
From: LeDuc, James W. [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=937DF08E29C4439E88A04BABFFB162AD-JWLEDUC]
Sent: 4/10/2020 1:03:20 PM
To: Dave Franz [davidfranz@gmail.com]
Subject: RE: Potential topics for discussion with Russian colleagues.

Thanks Dave. I don't know what to make of Rita's lack of engagement with us, especially if she is calling for an ID work group meeting in less than 2 weeks.

If we have a dialogue with the Russians, I think we should focus on the current COVID-19 pandemic and raise a few serious scientific issues such as a strategy for vaccine development and production for a global need. I think that there is a lot we do not know about immunity to this virus and we need to be very careful as we design and test vaccines. We need to address the question of re-infection/re-occurrence of illness. Is this an artifact of PCR testing or represent a real issue.

Also, basic public health questions about how effective—or not—certain interventions have been and how sustainable they are. Contact tracing is the current big challenge and the question about individual rights to privacy versus society need to interrupt transmission in the context of cell phone GPS tracking and other modern tools that have been used in other parts of the world.

There is also emerging information on genetic variability of the virus and what the impact might be on transmission and disease.

Pasted below is a string of email between Phil Russell and me following his viewing of the video we discussed yesterday. Read from the bottom up. This is not going away—and it probably shouldn't.

Happy Easter,

Jim

I admire your desire to avoid an adversarial situation but the seem to be impossible with the Chinese communists.

-----Original Message-----

From: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
To: pkrussell@aol.com <pkrussell@aol.com>
Sent: Fri, Apr 10, 2020 9:11 am
Subject: RE: Very scary. You must watch this

I agree that it is certainly possible that a lab accident was the source of the epidemic and I also agree that we can't trust the Chinese government. I sent a rather detailed plan to investigate the possibility that the lab might have been the source of the outbreak to Zhiming Yuan early in the event, but never heard back from him. It's good that folks are pressing the issue, but we need to strike a balance such that we are not in an adversarial situation. That's why we have focused on the NAS-CAS linkage as an appropriate forum.

From: pkrussell@aol.com <pkrussell@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 9:51 AM
To: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: Re: Very scary. You must watch this

WARNING: This email originated from outside of UTMB's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jim,

I have no doubt that Zheng Li Shi is a brilliant scientist and very charming. That does not rule out the possibility that one of the many bat coronaviruses isolated in the Wuhan lab infected a technician who walked out the door. No need for engineering the virus.

The flimsiness of the epidemiology pointing to the wet market, the absence of bats in the market, the failure to identify an intermediate animal host, the extraordinary measures taken by the Chinese government, including persecution and probable killing of two brave physicians, to cover up the outbreak, the steps taken to silence the laboratory personnel, the change in leadership of the lab, all point to the lab as the source of the outbreak.

This reminds me of the efforts by Matt Messelson and many colleagues to cover up the Sverdeslosk anthrax outbreak. They succeeded for many years aided and abetted by many in academia until Ken Alibek defected and the truth came out.

I bought the wet market story for months but now am very skeptical of anything information coming from the Chinese government.

Phil

-----Original Message-----

From: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>

To: pkrussell@aol.com <pkussell@aol.com>

Sent: Thu, Apr 9, 2020 4:06 pm

Subject: RE: Very scary. You must watch this

Yes, I just received the link this morning from Doug Watts. I don't believe that the virus originated from the lab in Wuhan and I think the attached paper makes a strong argument that it came from nature, a conclusion with which I concur.

We have been working with Zheng Li Shi through a dialogue established between the US National Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Dr Shi has presented at each of these meetings starting with the first in Beijing in 2015, and her message has consistently been that these bat coronaviruses hold the ability to infect humans through the hACE2 receptor. She's a very talented scientist and a charming person. Our meetings have included Ralph Baric and Linda Saif, two of the premier coronavirologist in the US and the discussions have always been open and frank. See attached summary prepared by NAS at the end of February, 2020 as the pandemic was unfolding. **PLEASE DO NOT FORWARD.**

I can't argue with the comments against the Chinese communist party. It's too bad that the global pandemic is being conflated with the challenges the world faces from the Chinese communist party. They are both important issues, but I'm not convinced that they are linked.

Hope you and Connie are staying well through all this,

Jim

From: pkrussell@aol.com <pkussell@aol.com>

Sent: Thursday, April 09, 2020 4:33 PM

To: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>

Subject: Fwd: Very scary. You must watch this

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Jim,

This is gaining credibility. What do you think?

Phil

From: Dave Franz <davidrf Franz@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 12:39 PM
To: LeDuc, James W. <jwleduc@UTMB.EDU>
Subject: Fwd: Potential topics for discussion with Russian colleagues.

WARNING: This email originated from outside of UTMB's email system. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Jim, This is what I sent Rita. Neither she nor Micah have acknowledged it, so I'm just going to leave it at that. See the blue type at the bottom. This is what Rita sent our to the nuc CISACers plus me. Matt Bunn, in one of his responses suggested that I put something together, thus this list. I was trying to stay away from a focused discussion on their response to the pandemic...but maybe that was being too cautious. As I said, if we forward it to 'expert' in CISAC, it would probably change significantly. ...but not a peep from anyone except Dick Garwin who wrote me and then asked me to call him this morning, which I did. He didn't say anything about this, but just wanted to know what I had going on these days and what I thought a bout a couple of things. d

P.S. Note at the bottom Rita has proposed an ID meeting for 4/22; you know as much as I do about that. If we were going to do that, I would think we might start putting a list of participants together.

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dave Franz <davidrf Franz@gmail.com>
Subject: Potential topics for discussion with Russian colleagues.
Date: April 8, 2020 at 5:55:26 PM EDT
To: Rita Guenther <RGuenther@nas.edu>
Cc: "Bunn, Matthew" <Matthew_Bunn@hks.harvard.edu>, James Timbie <jptimbie@gmail.com>, Linton Brooks <linton.brooks@cox.net>, Jill Hruby <jillhruby@gmail.com>, Robert Latiff <rlatiff@nd.edu>, Richard Mies <miesrw@verizon.net>, "Richard L. Garwin" <rlg2@us.ibm.com>, Raymond Jeanloz <jeanloz@berkeley.edu>, Steve Fetter <sfetter@umd.edu>, Micah Lowenthal <mlowenth@nas.edu>, "Cervenka, Nicole" <NCervenka@nas.edu>, Rose Gottemoeller <gottemoeller@stanford.edu>

Colleagues, Matt suggested I draft something from the bio subgroup.

I don't know how much involvement CISAC leadership is seeking from the 'bio'... or "Infectious Disease" Working Group. Each of us is officially, or unofficially in my case, spending a lot of time on the pandemic. Because they are probably nearly overwhelmed with work, we may not get a lot of time from the other four or five members of the bio subpanel just now, but I'm happy to coordinate a short paper with a list of suggested topics for collaboration if Rita and Micah are interested. I've taken a first cut at some bullets below, but the list might change significantly if I run it by the real experts.

Russia, as of yesterday, has reported about 40% as many 'tests' as the US and about 2% as many cases. My sense would be to start with a few rather generic, yet relevant, topics that don't get into the fine details of their response to or reporting of COVID19 pandemic. Some potential examples:

- Observations from the current COVID19 pandemic relevant to planning and preparations for a future highly contiguous and virulent influenza pandemic
- The effect of climate change on vector-borne infectious disease
- Timely recognition and public health response to emerging diseases