 scientists from the United States and China, on the topic of the "Ecology and Evolution of Infectious Diseases." Co-sponsored by the Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC), the Chinese lead for this workshop was the Wuhan Institute of Virology's Hu Zhihong, and the U.S. co-chair was the University of Oklahoma's Xiao Xiangming. The workshop explored opportunities for U.S.-China research cooperation in areas like using "big data" to predict emerging infectious

diseases, climate change’s effect on vector-borne diseases, and pathogen transmission between wildlife, domestic animals and humans.

11. ~~(SBU)~~ Some workshop participants also expressed skepticism about the Global Virome Project's (GVP) approach, saying that gaining a predictive understanding of viruses with pandemic potential would require going beyond the GVP’s strategy of sample collection, to take an "ecological" approach that considers the virome beyond vertebrate systems to identify mechanisms driving pathogen evolution. A follow-on workshop will be held in June at the University of Berkeley. NSF and NSFC hope to jointly announce a funding call for collaborative projects later this year.

Signature: FOUSS

Drafted By: WUHAN [redacted] (b)(5)
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 USAID: [redacted] (b)(6)
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 HHS: [redacted] (b)(6)
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Released By: WUHAN: [redacted] (b)(6)
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Subject:	China Coronavirus: Mission China Prepares for Authorized Departure, Holds Town Hall
Date:	Thu, 30 Jan 2020 09:45:48 GMT

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MRN: 20 BEIJING 226
Date/DTG: Jan 30, 2020 / 300943Z JAN 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: SHLH, CDC, HHS, NIH, CN, PGOV, SENV, PREL, CASC, AMGT, AMED, KPAO, KMDR, ASEC
Captions: SENSITIVE
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B) 20 BEIJING 216
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N) 20 BEIJING 122
O) 20 BEIJING 108
P) 20 BEIJING 74
Q) 19 WUHAN 112
Subject: China Coronavirus: Mission China Prepares for Authorized Departure, Holds Town Hall

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary:** Mission China held a Town Hall January 30 led by Ambassador Branstad to discuss authorized departure and posture in response to the novel coronavirus. The PRC coronavirus response group led by Premier Li Keqiang called for the delayed return to work of some Chinese government personnel. Mission China is scheduled to reopen February 3 to focus fully on the response to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. The Mission China Task Force

will continue to meet daily and report on the 2019-nCoV outbreak. **End Summary.**

Mission China Town Hall

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Beijing held a Town Hall January 30 led by Ambassador Branstad to discuss Mission China's authorized departure of family members and all non-emergency U.S. government employees, along with Mission posture in response to the coronavirus outbreak. Staff and family member from the Consulates also participated.

Assistance to AmCits and Relief Coordination for Wuhan

3. ~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Beijing continues to coordinate with the Department on assistance to and the possible evacuation of U.S. citizens who remain in Wuhan. The Mission China Wuhan Relief Group is coordinating with the Department to place relief supplies and donations aboard any aircraft that may travel to Wuhan to evacuate U.S. citizens.

Central Government Leaders Call for Delayed Return of Some Government Personnel

4. ~~(SBU)~~ The PRC's Central Leading Group for the 2019-nCoV Response convened a meeting on January 29, chaired by Premier Li Keqiang. The group noted that "the epidemic is still in the phase of spreading" and called on public agencies and entities to allow non-critical personnel traveling from areas with "high rates of infection" to delay their return to work. With the permission of the State Council, Hubei Province and other highly affected areas may delay the reopening of public offices, businesses, and schools, "as appropriate."

Triage Procedures at Beijing Hospitals Observed; No Reported Stresses on Healthcare Systems

5. ~~(SBU)~~ Embassy Beijing received a notice January 29 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) directing diplomatic personnel in Beijing with fevers to go to one of two hospitals: Ditan Hospital and You'an Hospital. On January 30, Embassy Beijing ESTHoff and a CDC Officer visited Ditan Hospital and two other hospitals with locally designated fever clinics: Beijing United Family Hospital (BJU) and Huaxin Hospital. BJU is frequented by Embassy personnel.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ At the hospitals, the CDC Officer conducted a rapid on-the-spot assessment of: (1) procedures for funneling individuals entering the hospital to one entry point where a triage nurse was set up; (2) screening and triaging patients at the entry point, including through temperature checks, symptom screen, and basic risk assessment (e.g., asking about recent travel history); (3) use of personal protective equipment (PPE) by healthcare workers (HCW) and training on PPE; (4) procedures for isolating individuals with a fever from the general hospital population and directing those with fever to the fever clinic; (5) presence of functioning negative-pressure isolation rooms on site; (6) lab testing capacity for 2019-nCoV on site in the fever clinics; and (7) existing protocols for HCW who may have been exposed. The expert assessed that all three hospitals had adequate capacity and procedures in place, to varying degrees. Among the three, BJU was superior in their triage procedures.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ At BJU, ESTH was told that BJU's fever clinic had reopened at 11:00 AM on January 30. The CDC Officer observed that the triage nurse was wearing a face shield, mask, gloves, and a gown. The assigned security personnel escorting patients to the fever clinic were wearing masks and face shields. Adult patients with temperatures above 37.3°C (99.1°F) are escorted to the fever clinic; children are escorted to a pediatric fever clinic, and all accompanying family members are immediately masked (if not already) and screened by staff. A BJU triage nurse said that BJU can test for 2019-nCoV in-house, and that the fever clinic has fully functioning negative-pressure isolation rooms. Patients who test positive for the virus are sent to one of the city's designated treatment hospitals. The triage nurse further indicated that BJU has established protocols for HCW who are exposed and has conducted training with all staff on the proper use of PPE.

8. ~~(SBU)~~ At Ditan hospital, ESTHOff spoke with a hospital administrator and asked about the MFA notice directing diplomatic personnel in Beijing with fevers to its facility. The administrator said she was not aware of the MFA notice and told ESTHOff the hospital did not have any special procedures or services for the intake of diplomatic personnel. The administrator suggested that Embassy staff and family just go to the nearest locally designated fever clinic or treatment hospital. [Note: Beijing city government has a published list of 101 fever clinics and 21 designated treatment hospitals in the city. End note.]

9. ~~(SBU)~~ CGs Shanghai and Guangzhou report no visible signs of stress to the local healthcare system. In Shanghai, private hospitals that serve international clients, including the official American community, appear to be operating as normal. In Guangzhou, there have been no reported changes to hospital conditions or wait times since the ConGenOffs' January 28 survey of facilities.

10. ~~(SBU)~~ According to contacts, as of today, Sichuan province has dedicated more than 2,273 beds in hospitals across the region, in addition to 30 backup hospitals, to treat patients infected with the virus. Sichuan currently has 54 quarantine sites, with an additional 249 backup sites. As of yesterday, 2,011 fever clinics at hospitals across Sichuan have screened over 75,000 patients for the virus.

11. ~~(SBU)~~ To ease the pressure on major hospitals in Chengdu, the provincial health commission has installed a new community-based early screening and referral system. Individuals with fever and other possible symptoms are urged to first contact their community health center for primary screenings. Symptomatic patients are then referred to fever clinics or placed under house quarantine for further monitoring. There are 197 hospitals with fever clinics in Chengdu, which are mandated to transfer confirmed cases to 17 designated treatment hospitals. Major hospitals in the city center, including Huaxi Hospital -- Sichuan's main provincial hospital and the primary hospital for CG Chengdu's community -- have not been designated as nCoV treatment hospitals. However, as noted in prior CG Chengdu reporting, Huaxi and other Chengdu hospitals have setup diagnostic and fever tents.

International Schools

12. ~~(SBU)~~ The PRC Ministry of Education January 27 suspended all classes at schools until

further instructions from local authorities. International schools in Beijing said January 29 the Beijing Municipal Education Commission (BMEC) announced that the reopening of schools shall now be determined by BMEC. The Western Academy of Beijing (WAB), International School of Beijing (ISB), and the British School of Beijing (BSB) said they will implement online learning starting February 3. American International School of Guangzhou (AISG), where all ConGen children study, still plans to re-open February 17 and sent instructions for on-line classes beginning February 3. Shanghai international schools attended by Consulate EFMs continue to plan on reopening February 17.

Beijing

13. ~~(SBU)~~ In Beijing, there are no reports of road closures or traffic restrictions from Beijing's transport authority and city police. Public buses and subway lines within the city continue to operate as normal. Grocery stores appear well-stocked. The DiDi ride-hailing app (similar to Uber) was functioning again on January 30. [Note: Didi announced January 29 that it was suspending most services by private drivers in Beijing "in response to local authorities' requirement." There was no announced reason why the service had resumed. End note.]

14. ~~(SBU)~~ China's Ministry of Transport (MOT) issued a notice on January 30 forbidding local transport authorities from closing highways or inter-province roadways in response to 2019-nCoV ([link](#)). MOT also published a notice on January 30 that vehicles carrying emergency supplies should receive free passage across provinces and would be exempt from any tolls or fees ([link](#)).

15. ~~(SBU)~~ The Hilton Beijing hotel, where many TDY and official visitors to Beijing stay, told an Embassy CDC officer January 29 that their procedure following any guests identified with a fever is to call the police/ambulance to take the guest to a hospital. Hilton staff said they would ensure the guest had a mask on and was set aside until the police arrived.

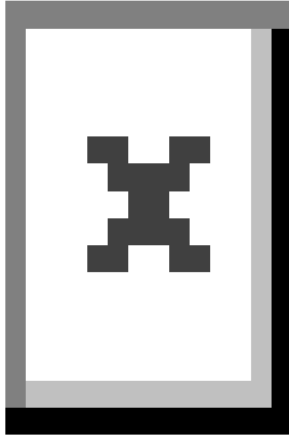


Figure: Hilton Beijing staff conducting temperature checks of hotel guests

Chengdu

16. ~~(SBU)~~ As of January 30, Sichuan province reported 142 cases of individuals infected with the nCoV virus. On January 30 Chengdu reported its first death, an 86-year-old woman with a history of prior illness. In Western Sichuan's remote Ganzi Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, local authorities announced that two individuals were confirmed as having the virus, bringing the total number of cases in Ganzi to five. Another 29 individuals in Ganzi suspected of suffering from the virus remain under quarantine. One contact speculated that these individuals may have been tourists from Wuhan who had chosen to spend their New Year sightseeing in the area. Tibetan contacts speculated that the number of individuals infected with the virus in Western Sichuan might be higher, with one Tibetan telling us he was forced to depart Chengdu in a hurry to take care of his parents after "several" individuals in their village fell ill.

17. ~~(SBU)~~ As of January 30, China's ride sharing application, DiDi, pushed a message to its English-speaking users, indicating the company would no longer provide "inter-city services" between Chengdu and other cities. Post confirmed all travel within Chengdu and to the local international airport remains available.

18. ~~(SBU)~~ United Airlines, Hainan Airlines, and other international airlines continue to operate flights out of Chengdu. Consulate employees transiting Chengdu's Shuangliu International Airport have reported inconsistent levels of arrival and departure health checks. Upon departure

or arrival, all travelers are required to undergo a "health check" which entails filling out a form indicating recent travel and any potential symptoms.

19. ~~(SBU)~~ Controls on movement within Chengdu extend to the lowest levels of governance, contacts say. One contact reports local police in residential areas of Chengdu checking the home registration (户口) for all individuals entering a given neighborhood, saying that authorities have been turning away anyone whose registration shows that they do not reside in that neighborhood, even if they are registered elsewhere in Chengdu. In rural areas of the province, contacts report authorities are searching all vehicles to ascertain if any passengers have recently arrived from Wuhan, while in city areas, police are stopping all cars with license plates from Hubei, of which Wuhan is the provincial capital. According to contacts, Sichuan has designated hotels to quarantine individuals with recent travel to Hubei, while some private hotels are refusing to admit any person with registration there.

20. ~~(SBU)~~ Despite February 17 being the official start date for schools, some universities have begun to hedge on when students and faculty should return, with the Southwest Minorities University in Chengdu publishing a notice that "all individuals should wait until further instructions at a later date before planning their return."

21. ~~(SBU)~~ Likeminded diplomatic colleagues based in Chongqing believe the next 5-8 days will be crucial for the municipality to contain the virus. On January 28, the first confirmed coronavirus case was reported in the municipality's Yuzhong district, where many of the foreign consulates are located. This appears to have triggered a more stringent set of public health measures, with mandatory temperature checks observed at residential compounds, gas stations, malls, and car routes. Contacts noted there remains a lot of concern, locally that Chongqing could become another epicentre for coronavirus infection based on the significant flow of people between Chongqing and Wuhan. On January 28, the Deputy Director of Chongqing's Center for Disease Control and Prevention was quoted as saying that some 210,000 people had 'recently' travelled from Wuhan to Chongqing prior to movement controls being implemented in Hubei Province. This has triggered a widespread grid search campaign by authorities to identify people in Chongqing coming from Wuhan and those with whom they have been in contact.

22. ~~(SBU)~~ According to diplomatic contacts, Chongqing has ordered non-essential businesses to stay closed until February 9th. Schools are to remain closed until February 17. As of January 28, Chongqing's one international hospital, Raffles Medical, still offers fever screening and blood test and directs patients to a designated public hospital if they test positive for the virus. English service at Raffles Hospital is reportedly inconsistent, and our diplomatic contacts said they have been unable to assess the availability/quality of foreign language services at the two hospitals designated for foreigners suspected of coronavirus infection.

23. ~~(SBU)~~ On January 28, Chongqing municipal government held a press conference, stating it had implemented containment measures, including setting up checkpoints at airports, train stations, highway exits, and piers to identify vehicles and passengers coming from Hubei Province. Starting on the morning of January 26, Chongqing's municipal metro system began operating on a reduced schedule. Chongqing has also stopped all interprovincial bus services.

Our contacts reported no indication that flights and trains have or would be disrupted. In addition, Chongqing FAO has suspended all activities with foreign countries until the end of February and has requested the city's consulates general do the same.

24. ~~(SBU)~~ Contacts also reported that masks remain difficult to procure locally. Chongqing FAO has circulated an updated list of supplies that the government needs for its response, which mainly consist of personal protective equipment. Authorities are asking foreign company contacts that are cleared to sell these supplies in China to increase their imports of such products. Chongqing is also willing to accept donations from private organizations and sub-national governments.

Guangzhou

25. ~~(SBU)~~ USDH and EFMs participated in Mission China's townhall January 30, followed by a ConGen Guangzhou Q&A session on authorized departure. CG Guangzhou will conduct an EAC January 30.

26. ~~(SBU)~~ Guangdong's provincial FAO, health commission, and information bureau held a briefing January 30 for the consular corps. The officials sought to calm anxiety in the consulate community by reiterating the province's pledge not to resort to lock down measures, to maintain normal transportation, and to quickly resolve supply shortages of face masks. Guangdong FAO officials told the consular corps there was "no need to withdraw" foreign nationals from Guangdong.

27. ~~(SBU)~~ CG Guangzhou RSO issued a security notice with guidance for responding to mandatory temperature checks, instructing USDH and EFMs to contact RSO if at any point they encounter forcible attempts to bring personnel to a fever hospital for further testing. At the January 30 briefing by FAO, provincial officials told the consular corps the protocol for foreign diplomats would be at-home quarantine.

28. ~~(SBU)~~ As of January 30, all regularly scheduled flights to the United States from Guangzhou and Shenzhen are operating normally. According to the FAO, the main carrier out of Guangzhou, China Southern (code share Delta, AA), has not cancelled any international routes.

29. ~~(SBU)~~ In Guangdong, provincial and municipal governments resumed normal operations as of January 30. Banks are scheduled to re-open February 3.

30. ~~(SBU)~~ CG Guangzhou reported that as of COB January 29, the New Zealand Consulate is working with minimal staff and LES working from home if needed. Some Consulate staff, including New Zealand Police, have voluntarily left China, although a Consulate contact reported Foreign Affairs had not yet decided to repatriate non-essential staff and their dependents. The UK Consulate is running with minimal staff and has offered voluntary departure to its staff. The Canadian Consulate has drawn down to minimal staff through at least February 3 and is offering essential consular services only. The Canadian Consulate has set up a screening station outside the Consulate entrance. Canadian Consulate leadership is actively

discussing evacuating dependents from Guangzhou.

31. ~~(SBU)~~ As of January 30, grocery stores surveyed by Consulate Guangzhou staff were well stocked and appeared to be increasing the availability of meat and produce. Water deliveries to Consulate personnel remain available through the Consulate's supplier, though delivery times were constrained through the extended holiday.

32. ~~(SBU)~~ Guangzhou public transportation remains open. ConGenOffs observed metro and bus ridership seemed to be up compared to previous days. Checkpoints have been stood-up at key freeway junctures to screen all inter-provincial inbound car traffic.

33. ~~(SBU)~~ High speed rail link suspension for mainland trains to Hong Kong went into effect at 12:00 AM January 30. ConGenOff observed at one Guangzhou train station that as many as one-third of overall rail frequencies in an out of the city are cancelled the evening of January 29, while no cancellations were evident at a second station.

34. ~~(SBU)~~ Foot traffic is light at inter-city bus terminals and plenty of tickets available to most mid-range destinations, according to ConGenOff observations. Staff confirmed bus service to Hong Kong Airport was suspended.

Shanghai

35. ~~(SBU)~~ CG Shanghai reported January 30 Shanghai has not yet seen signs of significant disruption to local transportation, food distribution, or medical services. The Shanghai consular district accounts for about 11 percent of total confirmed cases, with approximately half of those in Zhejiang Province. Confirmed cases in Shanghai – currently around 100 - remain low both in absolute terms and relative to the size of the population. Members of the Consulate community continue to find grocery stores accessible and well stocked, though supplies of some products – especially fresh vegetables and pork – are in short supply in some stores some of time. The Shanghai municipal government has acknowledged that demand for these items is higher than normal, attributing the increase in demand to decreased travel outside of the city and more residents cooking at home rather than eating out. While many restaurants remain closed, meal and grocery delivery services are operating as normal.

36. ~~(SBU)~~ The Shanghai subway network and the Didi ride hailing service continue to operate as normal. The ride-hailing app Didi is requiring all passengers and drivers to wear protective masks. The airport and high-speed rail service continue to operate, although a number of airlines have reduced or discontinued service to Shanghai from overseas. Some of these airlines have explicitly cited public health reasons as the main factor in their decision while others have pointed to reduced demand as the main driver.

37. ~~(SBU)~~ Calls into CG Shanghai ACS regarding the crisis have risen steeply in the last 24 hours. The Consulate's public mailbox had over 300 inquiries with questions about evacuations and guidance on the coronavirus. More than 700 U.S. citizens have enrolled in the STEP program since Friday.

38. ~~(SBU)~~ Google's General Counsel for China told CG Shanghai's Consul General January 30 that Google is not closed and has no plans to do so. The General Counsel said the company had merely delayed post-holiday reopening by a week to comply with a request from local authorities. Google offices will reopen and function normally from February 10.

39. ~~(SBU)~~ Health inspection sites on highways between Shanghai and other cities remain in place. A Consulate EFM January 29 observed four health inspection sites on the highway between Shanghai and Kunshan. Despite light traffic on the highway, long queues were present at inspection sites, where temperatures of all drivers and passengers were being checked.

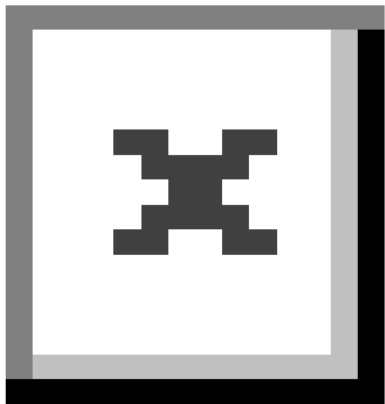


Figure: Health inspection site on highway between Shanghai and Kunshan.

Shenyang

40. ~~(SBU)~~ CG Shenyang reported January 30 that the situation remains stable with increased monitoring measures. Shenyang city is quiet with most residents heeding the government's call to stay home. Public transportation is operating, albeit on a reduced schedule. Taxis are available. There have been no significant changes to transportation within Shenyang since our last update. Transportation service between cities has been reduced. As reported in previous updates, intercity bus service was suspended in Liaoning province and some high-speed trains will skip Shenyang. While transportation is available, individual districts within the city have begun announcing measures to isolate neighborhoods and track residents down to the city block level. For example, Tiexi district, a district within Shenyang city, announced "isolation management" measures on January 29 that require people entering Tiexi district to have their temperatures checked. Only residents in Tiexi can enter and leave freely while visitors will

need to register so that the local officials can maintain accountability of them. While Tiexi was the first district to announce these "isolation measures" publicly, consulate staff report that these procedures are being expanded to cover all districts in Shenyang. One Consulate staff reported residents of his neighborhood who traveled out of town for the Lunar New Year holiday were contacted and told they could not return home once the neighborhood went into "isolation management." Within NE China, Chinese media have reported that some cities have enacted stringent measures to prevent cases of coronavirus from entering the city limits. For example, Yanji city, near the North Korean border, has reported no cases of coronavirus. The city has suspended all public transportation within the city as well long-distance transportation. Hotels in Yanji cannot accept outsiders.

41. ~~(SBU)~~ Shenyang Airport is operating normally with temperature check stations for passengers in vehicles leaving and arriving at the airport. China Southern's direct flight from Shenyang to Los Angeles operates three times a week and remains in operation, according to contacts at the Shenyang Airport. Data shared by CG Shenyang contacts show that outbound flights to Los Angeles are at almost full capacity. Tuesday's flight from Shenyang to Los Angeles had 20 empty seats and Thursday's flight has 10 empty seats out of a maximum capacity of 286 seats. In comparison, contacts noted that the inbound flight from Los Angeles to Shenyang has fewer passengers but is still within an acceptable range. Thursday's flight from Los Angeles to Shenyang had 170 passengers out of 286 seats. Contacts noted that both inbound and outbound flights are normally at full capacity during the Lunar New Year because of students studying in the United States. The China Southern flight is NE China's only direct international flight to the United States.

42. ~~(SBU)~~ Consulate Shenyang held an EAC meeting and joined the Ambassador's town hall meeting for AMCIT employees and family members on January 30. Shenyang will also hold an LE staff town hall meeting on the first workday after the extended holiday on February 3. Over the last 24 hours, the total number of patients with confirmed coronavirus in NE China increased by 16. Chinese media reported that two patients in Jilin and Liaoning province has recovered from the coronavirus and were released. These are the first reported cases of patients being fully cured and released from quarantine in NE China.

Media/Social Media

43. (U) People's Daily continued to publish new stories about how China will "definitely win the battle against the epidemic." People's Daily cited statements by international personages in support of China's efforts against the epidemic, including the tweet by U.S. President Trump which appreciated China for its efforts in preventing and controlling pneumonia caused by the new coronavirus. As well as Alex Azar, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services appreciated China's prior disclosure of gene sequence information of new coronavirus, and emphasized that this is helpful for the development of virus diagnosis methods. Xinhua and widely amplified by all media including CCTV prime time is an order from Xi Jinping to the Chinese military to "keep its mission firmly in mind and shoulder responsibility to make contributions to winning the battle against the novel coronavirus epidemic." The military resolutely implemented the decisions and arrangements of the CPC Central Committee after the novel coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan of Hubei Province, Xi said, adding that the armed forces

rapidly initiated the joint prevention and control mechanism and sent elite medical teams to combat the epidemic at the frontline. Xi said the epidemic prevention and control “remained grim and complex and demanded the armed forces shoulder their responsibility, fight the hard battle and actively assist local authorities in fighting the epidemic.” [Xinhua](#) and CCTV also featured Li Keqiang and officials emphasizing the treatment of patients and the supply of medical resources. The piece said that prevention and control efforts are in full swing and have been intensified, but the epidemic keeps spreading, with a rapid rising trend in some regions. The meeting also stressed efforts of epidemic prevention and control amid the return trips of people after the Lunar New Year holiday, adding that proper postponement of return should be allowed. Delays in business operation and school opening should be applied. [Chinese outlets](#) also report over 7,700 confirmed cases of coronavirus in China, 170 deaths, and 128 recovered patients. [Xinhua](#) amplified a health official in Beijing that “early reporting, isolation, diagnosis is the best way to contain coronavirus.” [Xinhua](#) and other outlets also covered work by the Wuhan Institute of Virology to screen new coronavirus drugs that can inhibit coronavirus. Another article in [Global Times](#) praised Wuhan residents for “whistle-blowing” on virus outbreak. A top epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDC) on Wednesday commended eight residents, who were detained in early January for spreading “rumors” about the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. Zeng Guang, Chief epidemiologist at the CCDC, said those eight residents should be highly regarded as they turned out to be correct about the viral outbreak, even though the information they spread “lacked scientific evidence.” Zeng’s comment followed an article from the Supreme People’s Court of China (SPC) on Tuesday, in which the top court said that the eight Wuhan residents should be “tolerated” and their act of spreading the information, if taken seriously, would have done much good to the public. [China Daily](#) reports on efforts to guarantee key supply items and featured promises by various businesses including Wumart and Alibaba.

44. (U) In commentary [Xinhua](#) said China’s virus battle unites people and protects the world. [Xinhua](#) said, accusations that the massive city lockdown in Wuhan is a violation of human rights emerged, but the citizens of Wuhan disagree. Since the lockdown was put in place, they have been staying indoors and practicing quarantine measures with the utmost respect for the government’s guidance and their hallmark perseverance and optimism. They have a sober understanding that while inconveniences may emerge, the historic quarantine serves their health, safety and overall interests. Social cohesion binds the people of Wuhan at this critical moment. [Xinhua](#) concludes, time will prove that China has made wise decisions and will emerge even stronger after coming through the epidemic. [Messages](#) to CPC members continued to “stand up in time of crisis--resolutely winning the battle of prevention and control of epidemic.” [Global Times](#) comments that Provincial Governor Wang Xiaodong himself made a mistake in that press conference about the annual production capacity of masks in Hubei Province, which attracted fierce criticism from the public. But after that, the leading cadres in Hubei province did not shrink back, and Wang Xiaodong attended the press conference for the second time to communicate with the media and the public. At last night’s press conference, Governor Wang Xiaodong first expressed “understanding and appreciation” for the public’s supervision and criticism of the work of Hubei Province since the outbreak. He praised and bowed to medical staffs as a tribute at the press conference. Many people who watched last night’s press conference felt that the governor’s behavior was very sincere, says [Global Times](#).

45. (U) Social media continued to track and monitor the virus. One of the most popular related topics is the first case confirmed in Tibet. The top story on Weibo is a 100 second [video](#) that went viral with Zhang Wenhong, the infectious disease expert tasked with managing Shanghai's response to the novel coronavirus. In the video, Mr. Zhang said he asked all CCP members of his hospital, to replace those who already has been combating the coronavirus for a long time. "You cannot bully obedient people" said Mr. Zhang. Other popular topics include the live streaming of the construction of the two field hospitals in Wuhan - every vehicle and machine has been nicknamed by netizens. Top three hashtags have received 76 million views: 1. Hubei governor responded to criticism of netizens; 2. The epidemic is still in spreading process; 3. Pets need to be isolated if they touch virus. Other popular posts showed factory production of masks and protective gear, profiles of doctors and medical providers working to protect others, and other stories on numbers of cases.

All 31 Provincial-Level Territories at Highest Level of Alert

46. ~~(SBU)~~ The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) decided to raise its public health alert to Level 1 on January 29, the highest level. All 31 provincial-level territories have now declared Level-1 emergencies (*People's Daily*).

Nationwide Cases: All 31 Provincial-Level Territories with Confirmed Cases

47. ~~(SBU)~~ China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 1,737 newly confirmed cases on January 29 as of 24:00, as total confirmed cases rose to 7,711, including 1,370 cases in serious or critical condition ([link](#)). Among the new cases is the first confirmed case in the TAR. NHC further reported 38 new deaths on January 29, including 37 in Hubei and one in Sichuan. The number of patients treated and released rose to 124. A total of 12,167 cases are currently suspected, with 81,947 close contacts in isolation under medical observation.

Table: Confirmed Cases in Mainland China as of January 29

Province/City/Region	Total confirmed cases to date	New confirmed cases	Total deaths to date	New deaths reported
Anhui	200	48	--	--
Beijing	111	20	1	--
Chongqing	165	18	--	--
Fujian	101	17	--	--
Gansu	26	2	--	--
Guangdong	311	70	--	--
Guangxi	78	20	--	--
Guizhou	12	3	--	--
Hainan	46	3	1	--
Hebei	65	17	1	--

Heilongjiang	43	6	1	--
Henan	278	72	2	--
Hubei	4,586	1,032	162	37
Hunan	277	56	--	--
Inner Mongolia	18	2	--	--
Jiangsu	129	30	--	--
Jiangxi	162	53	--	--
Jilin	14	5	--	--
Liaoning	39	1	--	--
Ningxia	17	5	--	--
Qinghai	6	--	--	--
Shaanxi	56	10	--	--
Shandong	145	24	--	--
Shanghai	101	21	1	--
Shanxi	35	8	--	--
Sichuan	142	34	1	1
Tianjin	27	3	--	--
Tibet	1	1	--	--
Xinjiang	14	1	--	--
Yunnan	70	19	--	--
Zhejiang	428	132	--	--
TOTAL (NHC Reported)	7,711	1,737	170	38
TOTAL (From Provinces)	7,703	1,733	170	38

-- zero cases. Source: NHC, provincial health commissions, and state media.

Table: Confirmed Cases in Other Countries and Regions as of Mid-Day January 30

Country/Region	Total Cases	New Confirmed Cases
Thailand	14	--
Hong Kong	10	2
Singapore	10	5
Japan	10	3
Taiwan	8	--
Macau	7	--
Australia	7	2

Malaysia	7	4
United States	5	--
France	5	1
South Korea	4	--
Germany	4	--
Canada	3	2
Vietnam	2	--
Nepal	1	--
Cambodia	1	--
Sri Lanka	1	--
United Arab Emirates	1	1
Finland	1	1
Total	101	21

Notes: As of 10:30 AM on January 30. Source: Ding Xiang Yuan, <http://www.dxy.cn/>

More Confirmed Cases of Third-Country Nationals in China, But No Amcits

48. ~~(SBU)~~ Guangdong authorities confirmed January 29 in a press conference that one Pakistani and two Australians had contracted the virus, the first cases involving foreigners in the province. According CG Guangzhou contacts, the Australians were students in Wuhan and have recovered. Health authorities reiterated to the Guangzhou consular corps January 30 there have been no fatalities in Guangdong and the preponderance of cases had a direct tie to Hubei, or a very close contact with someone with Hubei travel. No cases of Amcits currently in China have been confirmed and reported by PRC authorities.

Evacuation of Third-Country Nationals

49. ~~(SBU)~~ Nine of the 210 Japanese citizens evacuated from Wuhan to Tokyo on a second chartered aircraft on January 30 are reportedly symptomatic, with cough or fever. Two other Japanese passengers with fever or cough had been stopped from boarding at a pre-flight health screening in Wuhan (CCTV). Earlier, three of the 206 Japanese citizens that were evacuated from Wuhan to Tokyo on January 29 on the first chartered aircraft were diagnosed with 2019-nCoV (CCTV). Five of the passengers on the January 29 flight reportedly had fevers before they arrived in Tokyo.

Public Spending on 2019-nCoV Response

50. ~~(SBU)~~ China's national and local governments have reportedly spent RMB 27.3 billion (US\$ 3.9 billion) in public funds on the 2019-nCoV response as of 1700 on January 29 (CCTV). The Organization Department of the Communist Party announced on January 30 that it would release RMB 108 billion from CCP member dues to assist local governments (The Paper).

Mask Shortages – Daily Production in China Currently at 40-Percent Capacity

51. (SBU) Officials from China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) have estimated the country’s maximum daily production capacity for masks at around 20 million per day, about half the global total ([link](#)). According to the officials, current production is at around 8 million masks per day due to the holiday. MIIT has called on enterprises to increase shifts and resume their normal production levels, though officials noted difficulties faced by producers. As one official said, “Most workers have returned home, supplies of raw materials have stopped, and logistics are at a halt.” Officials also noted disruptions in inter-province rail service and trucking routes as a factor. Guangdong authorities told the consular corps January 30 that 27 of the 29 manufacturers in the province have resumed operation and estimated local shortages should ease within days.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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