



**United States Department of State**

***Washington, D.C. 20520***

December 23, 2022

Case No. FL-2021-00033

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

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

As we noted in our letter dated November 23, 2022, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. Since our last letter, the Department of State ("Department") has processed in excess of 1,500 pages of material potentially responsive to your request. The Department has identified an additional 37 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined that 13 records may be released in part and 24 records must be withheld in their entirety.

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 record. The records that were withheld in full are exempt from release pursuant to FOIA Exemption 1, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(1). 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](mailto: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, appearing to read "Diamonece Hickson", with a large, stylized initial "D" and "H".

Diamonece Hickson  
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch  
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

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(1)

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<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown
<b>Date:</b>	Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:00:25 +0000

Got it. (b)(5)

Thanks,

(b)(6)

---

**From:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:58 AM  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Here are the 4 questions S asked (for upcoming 1200-1230 meeting).

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**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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Working a question from the 7<sup>th</sup> floor on China's broader virus research efforts. Figured I'd start with you.

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Feel free to call. I understand you probably don't have all the data (I have a request out to INR as well) but maybe you can point us to those who do.

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David R. Stilwell  
Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

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(b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown  
**Date:** Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:18:44 +0000

All, this paper will go to CM, since we have the benefit of Mission China folks with current info that will be helpful. (b)(6) — you'll be a required clearer and can add content as necessary.

(b)(5) Thanks!

(b)(6)

Special Assistant  
Office of the Assistant Secretary  
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

(b)(6) (desk)  
(b)(6) (mobile— teleworking Tuesdays and Thursdays )

(b)(6)@state.gov

**From:** (b)(6)

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:02:10 PM

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

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	(b)(6)@state.gov>;
	(b)(6)@state.gov>

**From:** "Stilwell, David R"  
**To:** Nick Schifrin (b)(6)@newshour.org>  
**CC:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Good Article on CCP Dissembling  
**Date:** Thu, 2 Apr 2020 03:18:54 +0000

Well done! Balanced, factual.

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**From:** Nick Schifrin (b)(6)@newshour.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 1, 2020 10:32:51 PM  
**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Good Article on CCP Dissembling

Thanks. I agree that the idea the Ambassador "disagreed" with the spokesman showed some kind of division was naive.

In the meantime, our Taiwan piece from tonight:

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/taiwans-aggressive-efforts-are-paying-off-in-fight-against-covid-19>

Nick Schifrin  
Foreign Affairs and Defense Correspondent, PBS NewsHour  
Office: (b)(6)  
Mobile: (b)(6)  
(b)(6)@newshour.org  
(b)(6)

On Apr 1, 2020, at 4:19 PM, Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Nick

Here's the article I mentioned.

(b)(5)

Dave

<https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/30/beijing-coronavirus-response-see-what-sticks-propaganda-blame-ccp-xi-jinping/>

But the assertion that there is anything short of a leadership consensus within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to spread conspiracy narratives is ill-conceived. Indeed, despite a momentary turn to the language of conciliation from Zhao, what observers should be focusing on instead is the consistent core

of messaging coming from all of Beijing's official and propaganda channels, including Cui: that the question of the source of the virus is a scientific question that requires listening to scientific and expert opinions—not U.S. or other foreign officials. Not a single reputable epidemiologist has shown any evidence that the coronavirus came from anywhere else but China, and the Italian doctor whose comments were taken out of context to boost the case has publicly refuted it. Yet this is important because by permanently, or even temporarily, injecting doubt into the origins of the coronavirus through this question, Beijing hopes to escape blame for its initial cover-up of the outbreak in December and January, which cost the world precious time to rally resources and create a potentially successful containment strategy

From the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Hua Chunying's Regular Press Conference on March 31, 2020  
2020/03/31

\*\*\* Question: Some officials in a handful of countries including the US have been trying to blame China for the pandemic outbreak, accusing China of covering up the actual caseload of the infected and disseminating disinformation on COVID-19. They also said that they will reckon with China after the pandemic passes. What is your response?

\*\*\* Answer: At present, COVID-19 is ravaging across the world, especially in Europe and the US. People of all countries have called for unity to fight the pandemic, but still some people have made jarring noises from time to time, quite discordant with the current atmosphere of unity against the pandemic. I want to stress a few points.

As the coronavirus is novel virus unseen in the past, its detection, research, testing and confirmation naturally requires time. According to reports, on December 27, 2019, Zhang Jixian, director of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care at Hubei Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine, reported the first three suspected cases. On December 29, Hubei and Wuhan health committees instructed related centers for disease control and prevention and hospitals to carry out epidemiological investigation. On December 30 Wuhan Municipal Health Committee issued an "urgent notice on the treatment of pneumonia of unknown cause". On December 31, the NHS sent an expert group to Wuhan to investigate on site. On January 3, 2020, China started to send timely updates to WHO and other countries, including the US. On January 11, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention put online five whole genome sequences of the novel coronavirus and shared data with the world and WHO. On January 23, Wuhan was put under lockdown and unprecedented comprehensive, thorough and rigorous measures were taken. The Chinese government took decisive and strong measures at the earliest time possible and the Chinese people have been united as one in this fight against the pandemic, which ensured the life, safety and health of the Chinese people to the highest extent.

WHO estimates that the decisive, effective and timely measures taken by the Chinese government prevented the infection of tens of thousands of people. Many countries also think China's practice offers

explicable precedence. Our open, transparent and responsible attitude has been highly acclaimed by the international community.

We have no intention to judge other countries' response to the pandemic. But while China set an example and bought precious time for the world with huge efforts and sacrifice, as WHO, foreign leaders, experts and media say, did a certain country make full use of the time to enhance preparedness? I think its government knows that very well, and its people can feel it too.

Since January 3 China has been notifying the US of epidemic-related information on a regular basis. On January 7, the US CDC and its embassy in China issued warnings on traveling to Wuhan. On January 25, the US announced the decision to close its consulate in Wuhan and withdraw all staff. On February 2, the US government banned entry of all Chinese nationals and foreigners who had been to China in the past 14 days. Now so many days have passed, and some in the US still claim China should be held responsible for the COVID-19 in the US. Don't they feel guilty or ashamed? They are trying to shift the biggest blame of the century to China and make it the biggest scapegoat. However, such an attempt is just impossible as the blame is too heavy to be shifted. Sorry, it won't work.

The pandemic is in some way like a magical mirror that exposes a person's morality and character to the fullest extent. The virus knows no ideology, border or race. The destinies of all countries are closely intertwined. No one can make up for lost time by slandering others or shifting the blame. The only way to defeat the virus is through solidarity and cooperation.

At the G20 virtual summit last week, President Xi put forward propositions on overcoming the difficulties hand in hand. Upholding the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, China would like to share our experience on COVID-19, conduct international cooperation, and provide as much help as we can to countries in need. That is what we say and what we do. We hope certain individuals will, like the CPC and the Chinese government, put people's life, health and safety first, abandon political bias and arrogance, and focus on international cooperation in pandemic response.

\*\*\* Question: In a recent interview, White House trade adviser Navarro accused China of a cover-up that has set the world back six weeks, saying China saw human-to-human transmission cases as early as mid-December. I wonder if you have any comment?

\*\*\* Answer: The lies told by this US politician are not worth refuting. I noticed that during that interview, even the host interrupted him several times and pointed out he was wasting everybody's time.

What is the truth? The truth is, since the epidemic broke out, we have always been open, transparent and responsible. We notified WHO and the international community of related information in a timely manner, shared genome sequencing findings of the virus at the earliest time possible, responded to other countries' concerns, conducted international cooperation and provided help to others. The sacrifice made by the Chinese people has bought valuable time for global anti-epidemic response.

Since the beginning of January, China has been sending regular updates to WHO and other countries, the US included. How can the US politician allege that China's delay set the world back six weeks? What is his intention? He just wanted to muddy the water, shift the blame and undermine China-US cooperation as well as global cooperation in fighting COVID-19. No one with a sense of justice will fall for his words.

We advise Mr. Navarro to try and grasp the gist of the phone call between Chinese and US presidents on March 27. He should stop smearing China and undermining China-US relations, and work to advance rather than harm the two peoples' interests.

\*\*\* Question: The US State Department Spokesperson said yesterday that Secretary Pompeo spoke with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and discussed the importance of countering efforts by China to spread disinformation and propaganda related to the virus. I wonder if you have a comment?

\*\*\* Answer: Since the epidemic broke out, China, in an open, transparent and responsible manner, has been providing timely updates to WHO and countries around the world including the US. We have also been doing our best to provide support and assistance to countries in need. All this has been widely applauded by the international community. Some US officials are accusing China of disinformation campaigns, I wonder if they could point out what information is not true? Were they referring to the effective containment China has achieved, or the assistance it has provided to other countries?

As to how the US has been dealing with this crisis, there has been abundant media coverage in the US and the American people have seen it with their own eyes. The Chinese people are following with concern the development of the situation and sincerely hope the US will overcome the epidemic as soon as possible to safeguard American people's health and safety.

After the outbreak, China has been racing against time to fight the virus and contain its spread. Even as we speak, many Chinese businesses are working around the clock to produce medical supplies and reinforce other countries' combat. We don't have the interest or the time to launch any despicable "disinformation campaign".

President Xi Jinping, upon invitation, held a telephone conversation with President Trump last Friday. The two heads of state agreed that under current circumstances, China and the US should stand united and fight COVID-19. The remarks you mentioned clearly run counter to the consensus of the two leaders. We hope they will focus on containing the spread of the virus at home and contribute to China-US cooperation in responding to the pandemic.

David R. Stilwell  
Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

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**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**CC:** (b)(6)@state.gov>;  
(b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown  
**Date:** Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:19:42 +0000

Paper is going to (b)(6) will be a clearer.

(b)(6)

Special Assistant

Office of the Assistant Secretary

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

202-736-4161 (desk)

(b)(6) (mobile— teleworking Tuesdays and Thursdays )

(b)(6)@state.gov

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:18:52 PM

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** FW: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

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**Subject:** Re: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sounds good thank you

---

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On April 23, 2020 at 12:08:36 PM EDT, (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:02 PM

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Switzer, Bryan R (Rick)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

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Do you prefer (b)(5)

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<b>Subject:</b>	Re: FW: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown
<b>Date:</b>	Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:32:02 +0000

(b)(5)

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**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:28:05 PM

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Re: FW: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6) just reminded, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>



**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
(b)(6)@state.gov>;  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>;  
(b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown  
**Date:** Thu, 23 Apr 2020 16:28:05 +0000

(b)(6) just reminded, (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

---

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On April 23, 2020 at 12:18:53 PM EDT, (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:  
(b)(5)

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:18 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sounds good thank you

---

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On April 23, 2020 at 12:08:36 PM EDT, (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:  
(b)(6) (b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:02 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)  
(b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

Do you prefer (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5) Please let me know ASAP.

(b)(6)

---

**From:** Stilwell, David R. (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:58 AM  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Here are the 4 questions S asked (for upcoming 1200-1230 meeting).

---

**From:** (b)(6) (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:46 AM  
**To:** Stilwell, David R. (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

Here is the best I could come up with on short notice:

1. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

2. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

4. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

---

**From:** Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 10:28 AM

**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

Per our call I will get you my initial thoughts this morning and will reach out to NIAID to try to get more details.

Best,

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

---

**From:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Thursday, April 23, 2020 8:38:51 AM

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Cc:** (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

Working a question from the 7<sup>th</sup> floor on China's broader virus research efforts. Figured I'd start with you.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Feel free to call. I understand you probably don't have all the data (I have a request out to INR as well) but maybe you can point us to those who do.

Thanks

Dave

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

**From:** "SMART Core" <svcsmartbtsewssprec2@state.gov>

(b)(6) @state.gov;

(b)(6)

**cc:** (b)(6) @state.gov;

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov>;

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

@state.gov>;

(b)(6)

(b)(6)



(b)(6) @state.gov>;

(b)(6)

**Subject:** Mission China COVID-19 Update February 20

**Date:** Thu, 20 Feb 2020 11:11:16 +0000

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

DeControlled



**Info Office:**

FO\_STAFF, PD\_ANP, RSP\_SCI\_TECH, P\_PRESS, EX\_HRU, EAP\_EP,  
MTS\_PRIN, J\_ECON\_POLICY, ANP\_PRIN, CM\_CHINA\_MONGOLIA,  
EAP\_FAO, CM\_TC, J\_ECON, MTS\_INDONESIA, RSP\_CT, EP\_APEC,  
K\_DPRK, DMC, EX\_PMO, DEP\_DIR\_JAPP, IDO, AITW, EX\_PRIN, AITW2,  
EAP\_ADMIN, RSP\_ARF, FO\_CM\_TC, MLS\_BURMA, REG\_IMO\_OFF,  
FO\_SPEC\_ASST, REQ\_TAGS\_1, MLS\_CAMBODIA, DAS\_POL\_ECON,  
RIMO, ANP\_PACIFIC\_ISLES, EX\_ADM\_GSO, EX\_RPM, EAP\_DEP\_DIR,

AIT\_ADMIN, K\_ROK

---

**MRN:** 20 BEIJING 340  
**Date/DTG:** Feb 20, 2020 / 201107Z FEB 20  
**From:** AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** 13526  
**TAGS:** SHLH, PGOV, PREL, CASC, AMGT, AMED, ASEC, ELAB, ECON, EINT, KPAO, KHIV, KFLU, KFLO, KFPC, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, CDC, HHS, NIH, OSHA, AID, CN  
**Captions:** SENSITIVE  
**Reference:** A) 20 BEIJING 308, 296, 292, 282, 276, 264, 248, 234, 226, 222, 218, 216, 214, 206, 204, 202, 200, 198, 188, 186, 174, 172, 166, 164, 142, 122, 108, 74  
B) 20 BEIJING 260  
C) 20 BEIJING 250  
D) 20 BEIJING 256  
E) 20 BEIJING 254  
F) 19 WUHAN 112  
G) 20 BEIJING 272  
**Subject:** Mission China COVID-19 Update February 20

DeControlled

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and comment:** China's National Health Commission (NHC) released new case definition guidelines, reverting the confirmed case definition for Hubei province to no longer include "clinically diagnosed" cases in its confirmed case count and will only include lab-confirmed cases, consistent with other provinces. As a result, all provinces in China will now use a "lab-confirmed" case definition for reporting purposes. The change, which resulted in a decline in officially reported national cases, was made without explanation in the official documents. The NHC reported 394 new cases on February 19, bringing the total number of officially reported cases to 74,576. The number of newly reported cases on February 19 dropped to 394, or 1,490 fewer than the average for the previous three days, due to the change. President Xi Jinping said in public remarks that there exists a greater need to protect and care for medical workers to ensure they stay healthy and are not infected with COVID-19. Contacts at several ministries informed the Embassy that national government offices had reopened and were operating under rotating shifts.

2. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and comment, cont.:** Businesses throughout China continue to reopen, though many face labor shortages, logistics challenges and a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE). More municipal and provincial governments continue relaxing restrictions on intra-city and intra-provincial transport, though strict movement restrictions continue in many cities. A CG Wuhan contact reported the arrival of military guards at residential communities in Wuhan has resulted in stricter quarantine enforcement. A number of government officials outside of Hubei have cautioned against overzealous implementation of epidemic response measures. China's *Global Times* reported that the PRC government has donated COVID-19 nucleic acid testing kits to Japan. The Peoples' Bank of China (PBOC) listed the control of the epidemic as its top priority and asserted, perhaps optimistically, that the impact of the coronavirus on the economy will be limited "as the epidemic has not changed the country's economic fundamentals." PBOC stated it will help companies affected by the epidemic by lowering lending rates, increasing credit support, and providing more loans. Social media users continued to criticize a propaganda video released by authorities in Gansu province showing female health workers crying as their heads are

shaved; central government authorities have allowed this criticism of overzealous Gansu officials to continue for two days without obvious censorship of most comments. **End Summary and comment.**

### (U) LATEST UPDATES

3. **(SBU) New Coronavirus Guidelines Released, Case Definition Changed Again.** The PRC National Health Commission (NHC) and National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine February 19 released the *6th Edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia from Novel Coronavirus (Trial Version)*. Under the updated guidelines, Hubei province will no longer include “clinically diagnosed” cases in its confirmed case count and will only include lab-confirmed cases, consistent with other provinces (figure 1). The Hubei Provincial Health Commission announced February 13 that it had amended case definitions for COVID-19 to include the new “clinically diagnosed” category which did not require lab-confirmation but did require clinical characteristics and radiographic evidence of pneumonia. As a result, the total number of confirmed cases reported from Hubei province initially increased significantly, with 14,840 new cases (of which 13,332 were clinically diagnosed and 1508 were laboratory confirmed) on February 13. The inclusion of clinically diagnosed cases for Hubei followed the guidelines set forth in the *5th Edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia from Novel Coronavirus (Trial Version)* issued February 5. The NHC said at the time that it had changed the case definition for Hubei to allow more patients to receive earlier treatment, as there was a lag in lab-tested confirmation. The NHC did not state in the new *6th Edition* guidelines why they had changed the confirmed case definition for Hubei back to only including lab-confirmed cases. According to Professor Feng Zhanchun, of the School of Medicine and Health Management of Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, reasons for the change included considerations such as chest imaging alone not being the standard for diagnosis and limited availability of testing kits and testing capabilities in Hubei province [NOTE: It is unclear if he is speaking in a capacity as someone who had a role in the changing of these guidelines or if this is related to the official reason for the change].

### (U) Updated NHC Case Definition Guidelines

	All Provinces
Suspected case	
	<b>A: Epidemiological history 14 days before the onset</b>
	A1: travel to or resident in Wuhan or area nearby, or an affected community
	A2: exposed to infected person who has tested positive
	A3: exposed to person with fever or other respiratory symptoms and who is from Wuhan or an area nearby, or an affected community
	A4: cluster
	<b>B- Clinical criteria</b>
	B1: fever and / or respiratory symptoms

	<p>B2: radiographic pneumonia</p> <p>B3: Normal or decreased white blood cell count in the early stages of onset; or decreased lymphocyte count</p>
	<p><b>Suspected case if:</b></p> <p>1. Meets any one of the epidemiological histories and any two of the clinical criteria</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>2. Meets all three clinical criteria</p>
<b>Confirmed case</b>	<p><b>Suspected case + one of the following test results:</b></p> <p>Respiratory or blood specimens test</p> <p>1. RT-PCR positive for SARS-CoV-2</p> <p>2. Viral gene sequencing is highly homologous with known SARS-Cov-2</p>

*Data source: The 6<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia of New Coronavirus Infection issued by the National Health Commission*

<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yzygj/s7652m/202002/54e1ad5c2aac45c19eb541799bf637e9.shtml>

<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yzygj/s7653p/202002/8334a8326dd94d329df351d7da8aefc2.shtml>

4. (U) **Decline in Officially Reported Nationwide Cases As Definitions Changed Again:** China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 394 new cases in Mainland China on February 19 as of 24:00, bringing the total number of officially reported cases to 74,576 ([link](#)). The number of newly reported cases on February 19 dropped by 1,490 compared to the average for the previous three days. [Note: The sudden drop appears to reflect yet another change in the definition of confirmed cases, introduced by the NHC on February 19 ([link](#)). Per the newly revised guidelines for diagnosis and treatment (the sixth edition), only cases confirmed in the laboratory through a respiratory or blood sample test will be counted as "confirmed," thus removing the difference in the definition for confirmed cases between Hubei and other provinces. Hubei Health Commission's latest case report issued on February 20, after the publication of the new NHC guidelines, does not mention the change, however ([link](#)). **End note.**] Total deaths rose to 2,118, an increase of 114 over the previous day. In addition, 1,277 new suspected cases were reported on February 19, with the total number of currently suspected cases now down to 4,922. The number of close contacts under medical observation declined to 126,363.

**Table 1: Total and Active Cases in Mainland China as of End of February 19**

Province/City/Region	Active Cases	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Discharged	Newly Discharged
Anhui	557	987	1	6	--	424	63

<i>Beijing</i>	238	395	2	4	--	153	8
<i>Chongqing</i>	281	560	6	5	--	274	20
<i>Fujian</i>	180	293	--	1	1	112	16
<i>Gansu</i>	24	91	--	2	--	65	3
<i>Guangdong</i>	708	1,332	1	5	--	619	48
<i>Guangxi</i>	156	245	1	2	--	87	11
<i>Guizhou</i>	73	146	--	2	--	71	2
<i>Hainan</i>	80	168	5	4	--	84	5
<i>Hebei</i>	150	307	1	5	1	152	16
<i>Heilongjiang</i>	341	476	6	12	--	123	15
<i>Henan</i>	632	1,265	4	19	--	614	62
<i>Hubei*</i>	49,665	62,031	349	2,029	108	10,337	1,209
<i>Hunan</i>	424	1,010	2	4	--	582	36
<i>Inner Mongolia</i>	64	75	--	--	--	11	2
<i>Jiangsu</i>	306	631	--	--	--	325	29
<i>Jiangxi</i>	501	934	1	1	--	432	70
<i>Jilin</i>	50	91	1	1	--	40	4
<i>Liaoning</i>	62	121	--	1	--	58	3
<i>Ningxia</i>	29	71	--	--	--	42	--
<i>Qinghai</i>	2	18	--	--	--	16	1
<i>Shaanxi</i>	139	245	3	1	1	105	16
<i>Shandong</i>	304	546	3	4	1	238	23
<i>Shanghai</i>	145	333	--	2	1	186	9
<i>Shanxi</i>	63	131	--	--	--	68	7
<i>Sichuan</i>	319	520	6	3	--	198	21
<i>Tianjin</i>	73	130	2	3	--	54	6
<i>Tibet</i>	0	1	--	--	--	1	--
<i>Xinjiang</i>	55	76	--	1	--	20	6
<i>Yunnan</i>	111	172	--	1	1	60	--
<i>Zhejiang</i>	566	1,175	2	--	--	609	65
<b>Total (Provincial Reports)</b>	<b>56,298</b>	<b>74,576</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>16,160</b>	<b>1,776</b>
<b>Total (NHC Reported)</b>	<b>56,303</b>	<b>74,576</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>16,155</b>	<b>1,779</b>

*Note: \* Per the new NHC diagnosis guidelines (6<sup>th</sup> edition), clinically diagnosed cases for Hubei are no longer included in the total number of confirmed cases. Only lab-confirmed cases are included for all provinces; "Active cases" are total confirmed cases net of deaths and the number of patients treated and discharged from the hospital. Sources: NHC and provincial health commissions.*

- Beijing

5. (U) **Xi Calls for Greater Protections for Healthcare Workers:** President Xi Jinping said in public remarks that there exists a greater need to protect and care for medical workers to ensure they stay healthy and are not infected with COVID-19. Xi made the remarks at a recent event to train military medics participating in the COVID-19 prevention and control.

6. (U) **Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences President Warns Coronavirus May Be Here to Stay:** Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences president Wang Chen February 19 told CCTV in an interview that COVID-19 “may become a long-term disease that coexists with humans, just like flu.”

7. (U) **Government Offices Resume Partial Operation:** Contacts at China’s Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM), and Ministry of Ecology and Environment (MEE) told Embassy Beijing that national government offices had reopened and are currently operating under rotating shifts, with only some staff reporting to work each day.

#### Chengdu

8. (U) **Chongqing** municipal health authorities report that in recent days, **most newly confirmed cases have been asymptomatic carriers** identified through epidemiological studies.

#### Guangzhou

9. ~~(SBU)~~ Guangdong will make all-out efforts to promote economic stability and development, first by pushing forward the safe resumption of production, Party Secretary Li Xi said during a February 19 party meeting, echoing Governor Ma Xingrui’s February 15 and 16 calls for the same. In this spirit, more Guangdong municipalities announced companies could resume operations without special approval, including Zhongshan, Jiangmen, and several more districts in Shenzhen and Zhuhai. In an early sign that Guangdong cities may be moving to ease monitoring of inter-city travel, Zhongshan announced February 19 it would remove 41 checkpoints on inter-city highways and roads, and Shenzhen announced loosened procedures for frequent travelers. In Guangxi, Jinjing town (Mashan county, Nanning municipality) has closed all inbound and outbound vehicular traffic effective February 18 following a confirmed cluster of nine COVID-19 cases. To date, Post has not noticed easing of residential closed management procedures in South China.

#### Shanghai

10. ~~(SBU)~~ Active cases of COVID-19 continue to track downward across East China, according to official statistics. Businesses across Shanghai and the region continue to reopen, though many face labor shortages and logistics challenges. Local governments across East China are using chartered trains, buses, and planes to bring back workers from low-risk regions to address the labor shortage. More public transportation routes and roads are resuming operations across the region.

11. (U) In a February 19 briefing for Consuls General organized by the Shanghai FAO, officials provided the following updates:

- (U) **According to the Shanghai Health Commission, Shanghai has not experienced sustained person-to-person transmission.** Shanghai has received permission from the National Health Commission to develop its own treatment protocols, which are not identical with the National Treatment Guidelines but have proven to be equally effective. The demographics of Shanghai’s

cases are statistically the same as the national averages.

- (U) **Shanghai Party Secretary Li Qiang has noted it is urgent to verify the reliability of COVID-19 tests** and has instructed officials to strengthen capabilities to detect new infections by linking epidemiology studies with testing and with the efforts of the district, local, and neighborhood units. Checkpoints in the city will focus on identifying people from high-risk areas to ensure they follow the required quarantine protocols. Local and neighborhood units will provide assistance in sterilizing, ventilating, and cleaning public spaces.
- ~~(SBU)~~ A Shanghai Civil Affairs Office official acknowledged that **some neighborhood committees have taken measures much more stringent than required by official guidelines**, so the Civil Affairs Bureau is reminding them not to go beyond the official guidance. Only foreigners returning to Shanghai who have traveled to high-risk areas are required to self-quarantine. (Note: As reported previously, some neighborhoods are barring all outsiders from entering a residential area, are requiring quarantines for individuals beyond those recommended by the city, are requiring passes for residents to enter or leave, etc. End note.) Officials noted neighborhoods should establish checkpoints at the point of entry; measure the temperature of anyone seeking to enter, optionally registering people seeking to enter or depart; and enforce contactless deliveries of food and goods. Anecdotal information from American citizens and other foreigners who have returned to Shanghai suggests that despite municipal officials directing neighborhood committees to not implement measures stricter than required by the guidelines, many neighborhood committees continue to do so. When FAO has been contacted about these cases, they have continued to advise that while self-quarantine is not required, residents should follow the directions of neighborhood committees.
- (U) A senior official with the Development and Opening Commission said **Beijing has issued instructions to boost the growth of the construction sector and consumption**. As a result, the Commission is actively looking for shovel-ready construction and infrastructure projects that can be commenced as soon as possible after the crisis.

12. (U) The Zhejiang Health Commission updated its Five-color Risk Map on February 19, **moving Yueqing from red (“high-risk”) down to orange (“relatively high-risk”)**. There are currently no areas categorized as high-risk. The total number of areas categorized as high- or higher-risk was reduced from 11 to seven.

13. ~~(SBU)~~ **More municipal and provincial governments continue relaxing restrictions on intra-city and intra-provincial transport**. Additional public bus routes in Wenzhou and Ningbo in Zhejiang, and Lu'an, Anhui, and Yancheng, in Jiangsu resumed on February 20. Additional expressways opened in Hangzhou and Suzhou. Suzhou announced some local parks are reopening on February 20, with additional parks opening on February 26.

#### Shenyang

#### Heilongjiang

14. (U) **Officials caution against blanket closed management**: Heilongjiang's People's Congress held a meeting to discuss the closed management mechanisms currently implemented throughout the province. While the People's Congress emphasized that Heilongjiang must continue to apply stringent measures to control the spread of the virus, members also cautioned that officials do not have a blank check to implement any and all measures that could potentially impact economic activities and infringe upon peoples' livelihoods. Rather than applying blanket measures city-wide, members of the People's Congress encouraged officials to strategically implement measures only in key areas of concern.

15. (U) **Heilongjiang Focuses on Supporting Four Types of Enterprises Resuming Operations:** On February 18, the Department of Industry and Information Technology of Heilongjiang conducted a video conference meeting to promote the resumption of industrial enterprises in the province to minimize the impact of the epidemic on the industrial economy. The top priority discussed was to highlight the support of four types of enterprises to resume operations: 1) Prevention and control material production enterprises, 2) Basic needs production enterprises, 3) Agricultural and animal husbandry production enterprises, and 4) Enterprises that support regional economic growth. Officials also noted that masks, disinfectant, and other protective equipment is “stabilizing” and medical supply reserves are expanding as the province continues to increase funding for PPE production.

16. (U) **Harbin dispatches robots to hospitals:** Harbin announced that the city has dispatched “highly intelligent” robots to Harbin’s People’s Hospital and the Central Isolated Hotel in Pingfang district to be used for delivering food and medicine to patients. Developed by Lingyuan Technology Co. of the Institute of Automation of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, officials said that using robots for patients’ basic needs would greatly reduce the risk of medical personnel contracting the virus and improve quality of treatment.

#### *Jilin*

17. (U) **Development of COVID-19 Antibody Detection Kit in Jilin Enters Clinical Trial Stage:** A new COVID-19 antibody detection kit was recently developed by Jilin Shuang Zheng Medical Technology Company and the Joint Research Institute of Transitional Medicine at Jilin University. Clinical evaluation was completed in relevant medical institutions and is currently in the application stage for emergency approval through green channels of the State Drug Administration. The detection kit provides a simple, accurate and rapid tool that can be complemented with nucleic acid reagents to shorten the detection of COVID-19, accelerate the diagnosis of suspected cases and fast-track screening of close contacts.

#### *Liaoning*

18. (U) **Liaoning Party Secretary visits foreign companies:** Liaoning Party Secretary Chen Qiufa on February 19 visited South Korean companies POSCO Auto Parts Manufacturing and CJ Biotechnology, as well as German-owned Mubea Auto Parts Company to thank South Korea and Germany for supporting Liaoning and to learn about how foreign companies are preparing to resume operations. Both the ROK and German Consul Generals thanked Chen for his support and expressed confidence in Liaoning’s effort to control the spread of the virus.

19. ~~(SBU)~~ **Dandong contacts relieved businesses are reopening but concerned about PPE shortage:** After a 22-day suspension, eight bus routes in Dandong city in Liaoning have resumed operations (Note: Dandong is the focal point for China-DPRK commerce that sits at the mouth of the Yalu River and across the border from North Korea. End Note). According to officials, each bus will have a police officer on board to ensure every passenger is wearing a mask and to prevent overcrowding and close contacts between riders. Media reported that senior citizen cards and cash were no longer acceptable forms of payment; therefore, elders were forced to either download WeChat or obtain a metro card—the only two accepted methods of payment. Dandong officials also announced that large department stores were permitted to resume operations, but cautioned that all businesses must take proper precautions to ensure safety of all customers and employees. Dandong contacts told ConGenOffs that while they are relieved to see more businesses and transportations resuming operation, Dandong residents’ primary concern is PPE shortage. Some contacts asked ConGenOffs if Consulate Shenyang could provide medical supplies or help purchase



PPEs online.

20. (U) **Liaoning has not yet decided when schools can return:** *Correction regarding yesterday's sitrep: CG Shenyang reported February 19 that "Liaoning authorities released a statement that high school and middle school students who are taking entrance exams this summer may resume classes on March 2, while rest of the high school and middle school students could not return until March 9. Elementary students from grades 4-6 could resume classes on March 16 but authorities have not yet announced a specific date for grades 1-3 and kindergarten. Liaoning officials noted that having students return in different stages would help minimize the risk of students and teachers contracting the virus."* Liaoning has not/not released any statement detailing when students can return to school. Liaoning Department of Education on January 31 said schools were not allowed to reopen before February 17, and that specific dates for resuming classes would be announced later. While international schools in Shenyang are planning to resume classes in March, since January 31, Liaoning has not released any information on when schools could reopen. CG Shenyang LES said that they also have not heard from schools when their children would be able to return to class.

21. (U) **Shenyang's First Batch of Automatic Mask Production Lines to Launch Soon:** Shenyang Xinsong Group formed a project team to streamline automatic mask production lines in order to meet the current mask supply demands in the market. The company successfully developed fully automated medical and surgical mask production lines using state-of-the-art technology. The first batches of masks will be off the production lines soon and are expected to assist greatly with mask supply needs in the area.

#### Wuhan

22. (SBU) **Military Enforcing Wuhan Residential Quarantines:** A contact of an evacuated CG Wuhan officer reported that the arrival of military guards at residential communities in Wuhan has resulted in stricter quarantine enforcement. The contact, a PRC citizen, said military guards augmented the housing development's private guard force on February 17. She previously could only leave her house once every three days but could still freely move from one part of the large housing development to another (the housing development was built in stages, with each stage housing thousands of people). However, starting February 17, the newly arrived military guards began strictly enforcing the rule on leaving your house once every three days.

23. (SBU) (b)(6) **Reports Drop in Nearby Wuhan City Cases:** (b)(6)

(b)(6) in a satellite city one hour outside of Wuhan said her city's strict 21-day home quarantine is coming to an end. The LE staff reported that new cases in the city had dropped from dozens a day to two a day and she was hopeful that the quarantine in her town would end soon. However, the LE staff said she doubted that she could return to Wuhan for work until Wuhan ended its own quarantine.

#### **(U) COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS**

##### Guangzhou

24. (U) Zhong Nanshan, the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Health, and Shenzhen-based Evergrande property developer has joined forces with Harvard Medical School (HMS) to establish the "Sino-U.S. New Coronavirus Scientific Research Expert Group," according to press reporting. The group held its second video conference February 19 to exchange and discuss cooperation on rapid detection and diagnosis, clinical treatment, drug screening, and vaccine development, according to separate reporting. HMS participants

included George Q. Daley, MD, PhD, Dean; David Golan, MD, PhD, Dean for Research Operations and Global Programs; Arlene Sharpe, MD, PhD, Director of the Department of Immunology (HMS) and Co-Director of the Evergrande Center for Immunologic Diseases at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital; Bruce Walker, Director of the Ragon Institute of Mass General, MIT, and Harvard. Evergrande committed 800 million RMB (118 million USD) over five years to support the research. Over the long-term, the group will focus on virus traceability, infection and pathogenic mechanisms, rapid immunological detection methods, scientific research cooperation in ten major fields including genomic mutation and evolution.

25. (U) Guangdong provincial health authorities said February 19 at the daily press conference that about 89 percent of patients taking traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) medications have either recovered or exhibited improvements in their condition. The application of TCM in Hubei by a team of 312 Guangdong TCM medical professionals has shown that - combined with Western medicine - TCM shortens the treatment process, increases recovery rates, and reduces mortality. In Guangdong, TCM treatment combined with Western medicine has been applied to 93 percent of COVID-19 patients to help lower fevers and relieve fatigue. TCM treatment is reportedly most effective in early and mid-stages of infection.

## Chengdu

### *Sichuan*

26. (U) From February 17-18, **Sichuan Party Chief Peng Qinghua conducted an inspection tour** in rural areas surrounding Leshan and Liangshan, during which he focused on epidemic response, poverty reduction, resumption of business, and aid for migrant workers returning to their places of employment. Peng directed local authorities to focus on the following issues:

- Preventing social gatherings.
- Improving local capacity to receive suspected COVID-19 cases.
- Improving "health-data systems" to review migrant workers' health status.
- Managing charter buses for migrant workers returning to work.

27. (U) Peng also said that local officials should "resolutely prevent and correct" extreme behaviors, including the overzealous implementation of epidemic response measures and excessive use of law enforcement. Peng said that local governments should continue to protect people's legitimate interests and rights; gain the people's understanding and support; proactively deal with employment issues arising from the COVID-19 epidemic; and further ideological education and propaganda work.

28. (U) On February 19 the **Chengdu Municipal COVID-19 Epidemic Response Command issued a notice announcing the resumption of some passenger train lines** previously shut down as a result of the epidemic.

29. (U) On February 19, **Sichuan's provincial government issued guidance on the reopening of enterprises in key sectors.** Districts and counties without confirmed COVID-19 cases should begin pushing for private enterprises to reopen, particularly companies in sectors focusing on energy, transportation, and

the production of essential commodities, so long as they maintain a well-controlled and safe work environment. SOEs should take the lead in returning to work, according to the guidance. Owners of enterprises will assume full responsibility for a safe and healthy work environment. All facilities which plan on reopening should implement epidemic prevention measures and emergency reaction plans. The provincial government said it will closely work with other stakeholders to provide transportation to migrant workers.

**30. (U) Kardze (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Western Sichuan remains the most severely impacted region of the province outside of metropolitan areas.** On February 19, Tawu (Daofu) County in Kardze had 60 confirmed cases, 34 suspected patients, and 391 close contacts are under medical observation. Local health officials reportedly administered 8,309 viral RNA tests among close contacts of persons associated with the two initial cluster outbreak sites between February 12-18. The Sichuan provincial and Kardze prefectural CDC offices have sent 660 personnel to Daofu, along with PPE supplies, according to official statements. Authorities have designated the Kardze Prefecture People's Hospital and Daofu County People's Hospital as appropriate facilities for receiving COVID-19 patients, with technical support provided by Chengdu-based Huaxi Hospital. The county has also renovated another hospital and a government facility in Daofu, and reportedly has 129 beds on standby. The county is also planning to build another makeshift hospital using other facilities.

**31. (U)** Health authorities in Nanchong city have reported no further cases of H5N6 avian flu outbreak since February 9. While the outbreak of avian flu impacted several thousand poultry stock in the area, there were no reported cases of human transmission.

### *Chongqing*

**32. (U) All residents of Chongqing continue to face strict movement controls** and are only permitted to leave their residential areas to procure basic supplies every few days or to report for essential work, according to Canadian diplomats. All people entering Chongqing are required to self-isolate for 14 days or report to a government isolation center if they do not have a permanent Chongqing address. Diplomats are exempt only if they arrive directly from another country. The vast majority of businesses remain closed, and the process to receive approval to reopen is strict and unclear. Hotels are closed to short-term guests, with a possible handful of exceptions among luxury hotels.

**33. (U) Chongqing Party Secretary Chen Min'er chaired an extended meeting of the Chongqing municipal party standing committee on February 18, during which he said the city has achieved "positive results"** in previous phases of epidemic response, and is now moving into a new phase of "combining epidemic response with the resumption of production." Districts and counties should make sound judgements on the risk level that they are facing to avoid unnecessarily onerous restrictions and one size fits all approaches, Chen said.

**34. (U)** During the same February 18 meeting of the municipal party standing committee, Chen Min'er announced that Chongqing will initiate preferable tax policies, ensure the sufficient supply of energy and utilities, and facilitate project financing for enterprises affected by the virus outbreak. The municipal

government also will support migrant workers returning to their places of employment and match workers with local job opportunities, he said. Chen again emphasized the importance of Xi Jinping's leadership in the combat against the epidemic.

35. (U) On February 18, Chongqing Mayor Tang Liangzhi met with a visiting State Council Epidemic Response Group. Tang thanked the group for its guidance in the prevention and control efforts in Chongqing. Sun Xinhua, head of the visiting group, praised Chongqing for its quick action.

36. (U) Following a similar announcement by the Sichuan government on February 19, the **Chongqing municipal government said that it will roll out a “four-tiered, risk-based assessment system” to advise firms on resumption of normal operations.** According to the classification system, firms in “low-risk zones” that have had no COVID-19 cases in the last 14 days can resume work. Firms in “medium-risk” zones with fewer than 50 COVID-19 cases can reopen in a “quick but orderly” manner. Firms in high-risk zones with more than 50 cases or in zones with clustered outbreaks in the last 14 days can only resume production “gradually and on a case by case basis.”

37. (U) Following similar moves in Yunnan, the Chongqing government announced on February 19 that it will introduce a health QR code system to monitor citizens' health status. Residents will be required to swipe a QR code when entering or exiting public spaces and communal workspaces. Foreign residents are being advised to register on Chongqing's official WeChat account. The system will be piloted by a series of companies starting February 22.

38. (U) On February 19 Chongqing's Finance Bureau noted that the municipal government had spent 1.9 billion RMB (\$270 million) on epidemic response so far, an increase of 350 million RMB (\$50 million) over the last 11 days.

#### *Yunnan*

39. (U) Yunnan Party Secretary Chen Hao, who so far has maintained a low profile during the COVID-19 epidemic, visited the Yunnan Central Water Diversion Project Administration Bureau on February 19, during which he highlighted the importance of resuming major infrastructure projects.

40. (U) According to a February 19 press release, **Kunming municipality will continue rigid closed management practices in rural areas** and re-issued a list of 12 epidemic control measures.

41. (U) On February 19, **Yunnan province announced the gradual resumption of inter-provincial bus services** starting February 21, with the exception of lines to Hubei or destinations over 800 km.

42. (U) The Yunnan government announced on February 19 that it will roll out the same four-tiered, risk-based assessment system recently announced in Chongqing and Sichuan, in which authorities will allow enterprises to reopen depending on whether they are located in low-risk, medium-risk, or high-risk areas. Risk levels are determined by the number of COVID-19 cases in a given area during the preceding 14-day period.

#### *Guizhou*

43. (U) **Traffic in Guizhou has reportedly tripled after the removal of road blockades on February 16**

and is expected to continue growing rapidly, according to a statement issued by the Guizhou Provincial Transportation Department on February 18. The Department's current priorities include preventing individuals infected with COVID-19 from entering the province, containing the spread of the virus, and normalizing traffic to ensure logistics and supply chains.

#### **(U) INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

44. (U) **China Sends Testing Kits to Japan:** China's *Global Times* reported that the PRC government has donated COVID-19 nucleic acid testing kits to Japan ([link](#)). A spokesperson at the PRC Embassy in Japan told press that BGI in Shenzhen and Shenzhen MengMa Charity Foundation had donated the kits to National Institute of Infectious Diseases of Japan.

45. (U) Fosun Pharma's Vice President announced they ordered 140 non-invasive ventilators, with a total value of RMB 15 million (USD 2.1 million), from their affiliate Breas Medical Group in Sweden for donation to 14 Hubei hospitals. *(CG Shanghai)*

46. (U) Essilor Group, a French visual health company, donated RMB 1.5 million (USD 210,000) and 200,000 pairs of goggles to medical staff in Hubei Province, fever clinics in other parts of the country, and traffic and medical staff at Shanghai's highway checkpoints. *(CG Shanghai)*

47. (U) Shanghai-headquartered video sharing site Bilibili is donating RMB 10 million (USD 1.4 million) to Wuhan, together with RMB 300,000 (USD 42,200) worth of medical supplies. The company is also offering free monthly subscriptions to 100,000 housebound viewers in Hubei and Sichuan provinces. *(CG Shanghai)*

#### **(U) THIRD COUNTRY RESPONSE EFFORTS AND INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

48. (U) Nothing to report.

#### **(U) ECONOMIC AND SUPPLY CHAIN IMPACT**

49. (U) **PBOC Claims Strong Fundamentals and Limited Impact of Virus on the Economy:** In a report release by PRC's central bank the PBOC (People's Bank of China) February 19, the PBOC listed the control of the epidemic as its top priority and asserted that the impact of the coronavirus on the economy will be limited "as the epidemic has not changed the country's economic fundamentals." PBOC stated it will help companies affected by the epidemic by lowering lending rates, increasing credit support, and providing more medium- to long-term loans. It urged national and local banks to take full advantage of the liquidity released through the central bank re-lending program to provide targeted credit support for companies that directly participate in epidemic control effort. The central bank said it would monitor short-term fluctuations in the consumer prices, adding that "there is no basis for long-term inflation or deflation."

50. (U) **SMEs Struggle to Stay Afloat Despite Government Relief Policies** To address the plight of SMEs, local authorities have reduced or exempted rents and payment of social insurance. PRC's State Council announced it would eliminate or reduce required corporate contributions to employee social, medical, and unemployment funds for a period of time. However, many SME owners said these policies alone will not

help address their immediate cash flow issues.

**51. (U) Closed Schools and Self-Quarantined Teleworkers A Boon for Alibaba and Tencent APPs:**

Closed schools and homebound office workers have created a huge demand for virtual office tools, with Chinese tech firms Alibaba and Tencent being the main service providers. Alibaba's DingTalk is the most download free App in China's iOS App store, followed by Tencent Conference. DingTalk has been particularly swift in spotting the emerging need in the education sector. Nearly 600,000 teachers reported using DingTalk to conduct their online classes. According to media reports, some international schools have had to moved away from foreign online platforms due to slow Internet speed or VPN problems and instead have been using "more local friendly" online tools such as DingTalk and Tencent Conference. On February 17, PRC's Ministry of Education launched a national cloud learning platform for millions of students who are restricted to their homes over safety concerns arising from the Covid-19 outbreak.

**52. (U) Covid-19 Outbreak Reduced Spring Festival Travel by Half:** Passenger trips during the Chinese New Year Spring Festival period dropped by more than 50 percent this year, the country's top transport authority said on Wednesday. In December 2019, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) forecasted 3 billion trips during the holiday travel period from January 10 to February 18, however the actual figure was approximately 1.48 billion. The country recorded 210 million rail trips during the period—196 million fewer than during the same period a year ago, a decrease of 48.3 percent, according to China State Railway Group.

**53. (U) Heavily indebted private-sector conglomerate HNA Group will be taken over by the Hainan provincial government** and its assets divided, according to international [press reports](#). The Hainan-based HNA operates Hainan Airlines – which has 13 China-U.S. routes, all of which were suspended amid COVID-19. HNA Group has been shedding foreign assets since 2018.

**54. (U) State-owned Guangzhou Auto Corp. (GAC) announced it would begin mass production of facemasks** on February 20 using five production lines. GAC said the masks would be distributed by Guangzhou authorities to medical personnel and public transit workers. The firm on February 12 had said it wanted 12 production lines running by February 22, with eventual goal of 30.

**55. (U)** Hainan Governor Shen Xiaoming visited Qionghai city February 18, home of the [Bo'ao Forum for Asia](#), to observe epidemic-control efforts on the site, according to [press reports](#). The Forum, which annually convenes senior Chinese officials and high-level foreign attendees, is currently scheduled for March 24-27.

**56. (U) Officials at a State Council press conference on February 19 announced more than 50 percent of large enterprises in Shanghai and Jiangsu had returned to work, while small and medium-sized enterprises faced more challenges resuming work and production.** Meanwhile, the Shanghai Commerce Commission also reported on February 19 that of 697 companies surveyed, 86 percent had received permission to restart. Breaking the numbers down, approximately 93 percent of service sector businesses surveyed are working, including retail, food, delivery, and accounting firms. Deloitte and UPS are among the firms that authorities highlighted as open. However, officials noted that the service sector, which they said accounts for 70 percent of GDP, has been hit very hard in the short-term (though online grocery shopping more than doubled). Eighty percent of manufacturing firms surveyed have received approval to restart, including Tesla and J&J. Fortune 500 companies are doing better than average – over 90 percent surveyed have received permission to restart. (Note: It is unclear how representative surveyed companies

are of the overall business landscape in Shanghai. End note.) Shanghai and State Council officials both acknowledged problems related to a shortage of returning workers, poor transportation and logistics, and difficulty in supporting the industrial chain. Officials in Shanghai encouraged eligible companies to take advantage of 28 business support policies issued by the city on February 5.

57. (U) **Shanghai law enforcement officials announced on February 19 that 14 percent of small vendors that have reopened (approximately 12,000) have been ordered to improve virus prevention measures.** These measures include registering health information for all employees, ensuring those returning from key areas complete a 14-day self-quarantine, wearing facemasks, performing daily temperature checks, and disinfecting the business every day.

58. (U) **Shanghai officials announced on February 19 that chartered trains and buses can be used to bring workers back to the city.** These trains will transport migrant workers from areas where the epidemic has been brought under control and remains stable, such as Sichuan, to the Yangtze River Delta region through March 31. The Municipal Road Transportation Management Bureau announced businesses can apply to arrange chartered buses to bring back employees. Since Sunday, trial trains ran from Guizhou, Henan, Anhui, and Sichuan provinces to transport migrant workers to Hangzhou and Ningbo in Zhejiang. Local governments in Shanghai, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang provinces can apply for such trains and buses. Similarly, Taizhou, Zhejiang announced February 16 it will charter flights to bring workers from Chongqing, Guiyang, Chengdu, Kunming, and Xi'an back to Taizhou.

59. ~~(SBU)~~ **The Shanghai and Ningbo ports are facing a shortage of reefer plugs, leading to delays and additional costs for importing items in refrigerated containers.** These challenges are leading international container and shipping companies to suggest customers change the destination of shipments, especially for fresh and chilled commodities. One dairy importer reported to CG Shanghai's Agricultural Trade Office that supply chain challenges associated with coronavirus had caused recent shipments from Europe to be diverted or delayed due to labor shortages.

60. (U) **Ningbo launched China's first epidemic prevention insurance policies for small and micro enterprises.** The policies will pay up to RMB 100,000 (USD 14,200) for enterprises that stop work or stop production due to infectious diseases. The government will subsidize half of the RMB 2,000 (USD 285) premium for each enterprise.

61. (U) **Suzhou on February 18 announced additional measures to help businesses resume operations,** including employment subsidies per worker, subsidizing unemployment insurance, deferring payment of social security premiums, reducing interest rates on loans, etc.

62. ~~(SBU)~~ **COVID-19 Impact on JD.com Shenyang:** A delivery personnel at JD.Com Shenyang branch told ConGenOff that COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the company's operations. JD Shenyang's inventory is rapidly decreasing since many manufacturing companies have not yet resumed operations, and those that have resumed were behind schedule. Additionally, delivery service and supply chain continue to be a challenge, as JD trucks from other provinces face difficulty entering Shenyang due to roadblocks and highway closures. He lamented that delivery service within Shenyang has also slowed down because trucks are stopped multiple times at checkpoints for body temperatures and questioning by the authorities. Moreover, customers take longer time to pick up their packages due to closed management, forcing delivery personnel to wait much longer than usual at residential complexes. Checkpoints and movement restrictions



combined with dwindling inventory has led JD Shenyang to reduce its daily delivery schedules.

63. ~~(SBU)~~ **Contact says company's delivery process significantly impacted by COVID-19 and closed management:** A contact at the Zhengsheng Husbandry Co, a Shenyang-based animal feed production company, told ConGenOff that one of the biggest challenges the company faces is transportation and delivery. The contact noted that in addition to roadblocks and highways, another major problem for the company is that some truck drivers are unwilling to drive across provinces to deliver the products because they think they are at higher risk of contracting the virus driving long distances through multiple provinces (Note: CG Shenyang was told by other business contacts that their operations have also been impacted due to workers' fear of the virus. For example, Walmart Liaoning said that nearly half of Sam's Club Shenyang employees have resigned since COVID-19 outbreak, and a contact in Dalian told ConGenOff that seafood processing companies are concerned about resuming their businesses because many of their workers are hesitant to return due to growing fear of the virus. End Note). Additionally, contact noted that delivering products to rural areas are even more problematic since authorities there are generally stricter about allowing entry to outside trucks and personnel. In some rural areas, authorities require delivery personnel to drop off supplies at the border and force the customers to come pick up the packages themselves which slows down the overall delivery process that is already delayed due to roadblocks and checkpoints.

64. (U) While the central government has introduced a series of measures to ensure an adequate supply of **animal feed** to help agricultural companies restore production as soon as possible, in Sichuan local contacts report **their business operations remain at 70 percent of their normal capacity**. The national Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs have reportedly instructed local governments not to intercept or detain vehicles transporting feed, live animals, or animal products if they have a necessary traffic permit.

65. (U) According to CG Chengdu contacts at China Xiangtai Food Co., Ltd., the company has seen a 300 percent increase in supermarket sales over the 2020 Chinese New Year season compared to the same period last year, despite the COVID-19 outbreak. Headquartered in Chongqing, China Xiangtai is a new food company primarily engaged in pork processing, as well as selling beef, lamb and poultry products.

## **(SBU) SUPPORT FOR U.S. CITIZENS**

### Chengdu

66. ~~(SBU)~~ As of February 20, Chengdu ACS has received no new information of American citizens who have been ordered to self-quarantine or been sent to a controlled quarantine facility. Chengdu ACS has observed more discussions on AmCit WeChat groups about people planning their return to China. As AmCits return, they will likely face a 14-day period of self-quarantine in most major cities in Southwest China. Many AmCits who have remained in China throughout the epidemic note that their residential communities have implemented "closed-management" restrictions. Many Americans in Chengdu are only allowed to leave their apartment once per day or once every two day to get supplies.

### Shanghai

67. ~~(SBU)~~ The Consulate continues to reach out to the FAO to get clarity on **self-quarantine regulations in Shanghai** on behalf of returning American citizens who have been ordered by their neighborhood committee to complete a 14-day quarantine. As reported above, while Shanghai only requires this for those who have traveled to high-risk areas, in practice, many locations are requiring an in-home quarantine for anyone



returning to Shanghai, regardless of from where.

#### Wuhan

68. (U) **Wuhan Maternity Hospital Unable to Provide Birth Certificate to U.S. Citizen:** An American citizen reported that a private maternity hospital in Wuhan was unable to provide a birth certificate after she gave birth. The hospital said they had too few staff to handle administrative tasks such as birth records. The hospital could not give a date for when they would be able to provide a birth certificate.

69. ~~(SBU)~~ **U.S. Citizen in Changsha Reports Free Movement:** A U.S. citizen in Changsha reported that he was able to move around freely as long as he carried a resident's card. He reported that American Citizen WeChat groups in the city were largely concerned with how to get paid for missed work, how to work from home, and, in some cases, more restrictive housing policies. He noted that he had not heard of any problems from U.S. citizens in Changsha and that those who have stayed in the city to this point are not planning on leaving.

#### ~~(SBU)~~ POST OPERATIONS

#### ~~(SBU)~~ Chengdu

70. (U) Civil aviation is still operating from Chengdu, **though with decreased viable flights for USG personnel to depart Chengdu for the United States.** Viable transit destinations remaining include Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Seoul, and Hong Kong. Only two international flights from Chongqing, to Bangkok and Hong Kong, remain in operation.

#### ~~(SBU)~~ Guangzhou

71. ~~(SBU)~~ **Post Medical Provider returned to Guangzhou February 19 with medical equipment that can test for a variety of respiratory viruses and bacteria.** While it cannot test for COVID-19, it can test for 22 other respiratory pathogens and give medical personnel a better picture of any illnesses that occur at Post.

#### (U) MEDIA ROUNDUP

72. ~~(SBU)~~ **South China PAS media contacts posted satirical comments on the government's response to COVID-19.** The manager of an online media outlet in Guangzhou noted that with the increasing closed management policies of cities and provinces in the COVID-19 campaign, there has also been an uptick in the blocking of WeChat groups, Weibo posts, and other websites. A leader of a WeChat public account in Guangzhou posted commentary that the government should gain respect and authority to govern by not completely squashing rumors. A Guangzhou-based blogger had written about a January order given by the Director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology to the staff in January to not discuss COVID-19. This post has since been blocked on social media. *(CG Guangzhou)*

73. (U) Guangzhou netizens shared comments made by Wang Chen, the Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Engineering who said that **society should prepare for long-term co-existence with COVID-19** after this year, with commenters expressing concern. They also discussed reports that nine individuals are being investigated by the Guangzhou police for obstructing the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control measures, including deliberate concealment of symptoms and refusal to quarantine, with some netizens commenting that these individuals should be severely punished for their actions. *(CG Guangzhou)*

74. (U) On February 16, **Wuhan authorities announced that a medical team from Liaoning will take over management of 17 of the 32 wards at Leishenshan Hospital**, one of two emergency hospitals built in Hubei in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Since early February, Liaoning province has sent more than more than 1,000 workers to Hubei to assist with relief efforts. Media reports and updates regarding the news quickly went viral on social media platforms in Northeast China under the hashtag #Liaoning Medical Team Takes Over Management at Leishenshan Hospital#. By February 20, it had become a top trending topic with a viewership of 15 million and more than 11,000 comments. Chinese netizens in the region expressed mixed opinions on the issue. Most praised the high-caliber medical skills of Liaoning medical personnel and welcomed the inspiring and positive news, however some netizens complained about underreporting of the actual contribution of relief efforts from Liaoning and national bias towards people from Northeast China. Others voiced concerns about the impact sending medical workers to Hubei would have on local medical services and unequal access to medical treatment in the country. The following additional topics were also trending on social media sites in Northeast China: 1) Over 100 patients cured and discharged in Heilongjiang, 2) 1,100 milliliters of plasma donated by healed patients in Jilin, and 3) Changchun medical waste treatment plant runs around-the-clock. (CG Shenyang)

75. (U) **Social media users continued to criticize a propaganda video released by authorities in Gansu province showing female health workers crying as their heads are shaved**, ostensibly to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Social media users questioned whether such measures were necessary and urged local government officials to remember that health workers are still human beings.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature:

Branstad

DeControlled

Drafted By:

BEIJING:Multiple Mission China Drafters

Cleared By:

HHS/CDC/IRD: (Beijing)  
HHS/OGA: (Beijing)  
POL-ECON: (b)(6)  
POL-ECON: Guangzhou  
POL: (Beijing)  
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POL-ECON: (Beijing)  
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ESTH: (Beijing)  
MGT/MED: (Beijing)  
RSO: (Beijing)  
PD: (b)(6) (Beijing)  
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MGT: (Beijing)  
ESTH: (Beijing)  
POL: (Beijing)  
BEIJING: (Beijing)

Approved By:

Released By:

**Info:**

SEOUL, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; TAIPEI, AIT *ROUTINE*; HANOI, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; SINGAPORE, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; ULAANBAATAR, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; PHNOM PENH, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; BANGKOK, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; HONG KONG, AMCONSUL *ROUTINE*; MANILA, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; PARIS, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; VLADIVOSTOK, AMCONSUL *ROUTINE*; TOKYO, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; ATLANTA GA, CDC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; PACOM IDHS HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

**XMT:**

CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

**Action Post:**

NONE

**Dissemination Rule:**

DIS\_FO\_STAFF, DIS\_PD\_ANP, DIS\_RSP\_SCI\_TECH, DIS\_P\_PRESS, DIS\_EX\_HRU, DIS\_EAP\_EP, DIS\_MTS\_PRIN, DIS\_J\_ECON\_POLICY, DIS\_ANP\_PRIN, DIS\_CM\_CHINA\_MONGOLIA, DIS\_EAP\_FAO, DIS\_CM\_TC, DIS\_J\_ECON, DIS\_MTS\_INDONESIA, DIS\_RSP\_CT, DIS\_EP\_FROM\_APEC, DIS\_K\_DPRK, DIS\_DMC, DIS\_EX\_PMO, DIS\_DEP\_DIR\_JAPP, DIS\_IDO, DIS\_AITW, DIS\_EX\_PRIN, DIS\_AITW2, DIS\_ADMIN\_TAGS, DIS\_RSP\_ASEAN\_FORUM, DIS\_FO\_CM\_TC, DIS\_MLS\_BURMA, DIS\_REG\_IMO\_OFF, DIS\_FO\_SPEC\_ASST, DIS\_TAG\_1, DIS\_MLS\_CAMBODIA, DAS\_POL\_ECON, DIS\_RIMO, DIS\_ANP\_PACIFIC\_ISLES, DIS\_EX\_ADM\_GSO, DIS\_EX\_RPM, DIS\_DEP\_DIR, DIS\_AIT\_ADMIN, DIS\_K\_ROK

**UNCLASSIFIED**

~~SBU~~

<b>Sender:</b>	"SMART Core" <svcsmartbtsewssprec2@state.gov>
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**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**To:** (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov>;  
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)  
**CC:** (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)  
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)  
**Subject:** Meeting on May 4th, Friday  
**Date:** Mon, 23 Apr 2018 23:24:17 -0400

Hi (b)(6)

We would like to check with your availability on May 4<sup>th</sup> to meet with EcoHealth Alliance colleagues on GVP. Will 2-3.30pm be OK for you? Thanks and regards,

(b)(6)

USAID/Beijing

US Embassy Beijing

Phone: (b)(6)

Fax: (b)(6)

E-mail: (b)(6)@state.gov

<http://www.usaid.gov> <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/usaid.html>

**From:** Hongying Li [(b)(6)]@ecohealthalliance.org]

**Sent:** Monday, April 23, 2018 4:43 PM

**To:** (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)

**Cc:** Peter Daszak; Alison Andre

**Subject:** Meeting on May 4th, Friday

Dear (b)(6)

I am writing to confirm the time for Peter and me visiting you at the Embassy on May 4th, Wednesday, to give updates to the Health Working Group on the GVP as you suggested, as well as other relevant work in China. Please let us know what time will work best for you on that day, and if there is any specific topics/questions you want to hear from us, please feel free to let us know.

Please find our IDs information as the follows for the security clearance:

Peter Daszak Passport No.: (b)(6)

Hongying Li Chinese ID: (b)(6)

Look forward to seeing you soon!

Best,  
Hongying



**Hongying Li, MPH 李泓莹**  
China Program Coordinator

EcoHealth Alliance  
460 West 34th Street – 17th floor  
New York, NY 10001

(b)(6) (U.S. mobile)  
(b)(6) (China mobile)  
(b)(6)

*EcoHealth Alliance leads cutting-edge scientific research into the critical connections between human and wildlife health and delicate ecosystems. With this science, we develop solutions that prevent pandemics and promote conservation.*

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
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<b>From:</b>	"Ortagus, Morgan D" (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>To:</b>	Kenna, Lisa D (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>CC:</b>	Martin, Kathryn (Katie) (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Fwd: Draft report
<b>Date:</b>	Thu, 30 Apr 2020 18:08:43 +0000

Lisa— can we print this out for S? (b)(5)

(b)(5) so I wanted to flag this for Him.

Sent from an iPhone

**From:** James Rosen (b)(6)

**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 1:39:03 PM

**To:** Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Draft report

#### EXCLUSIVE: U.S. intelligence will not find the origin of coronavirus, officials say

By James Rosen

Top Trump administration officials do not expect the U.S. intelligence community to succeed in their quest to determine the precise origins of the coronavirus, sources said Thursday.

A senior intelligence official, speaking to Sinclair on condition of anonymity so as not to jeopardize an ongoing investigation, said that while the country of origin is not disputed, the difficulty of intelligence collection in China, and the nature of viral phenomena, make it exceedingly remote that U.S. spy agencies will locate the exact manner and location where the virus originated.

"China is a hard target to begin with," the official said. "We'll certainly keep looking at whatever we find. But even with our best people on it, it's not as if we're going to be able to say, 'Here's the witness we need,' or 'Here's the document we need.' It's a waste of time. We're not going to get there."

The pessimistic conclusion came following a rare statement Thursday afternoon from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the nation's top intelligence unit, saying that the virus "originated in China" and adding that the intelligence community "concurs with the wide scientific consensus that the COVID-19 virus was not manmade or genetically modified."

The statement said the spy agencies are "surging resources" to study these issues, as part of an effort "to determine whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or if it was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan."

A separate report by the *New York Times* on Thursday had alleged that senior Trump aides have been "pressuring" intelligence analysts to deliver an assessment that the virus originated in a laboratory setting in China, either at the controversial Wuhan Institute of Virology or the less-publicized Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

The officials who spoke with Sinclair dismissed the *Times* report, without elaboration, as untrue. Separately, a senior official at the State Department, when contacted by Sinclair, also refuted the premise of the *Times* story, denying that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has applied pressure to intelligence analysts to deliver a particular assessment on the origins of the coronavirus.

The idea that the coronavirus may have emerged from a laboratory – not as the result of a deliberate weaponization program but rather as the result of an accident of some kind – gained traction last month, after the *Washington Post* reported that State Department officials had warned in cables sent in 2018 about unsafe conditions at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where researchers have worked with bats to study infectious diseases.

Until the disclosure of the cables, most senior U.S. officials – notably Dr. Anthony Fauci, head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases – had ventured publicly that the likeliest origin point for the coronavirus was the network of wet markets in Wuhan, where live animals have been sold. On April 17, however, three days after the Post disclosed the existence of the State Department cables, Secretary Pompeo told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt, without elaborating on his source of information: “We know that the Chinese Communist Party, when it began to evaluate what to do inside of Wuhan, considered whether the W.I.V. was, in fact, the place where this came from.”

The intelligence officials who spoke with Sinclair confirmed that they had reviewed the State Department cables from 2018 as part of their effort to learn more about the origins of the virus. “We’ve got all the stuff,” one official said dourly, suggesting that the presence of a large body of documentation for intelligence analysts to review – typically an advantage in the development of a preliminary assessment – was not, in this instance, expected to provide much value.

[More as I have it]

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James Rosen  
National Investigative Reporter  
Sinclair Broadcast Group

(b)(6)  
(b)(6) (desk)  
(b)(6) (mobile)  
@JamesRosenTV

<b>Sender:</b>	"Ortagus, Morgan D" (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	Kenna, Lisa D (b)(6)@state.gov>; Martin, Kathryn (Katie) (b)(6)@state.gov>

**From:** "Stilwell, David R"

**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6)@state.gov

**CC:** (b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6)@state.gov;  
(b)(6) EOP/NSC (b)(6)

**Subject:** FW: Washington Times report on Friday

**Date:** Sun, 26 Jan 2020 20:27:25 +0000

(b)(5)

From the link below:

China in the past has denied having any offensive biological weapons. The State Department, in a report last year, said it suspects China has engaged in covert biological warfare work.

A Chinese Embassy spokesman did not return an email seeking comment.

Chinese authorities so far have said the origin of the coronavirus that has killed scores and infected hundreds in in central Hubei Province is not known.

Gao Fu, director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told state-controlled media initial signs as of Thursday indicated the virus originated from wild animals sold at a seafood market in Wuhan.

One ominous sign, said a U.S. official, is the that false rumors since the outbreak began several weeks ago have begun circulating on the Chinese Internet claiming the virus is part of a U.S. conspiracy to spread germ weapons.

That could indicate China is preparing propaganda outlets to counter future charges the new virus escaped from one of Wuhan's civilian or defense research laboratories

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 26, 2020 12:56 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fwd: Washington Times report on Friday

<https://m.washingtontimes.com/news/2020/jan/24/virus-hit-wuhan-has-two-laboratories-linked-chines/>

<b>Sender:</b> "Stilwell, David R"	
<b>Recipient:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>;
	(b)(6)@state.gov>;
	(b)(6)@state.gov>;
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<b>To:</b>	Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Re: FW: FW: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses
<b>Date:</b>	Tue, 14 Apr 2020 21:28:47 +0000

He's got personal background and network on ties between Galveston and Wuhan Institute. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6) (o)

(b)(6) (c)

(b)(6)

On April 14, 2020 at 5:26:38 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:  
(b)(5) He insisted all was well.

**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2020 5:23 PM

**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Re: FW: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses

Dave,

Below were the speakers.

(b)(5)

Best, (b)(6)

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Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On April 14, 2020 at 5:13:21 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:

(b)(6)

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**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)

(Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6) (Shenyang) (b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>

**Subject:** Fwd: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses

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Josh Rogin

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taking unnecessary risks. In October 2014, the U.S. government had imposed a moratorium on funding of any research that makes a virus more deadly or contagious, known as “gain-of-function” experiments.

As many have pointed out, there is no evidence that the virus now plaguing the world was engineered; scientists largely agree it came from animals. But that is not the same as saying it didn’t come from the lab, which spent years testing bat coronaviruses in animals, said Xiao Qiang, a research scientist at the School of Information at the University of California at Berkeley.

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There are similar concerns about the nearby Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention lab, which operates at biosecurity level 2, a level significantly less secure than the level-4 standard claimed by the Wuhan Institute of Virology lab, Xiao said. That’s important because the Chinese government still refuses to answer basic questions about the origin of the novel coronavirus while suppressing any attempts to examine whether either lab was involved.

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<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

<b>From:</b>	"Stilwell, David R"
<b>To:</b>	(b)(6)
<b>Subject:</b>	FW: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses
<b>Date:</b>	Tue, 14 Apr 2020 21:13:20 +0000

(b)(6)

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**Sent:** Tuesday, April 14, 2020 7:15 AM

**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

(b)(6)

**Subject:** Fwd: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses

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**Sender:** "Stilwell, David R"

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The Chinese government, meanwhile, has put a total lockdown on information related to the virus origins. Beijing has yet to provide U.S. experts with samples of the novel coronavirus collected from the earliest cases. The Shanghai lab that published the novel coronavirus genome on Jan. 11 was quickly shut down by authorities for "rectification." Several of the doctors and journalists who reported on the spread early on have disappeared.

On Feb. 14, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for a new biosecurity law to be accelerated. On Wednesday, CNN reported the Chinese government has placed severe restrictions requiring approval before any research institution publishes anything on the origin of the novel coronavirus.

The origin story is not just about blame. It's crucial to understanding how the novel coronavirus pandemic started because that informs how to prevent the next one. The Chinese government must be transparent and answer the questions about the Wuhan labs because they are vital to our scientific understanding of the virus, said Xiao.

We don't know whether the novel coronavirus originated in the Wuhan lab, but the cable pointed to the danger there and increases the impetus to find out, he said.

"I don't think it's a conspiracy theory. I think it's a legitimate question that needs to be investigated and answered," he said. "To understand exactly how this originated is critical knowledge for preventing this from happening in the future."

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