



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 24, 2023

Case No. FL-2021-00033

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

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

As we noted in our letter dated January 24, 2023, 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 has identified an additional 17 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined that all 17 records may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made excisions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. 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 Christopher M. Lynch, Trial Attorney, at Christopher.M.Lynch@usdoj.gov or (202) 353-4537. 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 stylized flourish at the end.

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

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Latest timeline
Date:	Sun, 12 Apr 2020 20:52:09 +0000

Flagging. Adding a few more items now though.

--

(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6) (o)
(b)(6) (c)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On April 12, 2020 at 2:24:08 PM EDT, (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Want to review before I circulate? Below/attached. Thanks.

This version notes at the top that major themes include:

The silenced and the disappeared: E.g. Wuhan doctors Li Wenliang, Ai Fen and others; journalists Fang Bin, Chen Quishi, and Li Zehua; activist Xu Zhiyong; professor Xu Zhangrun; billionaire and Xi Jinping critic Ren Zhiqiang...

The suppression and destruction of evidence: E.g. virus samples ordered destroyed at genomics labs, wildlife market stalls bleached, genome sequence not shared publicly, Shanghai lab closed for "rectification" after sharing genome on its own, academic articles subjected to Ministerial prior review...

The deadly denial of human-to-human transmission: Despite evidence of human-human transmission from early December, PRC authorities deny it until Jan. 20. The World Health Organization does the same. Yet officials and doctors in Taiwan raised concerns about human-human transmission as early as Dec. 31, as did officials and doctors in Hong Kong on Jan. 4...

The endangerment of other countries: Millions of people leave Wuhan after the outbreak and before Beijing locks down the city on Jan. 23. Thousands fly overseas. When Beijing cuts off travel from Hubei Province to the rest of China, it doesn't stop travel from Hubei to the rest of the world. Throughout February, Beijing tries to bully the U.S., Italy, India, Australia, Southeast Asian neighbors and others not to protect themselves via travel restrictions...

New timeline elements in the attached:

--2013--

Researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology collect a sample of horseshoe bat feces from a cave in Yunnan Province, China. The sample, labeled RaTG13, is later found to contain a virus 96.2% identical to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

--2019--

February 20: Researchers at Hong Kong University publish a study of bat coronaviruses, warning: “bat–animal and bat–human interactions, such as the presence of live bats in wildlife wet markets and restaurants in Southern China, are important for interspecies transmission of [coronaviruses] and may lead to devastating global outbreaks.”

--2020--

January 13: The first coronavirus case outside of China is reported in Bangkok when a 61-year-old woman from Wuhan tests positive four days after arriving from China with a fever at the airport. The patient had begun exhibiting symptoms (fever, chills, sore throat, headache) three days before leaving Wuhan.

January 15: The patient who becomes the first confirmed U.S. case leaves Wuhan and arrives in the U.S., carrying the coronavirus.

January 22: WHO holds emergency committee meeting, decides not to declare the novel coronavirus a “public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC).” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says afterward that declaring a PHEIC is a decision he takes “extremely seriously” and is “only prepared to make with appropriate consideration of all the evidence.” The emergency committee meeting excluded Taiwan from its deliberations.

January 23: Despite locking down Wuhan and cutting off travel from the surrounding Hubei Province to the rest of China, PRC officials did not cut off travel from Hubei Province to the rest of the world.

January 24: Officials in Beijing prevent the Wuhan Institute of Virology from sharing samples of the novel coronavirus with the University of Texas biocontainment lab, overruling an initial agreement by the Wuhan lab to share these samples.

January 30: WHO declares a public-health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), after nearly 10,000 cases of the virus are confirmed, including in at least 18 countries outside of China.

February 23: Xi Jinping delivers speech to PRC officials, calls virus “a crisis for us and also a major test.” He stresses the need to maintain “social stability,” “positive energy” news reporting, and enhanced “external propaganda.” He states that “the effectiveness of the prevention and control work has once again demonstrated the significant advantages of the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.”

March 11: WHO declares the novel coronavirus a “pandemic,” after the official worldwide case count is 118,000 people in 114 countries.

March 26: China bars entry of all foreigners in attempt to limit virus spread. This measure is harsher than the travel restrictions of other countries that Beijing had criticized just weeks before.

April 3: While lifting lockdown restrictions in Wuhan, officials limit funerals of those who died from the coronavirus, suppress online discussions of fatalities, scrub images of funeral homes from social media, assign minders to families in mourning, and face questions from families such as why it took the government weeks to inform the public that the virus could spread among humans.

April 3: China's Ministry of Science and Technology announces that ongoing clinical research on the coronavirus must be reported to authorities within three days or be halted.

April 7: Human rights activists report, citing public records alone, that Chinese police punished nearly 900 people for online speech or information-sharing about the virus over three months.

April 11: Chinese universities publish online—and then apparently delete—new guidelines stating that academic papers on the origin of the novel coronavirus can be published only with the approval of the Ministry of Science and Technology.

<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 12.pdf>

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

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)@pacom.mil>; Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
CC:	(b)(6)@pacom.mil>
Subject:	RE: Latest timeline
Date:	Mon, 13 Apr 2020 12:50:15 +0000

I'll take a look later this morning too. (b)(5)

Sent from Mail for Windows 10

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Stilwell, David R; (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Latest timeline

We can pass that on to CNA.

Also, here is a recent "official" COVID timeline according to Xinhua:
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/E5HSjhIDnHeq6msltkl4LQ>

(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 8:40:08 AM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: [Non-DoD Source] FW: Latest timeline

<!-- .rps_a258 .EmailQuote { margin-left: 1pt; padding-left: 4pt; border-left: #800000 2px solid; } -->

(b)(5)

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

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 2:24 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
Subject: Latest timeline

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Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)@pacom.mil>;

Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

(b)(6)@pacom.mil>

From:	"Hale, David" (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: FLASH CLEARANCE - S Note on WIV Reporting
Date:	Fri, 17 Apr 2020 22:08:27 +0000

Ok

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 17, 2020, at 4:51 PM, (b)(6) wrote:

I cleared

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6)
Date: April 17, 2020 at 4:48:12 PM EDT
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: FLASH CLEARANCE - S Note on WIV Reporting

Flagging this draft note to S from EAP on Wuhan Institute of Virology-related reporting from Mission China. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

NOTE FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM:EAP – David R. Stilwell

SUBJECT:(SBU) Mission China's 2018 Reporting on Coronaviruses and the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV)

BLUF: (b)(5)

(U) Mission China Reporting: Background and Timeline

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Follow-Up to Reporting

(b)(5)

(U) USG Cooperation with WIV

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(U) CDC's China Office Staff Reduction and Implications for COVID-19 Response

(b)(5)

From: EAP-Staffers Mailbox (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 17, 2020 16:36

To: (b)(6)

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FLASH CLEARANCE - S Note on WIV Reporting

Hi (b)(6)

Please find attached Note to S on Mission China's 2018 Reporting on Coronaviruses and the Wuhan Institute of Virology (b)(5) Please note that (b)(6) granted EAP permission to extend the note beyond the two page maximum.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

<S Note on WIV Reporting.docx>

<18-BEIJING-138.eml.pdf>

<18-WUHAN-38.eml.pdf>

Sender:	"Hale, David"	(b)(6)	
Recipient:	(b)(6)		

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
CC:	Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: 5 Questions for WHO
Date:	Fri, 24 Apr 2020 21:03:31 +0000

This is outstanding! Thank you, Doctor.

(b)(6) please let me know if you have any additions, etc.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~ DeControlled

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 5:01 PM
To: (b)(6) Stilwell, David R
(b)(6)
Cc: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: 5 Questions for WHO

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Bureau of Medical Services
U.S. Department of State

(703) 957-9493

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 2:24 PM

To: Pryor, Pamela D (b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: 5 Questions for WHO

OK great, I'll contact him now.

(b)(6) please send me your 5 top questions. Here is the kind of thing I'm looking for:

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Pryor, Pamela D (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 2:19 PM

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

(b)(6)

Cc: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: 5 Questions for WHO

Yes. (b)(6) speaks to him often.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 24, 2020 2:10 PM

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

(b)(6)

Cc: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

Pryor, Pamela D

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: 5 Questions for WHO

Are we allowed to contact Stu Symington, our top American at WHO?

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~**From:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6)**Sent:** Friday, April 24, 2020 12:03 PM**To:** (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: 5 Questions for WHO

(b)(6)

If you could ask Tedros five (or three or whatever) questions, what would they be?

(b)(5)

Thanks

Dave

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

Sender:	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)
Recipient:	Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
	Bremberg, Andrew P (Geneva) (b)(6)
	Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Mon, 18 May 2020 20:37:51 +0000

so what are you making of the debunked report, and the Australian reporter's "dossier"?

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 2:14 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

OMG doesn't begin to express what I'm feeling right now. I JUST got back into my state email after being locked out for months and was able to read this.

Thank you for your bio and for agreeing to help out with the ESTH course. Promise I'll get back to you within a week to lay out what I think the agenda will be, but I'd very much like to grab you for two days, if I could: Fri, June 19 for a bit to talk about effective ESTH reporting (I'm going to ask them to write a short cable over the weekend or critique a few already sent out, not sure which might be more useful); and Fri, June 26 to talk to them candidly about the on-the-ground work of an ESTH officer in the field and how to engage with country team, make a difference, work with Washington, etc. Both sessions would likely be in the 9-11 time frame (not the whole two hours, but that's the window). Would you be game?

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:50 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:49 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

From 2018 Cables:

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary with

Comment.

5. (SBL) During interactions with scientists at the WIV laboratory, they noted that the new lab has a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory.

6. (SBL) The ability of WIV scientists to undertake productive research despite limitations on the use of the new BSL-4 facility is demonstrated by a recent publication on the origins of SARS. Over a five-year study, Drs. Shi and Cui Jie (and their research team) widely sampled bats in Yunnan province with funding support from NIAID/NIH, USAID, and several Chinese funding agencies. The study results were published in PLoS Pathogens online on Nov. 30, 2017 (1), and it demonstrated that a SARS-like coronavirus isolated from horseshoe bats in a single cave contain all the building blocks of the pandemic SARS-coronavirus genome that caused the human outbreak. These results strongly suggest that the highly pathogenic SARS-coronavirus originated in this bat population. Most importantly, the researchers also showed that various SARS-like coronaviruses can interact with ACE2, the human receptor identified for SARS coronavirus. This finding strongly suggests that SARS-like coronaviruses from bats can be transmitted to humans to cause SARS-like disease. From a public health perspective, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

David Ignatius runs through the possible origins...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-did-covid-19-begin-its-initial-origin-story-is-shaky/2020/04/02/1475d488-7521-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

April 2, 2020 at 6:56 p.m. EDT

The story of how the novel coronavirus emerged in Wuhan, China, has produced a nasty propaganda battle between the United States and China. The two sides have traded some of the sharpest charges made between two nations since the Soviet Union in 1985 falsely accused the CIA of manufacturing AIDS.

U.S. intelligence officials don't think the pandemic was caused by deliberate wrongdoing. The outbreak that has now swept the world instead began with a simpler story, albeit one with tragic consequences: The prime suspect is "natural" transmission from bats to humans, perhaps through unsanitary markets. But scientists don't rule out that an accident at a research laboratory in Wuhan might have spread a deadly bat virus that had been collected for scientific study.

"Good science, bad safety" is how Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) put this theory in a Feb. 16 tweet. He ranked such a breach (or natural transmission) as more likely than two extreme possibilities: an accidental leak of an "engineered bioweapon" or a "deliberate

release.” Cotton’s earlier loose talk about bioweapons set off a furor, back when he first raised it in late January and called the outbreak “worse than Chernobyl.”

President Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo added to the bile last month by describing the coronavirus as the “Chinese virus” and the “Wuhan virus,” respectively. China dished wild, irresponsible allegations of its own. On March 12, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lijian Zhao charged in a tweet: “It might be [the] US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan.” He retweeted an article that claimed, without evidence, that U.S. troops might have spread the virus when they attended the World Military Games in Wuhan in October 2019.

China retreated on March 22, when Ambassador to the United States Cui Tiankai told “Axios on HBO” that such rumors were “crazy” on both sides. A State Department spokesman said Cui’s comment was “welcome,” and Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping pledged in a March 27 phone call to “focus on cooperative behavior,” a senior administration official told me.

To be clear: U.S. intelligence officials think there’s no evidence whatsoever that the coronavirus was created in a laboratory as a potential bioweapon. Solid scientific research demonstrates that the virus wasn’t engineered by humans and that it originated in bats.

But how did the outbreak occur? Solving this medical mystery is important to prevent future pandemics. What’s increasingly clear is that the initial “origin story” — that the virus was spread by people who ate contaminated animals at the Huanan Seafood Market in Wuhan — is shaky.

Scientists have identified the culprit as a bat coronavirus, through genetic sequencing; bats weren’t sold at the seafood market, although that market or others could have sold animals that had contact with bats. The Lancet noted in a January study that the first covid-19 case in Wuhan had no connection to the seafood market.

There’s a competing theory — of an accidental lab release of bat coronavirus — that scientists have been puzzling about for weeks. Less than 300 yards from the seafood market is the Wuhan branch of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Researchers from that facility and the nearby Wuhan Institute of Virology have posted articles about collecting bat coronaviruses from around China, for study to prevent future illness. Did one of those samples leak, or was hazardous waste deposited in a place where it could spread?

Richard Ebright, a Rutgers microbiologist and biosafety expert, told me in an email that “the first human infection could have occurred as a natural accident,” with the virus passing from bat to human, possibly through another animal. But Ebright cautioned that it “also could have occurred as a laboratory accident, with, for example, an accidental infection of a laboratory worker.” He noted that bat coronaviruses were studied in Wuhan at Biosafety Level 2, “which provides only minimal protection,” compared with the top BSL-4.

Ebright described a December video from the Wuhan CDC that shows staffers “collecting bat coronaviruses with inadequate [personal protective equipment] and unsafe operational practices.” Separately, I reviewed two Chinese articles, from 2017 and 2019, describing the heroics of Wuhan CDC researcher Tian Junhua, who while capturing bats in a cave “forgot to take protective measures” so that “bat urine dripped from the top of his head like raindrops.”

And then there's the Chinese study that was curiously withdrawn. In February, a site called ResearchGate published a brief article by Botao Xiao and Lei Xiao from Guangzhou's South China University of Technology. "In addition to origins of natural recombination and intermediate host, the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. Safety level may need to be reinforced in high risk biohazardous laboratories," the article concluded. Botao Xiao told the Wall Street Journal in February that he had withdrawn the paper because it "was not supported by direct proofs." Accidents happen, human or laboratory. Solving the mystery of how covid-19 began isn't a blame game, but a chance for China and the United States to cooperate in a crisis, and prevent a future one.

Read more from [David Ignatius's archive](#), [follow him on Twitter](#) or [subscribe to his updates on Facebook](#).

Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Wed, 8 Apr 2020 13:49:18 +0000

So I actually had no idea about the Washington Post request when I sent these to you. There has just been a lot of talk about them lately, which is why I sent them on.

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:48:56 AM

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

Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for this. Truly interesting. Will digest and socialize.

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:27 AM

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

Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

Hey (b)(6)

Thought you might be interested in the below article if you haven't seen it. Additionally, I do not think the 7th floor has ever seen the two cables my team and I wrote back in 2018 when I was the ESTH Counselor at Embassy Beijing to reflect my concerns about the biolab in Wuhan. There is more background in case there is interest.

From 2018 Cables:

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5) **End Summary with Comment.**

5. ~~(SBU)~~ During interactions with scientists at the WIV laboratory, they noted that the new lab has a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ The ability of WIV scientists to undertake productive research despite limitations on the use of the new BSL-4 facility is demonstrated by a recent publication on the origins of SARS. Over a five-year study, Drs. Shi and Cui Jie (and their research team) widely sampled bats in Yunnan province with funding support from NIAID/NIH, USAID, and several Chinese funding agencies. The study results were published in PLoS Pathogens online on Nov. 30, 2017 (1), and it demonstrated that a SARS-like coronaviruses isolated from horseshoe bats in a single cave contain all the building blocks of the pandemic SARS-coronavirus genome that caused the human outbreak. These results strongly suggest that the highly pathogenic SARS-coronavirus originated in this bat population. Most importantly, the researchers also showed that various SARS-like coronaviruses can interact with ACE2, the human receptor identified for SARS coronavirus. This finding strongly suggests that SARS-like coronaviruses from bats can be transmitted to humans to cause SARS-like disease. From a public health perspective, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:39 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

You heard it first from (b)(6)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:18 AM

To: EAP-CM-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>; EAP-FO-Principals-DL (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; INR-China-Small Group (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

David Ignatius runs through the possible origins...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-did-covid-19-begin-its-initial-origin-story-is-shaky/2020/04/02/1475d488-7521-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

April 2, 2020 at 6:56 p.m. EDT

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

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Thu, 23 Apr 2020 01:09:27 +0000

Thanks Joe! Great talking to you as always.

Get Outlook for iOS

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

Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 9:08:19 PM

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

Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

(b)(6)

Found it – thanks! I have been telling everyone you called this first.

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:28 PM

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

Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

(b)(5)

David Ignatius runs through the possible origins...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-did-covid-19-begin-its-initial-origin-story-is-shaky/2020/04/02/1475d488-7521-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

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

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
To: (b)(6) Berlin (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Seckinger, D.R. (Bratislava) <SeckingerDR@state.gov>
Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date: Fri, 3 Apr 2020 13:33:23 +0000

Also is it weird that now I'm hungry for Chinese food?

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 4:31 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) Berlin (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6) (Bratislava)
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

See also (b)(6) who predicted this in 2006

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 4:29 PM
To: (b)(6) (Helsinki) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Berlin) (b)(6)
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<SeckingerDR@state.gov>
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To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>
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	(b)(6) @state.gov>;
Recipient:	(b)(6) (Berlin) (b)(6) @state.gov>;
	(b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6) @state.gov>;
	(b)(6) (Bratislava) (b)(6) @state.gov>

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 09:04:43 -0400

(b)(5)

On Apr 3, 2020, at 8:52 AM, (b)(6) wrote:

Looks like the media is starting to report on this (b)(5)

(b)(5)

David Ignatius runs through the possible origins...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-did-covid-19-begin-its-initial-origin-story-is-shaky/2020/04/02/1475d488-7521-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

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Sender:	Eric Sayers (b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
(b)(6) (Helsinki) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
To: (b)(6) (Berlin) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6) (Bratislava) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date: Fri, 3 Apr 2020 13:33:57 +0000

But mine is a factual cable based upon reporting from the scientists. Science fiction writers get stuff right all the time, I am FSO we only get it right when people ignore us. That is how I knew for sure I was right.

From: (b)(6) (Helsinki) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:31 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6) (Berlin) (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6) (Bratislava) (b)(6)@state.gov>
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See also (b)(6) who predicted this in 2006

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
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Sender:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	(b)(6) (Helsinki) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Berlin) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Wellington) (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Bratislava) (b)(6)@state.gov>

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 16:11:17 +0000

very cool

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:38 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL <EAP-J-Office-DL@state.gov>

Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

In case folks are interested.

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:39 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

You heard it first from (b)(6)...

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:18 AM

To: EAP-CM-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>; EAP-FO-Principals-DL (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; INR-China-Small Group (b)(6)@state.gov>

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

From:	Eric Sayers (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 09:12:43 -0400

(b)(6)

On Apr 3, 2020, at 9:12 AM, (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

What is your cell number again?

From: Eric Sayers (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:05 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

(b)(5)

On Apr 3, 2020, at 8:52 AM, (b)(6) wrote:

Looks like the media is starting to report on this (b)(5)

(b)(5)

David Ignatius runs through the possible origins...

https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/how-did-covid-19-begin-its-initial-origin-story-is-shaky/2020/04/02/1475d488-7521-11ea-87da-77a8136c1a6d_story.html

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Sender:	Eric Sayers (b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 14:01:26 +0000

Also very true!

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:59 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

If we were leading OES they would have come out much sooner.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:58 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

About time! Let's hope they come out sooner rather than later....

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:29 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:38:48 AM
To: EAP-J-Office-DL <EAP-J-Office-DL@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

You heard it first from (b)(6) ..

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:18 AM
To: EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>; EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; INR-China-Small Group <INR-ChinaSmallGroup@state.gov>
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Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient:

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 14:50:44 +0000

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:49 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

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Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 13:58:26 +0000

About time! Let's hope they come out sooner rather than later....

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:29 AM

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

Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:38:48 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

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To: EAP-CM-Office-DL (b)(6)@state.gov>; EAP-FO-Principals-DL (b)(6)

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April 2, 2020 at 6:56 p.m. EDT

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But how did the outbreak occur? Solving this medical mystery is important to prevent future pandemics. What’s increasingly clear is that the initial “origin story” — that the virus was spread by people who ate contaminated animals at the [Huanan Seafood Market](#) in Wuhan — is shaky.

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

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	RE: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 13:48:56 +0000

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for this. Truly interesting. Will digest and socialize.

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:27 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

Hey (b)(6)

Thought you might be interested in the below article if you haven't seen it. Additionally, I do not think the 7th floor has ever seen the two cables my team and I wrote back in 2018 when I was the ESTH Counselor at Embassy Beijing to reflect my concerns about the biolab in Wuhan. There is more background in case there is interest.

From 2018 Cables:

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary with Comment.

5. ~~(SBU)~~ During interactions with scientists at the WIV laboratory, they noted that the new lab has a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory.

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:39 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)

Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

You heard it first from (b)(6).

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:18 AM

To: EAP-CM-Office-DL (b)(6); EAP-FO-Principals-DL (b)(6)

(b)(6); INR-China-Small Group (b)(6)

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Sender:	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6) (Kabul) (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Re: FW: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post
Date:	Fri, 3 Apr 2020 15:09:27 +0000

We need to get you back in the private sector and publishing.

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On April 3, 2020 at 10:58:05 AM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

Looks like the media is starting to report on this more factually — I wonder who set them straight. If they get my cables they'll also know it was essentially predicted in 2018. They are unclassified and FIOA-able so I suspect at some point they'll come out.

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(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 8:38:48 AM

To: EAP-J-Office-DL (b)(6)

Subject: Fw: How did covid-19 begin? Its initial origin story is shaky. from The Washington Post

You heard it first from (b)(6)

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<18-WUHAN-38.eml.pdf>

<18-BEIJING-138.eml.pdf>

Sender:	(b)(6)	(Kabul)	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6)		