

Lisa D. Kenna
Executive Secretary
Department of State

Dear Ms. Kenna:

Thank you for the invitation to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar to co-sign a letter to the People's Republic of China (PRC) Vice Premier Han Zheng and Yang Jiechi, Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China regarding the Wuhan Institute of Virology. After careful consideration, HHS respectfully declines to join the letter. As you may know, we have sent our own letter to Mr. Azar's counterpart at the National Health Commission, Minister Ma Xiaowei, regarding sample sharing. We would like to ensure that line of inquiry remains open, and as such do not wish to confuse issues by joining this letter. Further, we recently ended funding to the institute that this letter is requesting access to. A request for a visit could be construed as opening the possibility for that funding to again be available, something we do not wish to be suggested.

HHS recommends that the State Department reconsider sending the letter as it could be used to curtail access to Chinese vaccine and therapeutic development – something that we also do not wish to do as it could impede other Presidential health initiatives, such as Operation Warp Speed. Finally, the letter is now overtaken by the resolution agreed to at the 73rd World Health Assembly sponsored by more than 130 countries, including the United States, mandating WHO, working with the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health to undertake an investigation into the origins of COVID-19.

Thank you again for the opportunity to join this letter. We wish you the very best.

Sincerely,

Ann C. Agnew
Executive Secretary



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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

www.state.gov

May 15, 2020

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

MEMORANDUM FOR MS. ANNE C. AGNEW
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SUBJECT: (SBU) Request for Access to Wuhan for International Scientists and
Public Health Experts

(SBU) The Secretary of State intends to send a letter to officials of the People's Republic of China (PRC) requesting that the PRC authorize and facilitate a visit of international scientists and public health experts to Wuhan to exchange information with counterparts who have conducted research on coronaviruses (including the origin and characteristics of SARS-CoV-2), examine all relevant data, and visit laboratory facilities where such work has been conducted, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention laboratories. The purpose of the visit would be to access critical information needed to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and to prevent future outbreaks.

(SBU) The Department of State hereby respectfully invites the Secretary of Health and Human Services to co-sign a letter to PRC Executive Vice Premier Han Zheng and Yang Jiechi, Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs of the Communist Party of China. A draft of the letter is enclosed with this memorandum. The Department of State is separately requesting OSTP Director Droegeheimer co-sign the letter as well.

(b)(6)

Lisa D. Kenna

Executive Secretary

Attachment:

Letter to Executive Vice Premier Han and Director Yang

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

His Excellency Han Zheng
Vice Premier
of the People's Republic of China
Beijing

His Excellency Yang Jiechi
Director of the Office of Foreign Affairs
of the Communist Party of China
Beijing

Dear Vice Premier Han and Director Yang:

(b)(5)

Sincerely,

Michael R. Pompeo