



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 26, 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 May 24, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State ("Department") has identified an additional eight responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined that all eight records may be released in part.

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. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. 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 Sarah M. Suwanda, Trial Attorney, at sarah.m.suwanda@usdoj.gov or (202) 305-3196. 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 a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Meeting on May 4th, Friday
Date:	Tue, 24 Apr 2018 00:22:51 -0400

Great. We will coordinate and send out a general HWG invitation soon.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 12:18 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: Meeting on May 4th, Friday

1:30 OK for me. Thanks!

(b)(6)
Health Attaché
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Embassy Beijing

Tel: (b)(6)
Mobile: (b)(6)
(b)(6)

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 12:16 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)

Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: Meeting on May 4th, Friday

Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for replying. We can move it to 1:30pm or even morning. Thanks,

(b)(6) USAID/Beijing

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 12:11 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: Meeting on May 4th, Friday

I have a meeting outside the embassy at 3pm. Can we do it at 2 or earlier?

(b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, April 24, 2018 11:24
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Meeting on May 4th, Friday

Hi (b)(6)

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

(b)(6)
Administrative and Program Assistant
USAID/Beijing
US Embassy Beijing
Phone: (b)(6) Fax: (b)(6)
E-mail: (b)(6)
<http://www.usaid.gov> <http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/usaid.html>

From: Hongying Li [mailto:(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; (b)(6)
Subject: Meeting on May 4th, Friday

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

From:	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) (b)(6) TOKYO ECON Americans DL <TOKYOECONAmericansDL@state.gov>; (b)(6)
CC:	EAP-J-ECON-DL <EAP-J-ECON-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Caixin Article
Date:	Wed, 11 Mar 2020 05:18:52 +0000

(b)(6)

Here's a bit more from our media analysis team: - (b)(6)

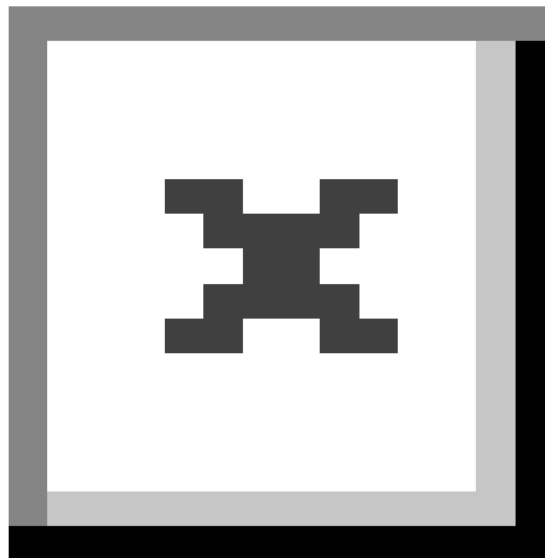
Mainichi reported on the growing spread of misinformation and disinformation on COVID-19 in cyberspace, noting that some social media users have circulated a rumor that the Chinese government was trying to describe the virus as the "Japanese coronavirus" by citing a message posted on the website of the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo on Feb. 27. The wording of a phrase in Chinese was taken by some Japanese to mean that Beijing was labeling the virus as if it were of Japanese origin. However, the Chinese Embassy dismissed the allegation, explaining that the phrase means "the coronavirus situation is changing in Japan." A Chinese Embassy spokesperson told the daily: "We have no intention to describe the pathogen as a Japanese virus. This was a completely false narrative. On various occasions our ambassador has voiced appreciation for Japan's support."

According to online-based outlets, including J-CAST News, some conservative Japanese lawmakers have called COVID-19 the "Wuhan virus." LDP Upper House member Hiroshi Yamada said at a Diet committee on March 3 that he describes the pathogen as the "Wuhan virus" in order to make it clear that the disease originated in the Chinese city. "Labeling it differently would make it difficult to delve into the source and origin of the disease," he said. According to BuzzFeed News Japan, one twitter user, who used to be an interpreter/detective with the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, posted a tweet regarding the Chinese Embassy message the next day, asserting that the Chinese were trying to shift blame on Japan. He repeated the same narrative on an internet TV program popular among conservatives. Dr. Takasu, an influencer/TV personality, reportedly echoed the same view by saying in his tweet on March 3: "Unless we make 'Wuhan virus' a household expression, the phrase 'Japanese virus' will go down in history. Japanese of coming generations will be forced to offer an apology [for spreading the virus]." This twitter chatter made "#Japanese virus" instantly popular.

Huffington Post Japan wrote that according to Chinese people it interviewed, no Chinese would interpret the phrase on the Chinese Embassy website as meaning that the virus originated in Japan. These internet-based outlets warned readers against being led to believe misleading information.

The link is to the Chinese Embassy webpage. Below is a screen shot. Highlighted in blue is the language in question (“日本新型冠状病毒肺炎疫情不断变”.

<http://www.china-embassy.or.jp/chn/sgxxs/t1750052.htm>



From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 8:47 AM

To: (b)(6); (b)(6); TOKYO ECON
Americans DL <TOKYOECONAmericansDL@state.gov>; (b)(6)

Cc: EAP-J-ECON-DL <EAP-J-ECON-DL@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

(b)(6)

This just in (b)(6)

Disinformation spreading on COVID-19

Mainichi reported on the growing spread of misinformation and disinformation on COVID-19 in cyberspace, saying that some people are apparently being led to believe false information, such as that the virus can be killed by drinking water of a certain temperature. Conspiracy theories are also being widely circulated, including claims that the virus is a Chinese biological weapon that was produced at a lab in Wuhan. The daily noted that some social media users circulated a rumor that the Chinese government was trying to describe the virus as the "Japanese coronavirus" by citing a message posted on the website of the Tokyo-based Chinese Embassy in late February. The wording of a phrase in Chinese was taken by some Japanese to mean that Beijing was labeling the virus as if it were of Japanese origin. However, the Chinese Embassy dismissed the allegation, explaining that the phrase means that "the coronavirus situation is changing in Japan." A Chinese Embassy spokesperson told the daily: "We have no intention to describe the pathogen as a Japanese virus. This is a completely false narrative. Our ambassador has voiced appreciation for Japan's support on various occasions. The daily added that the WHO has said the world needs to combat not only the epidemic but also an 'infodemic.'"

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2020 1:20 AM

To: (b)(6) TOKYO ECON Americans DL

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

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-J-ECON-DL <EAP-J-ECON-DL@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

+ Tokyo PAS colleagues.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 12:17 PM

To: TOKYO ECON Americans DL <TOKYOECONEAmericansDL@state.gov>

Cc: EAP-J-ECON-DL <EAP-J-ECON-DL@state.gov>

Subject: FW: Caixin Article

Have you all seen any local reporting corroborating this article?

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 12:11 PM

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

Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: Caixin Article

J Desk colleagues:

Would it be possible to ask if Embassy Tokyo has seen a message from the Chinese embassy (sent apparently to Chinese nationals in Japan) calling the virus the "Japanese coronavirus?" Or perhaps some local press stories about the message?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Office of Chinese & Mongolian Affairs

(b)(6)

HST Room 4318 | U.S. Department of State

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 12:04 PM

To: (b)(6); (b)(6); (b)(6)

(b)(6); Buangan, Richard L.; (b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D

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

Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Will see if we can find it...

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On March 10, 2020 at 11:26:12 AM EDT, (b)(6)

wrote:

Is there anyway we can find this message from the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo?

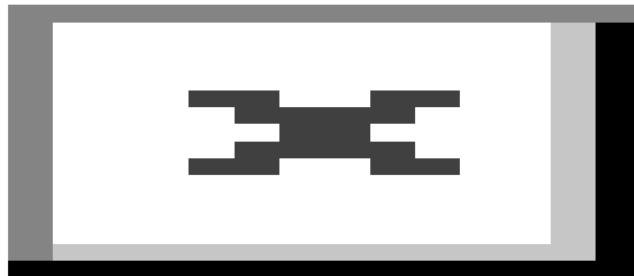
Chinese virus becomes "Japanese virus"

More insidious, the Chinese Embassy in Tokyo last week sent all its nationals a message on certain directives to apply if they are confronted with ... "Japanese coronavirus". As if the virus once arrived in Japan took Japanese nationality.

No corrective action was required from Tokyo, but this qualification did not go unnoticed. Faced with the scale of the epidemic, Tokyo postponed the official visit of leader Xi Jinping to Japan, scheduled for April, and prohibited, two months after the crisis, the entry into its territory of Chinese nationals.

<https://www.la-croix.com/Monde/Asie-et-Oceanie/Chine-reecrit-deja-lhistoire-coronavirus-Wuhan-2020-03-09-1201082887>

I searched their embassy's website for "Japanese coronavirus" and "coronavirus" in general and just got this back. Would be hilarious if it wasn't so sad.



SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

DeControlled

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 5:39 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6) Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Received.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 5:37 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(6)
(b)(6); (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6); Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

OK. GPA colleagues, please confirm receipt.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 5:37 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(6)
(b)(6); (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6) Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

That' s correct.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 5:36 PM
To: (b)(6); (b)(6)
(b)(6); (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6); Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Team, a note of caution here (b)(6) please correct me if I' m wrong) -

Note that Xi says "outbreak" and not "origin." We can safely say the outbreak started in Wuhan, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Small distinction but important.

Again, China hands, let me know if I'm misreading anything here.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:08 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

> Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Fritz,

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

(b)(6) do you have a link to the speech below?

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:03 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

> Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Fritz,

Jonathan D (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

GOLD.

(b)(5) IMHO.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:02 PM

To: (b)(6)

@state.gov (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); (b)(6); Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Full sentence is:

After the outbreak of a new coronavirus in Wuhan, on January 7, I presided over a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, (where) I put forward requirements for the prevention and control of the epidemic situation of new coronavirus.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:58 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Caixin Article

(b)(6) that Xi quote (b)(5) Is it possible for you to translate the complete first sentence? Where did he deliver the speech? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:57 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L
(b)(6) Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6); Fritz,

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

It' s an official source, so (b)(5)

Btw, you can also quote the first line of Xi Jinping' s February 3 speech, which reads in its first sentence, "After the outbreak of a new coronavirus in Wuhan..."

武汉新型冠状病毒肺炎疫情发生后，1月7日，我主持召开中央政治局常委会会议时，就对新型冠状病毒肺炎疫情防控工作提出了要求。1月20日，我专门就疫情防控工作作出批示，指出必须高度重视疫情，全力做好防控工作，要求各级党委和政府及有关部门把人民群众生命安全和身体健康放在第一位，采取切实有效措施，坚决遏制疫情蔓延势头。1月22日，鉴于疫情迅速蔓延、防控工作面临严峻挑战，我明确要求湖北省对人员外流实施全面严格管控。正月初一，我再次主持召开中央政治局常委会会议，对疫情防控特别是患者治疗工作进行再研究、再部署、再动员，并决定成立中央应对疫情工作领导小组。

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:33 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

Ortagus,

Morgan D (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

+(b)(6) in case they have a view?

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:32 PM

To: (b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L

(b)(6)

Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

“Recently, some medical institutions found that many of the pneumonia cases received were related to South China Seafood City. After receiving the report, the Municipal Health and Health Commission immediately launched a case search and retrospective investigation related to South China Seafood City in the city's medical health institutions. Twenty-seven cases have been found, of which 7 are in serious condition, and the remaining cases are stable and controllable. Two patients are expected to be discharged in the near future. The clinical manifestations of the cases were mainly fever, a few patients had difficulty breathing, and chest radiographs showed bilateral lung infiltrative lesions. At present, all cases have been isolated for treatment, follow-up investigations and medical observations of close contacts are ongoing, and hygiene investigations and environmental sanitation disposals for South China Seafood City are ongoing.”

<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2019123108989>

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:27 PM

To: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Can I use that exact language to pass along OTR?

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:24 PM

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

(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

So we can say that even China's own media apparatus admits that the virus has local Hubei origins.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Buangan, Richard L

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:23 PM

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

(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: Caixin Article

Here is what I forwarded to (b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Buangan, Richard L

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:20 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: FW: Caixin Article

Here is the Caixin article. I've highlighted (b)(5)

(b)(5) This article is more about how the Hubei authorities tried to cover up the emergence of the outbreak in the early stages but (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Also interesting: On Dec 31, it was China (not any other country) who notified the WHO of the emergence of an unidentified infectious disease.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:11 PM

To: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Caixin Article

Sorry for delay - literally just had to renew my subscription:

eb 29, 2020 09:19 PM

SOCIETY & CULTURE

In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread, and Throttled

By Gao Yu, Peng Yanfeng, Yang Rui, Feng Yuding, Ma Danmeng, Flynn Murphy, Han Wei and Timmy Shen

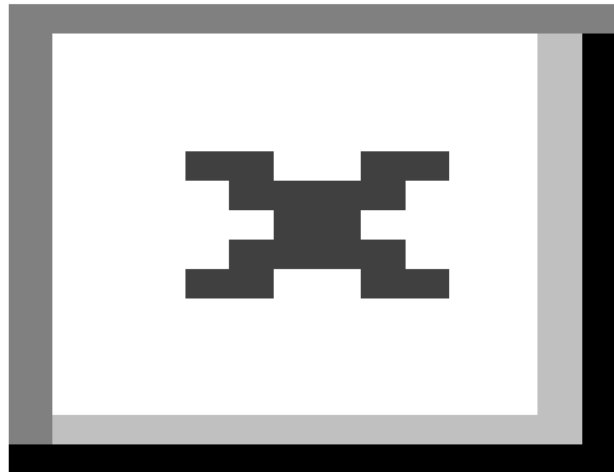
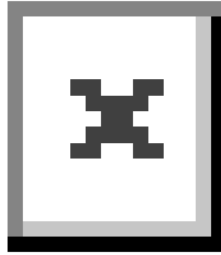


Photo: Pixabay



The new coronavirus that has claimed nearly 3,000 lives and spread to almost 50 countries was sequenced in Chinese labs — and found to be similar to SARS — weeks before officials publicly identified it as the cause of a mysterious viral pneumonia cluster in Wuhan, a Caixin investigation has found.

Test results from multiple labs in December suggested there was an outbreak of a new virus. However, the results failed to trigger a response that could have prepared the public, despite being fed into an infectious disease control system that was designed to alert China's top health officials about outbreaks. The revelations show how health officials missed early opportunities to control the virus in the initial stages of the outbreak, as questions mount about who knew what and when, and whether these actions helped the disease to spread.



As early as Dec. 27, a Guangzhou-based genomics company had sequenced most of the virus from fluid samples from the lung of a 65-year old deliveryman who worked at the seafood market where many of the first cases emerged. The results showed an alarming similarity to the deadly SARS coronavirus that killed nearly 800 people between 2002 and 2003.

Around that time, local doctors sent at least eight other patient samples from hospitals around Wuhan to multiple Chinese genomics companies, including industry heavyweight BGI, as they worked to determine what was behind a growing number of cases of unexplained respiratory disease. The results all pointed to a dangerous SARS-like virus.

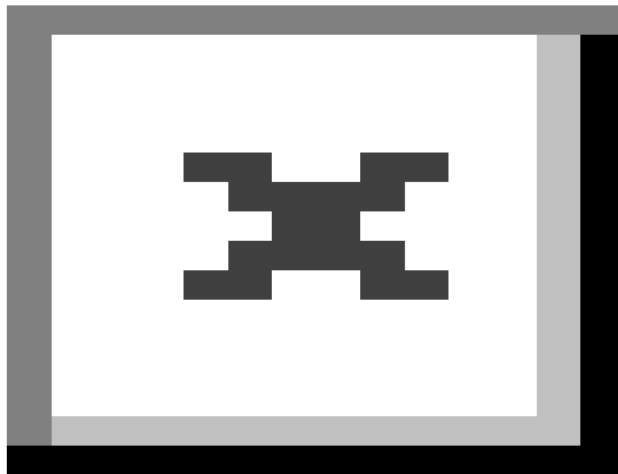
That was days before China notified the World Health Organization (WHO) on Dec. 31 about the emergence of an unidentified infectious disease, two weeks before it shared the virus's genome sequence with the world, and crucially, more than three weeks before Chinese authorities confirmed publicly that the virus was spreading between people.

Concerns about the new disease were initially kept within a small group of medical workers, researchers and officials. On Dec. 30, Dr. Li Wenliang was one of several in Wuhan who sounded the first alarms and released initial evidence online. Li, who was punished for releasing the information, would perish from the disease five weeks later, after contracting it from a patient.

On Jan. 1, after several batches of genome sequence results had been returned to hospitals and submitted to health authorities, an employee of one genomics

company received a phone call from an official at the Hubei Provincial Health Commission, ordering the company to stop testing samples from Wuhan related to the new disease and destroy all existing samples. The employee spoke on condition of anonymity, saying they were told to immediately cease releasing test results and information about the tests, and report any future results to authorities.

Then on Jan. 3, China's National Health Commission (NHC), the nation's top health authority, ordered institutions not to publish any information related to the unknown disease, and ordered labs to transfer any samples they had to designated testing institutions, or to destroy them. The order, which Caixin has seen, did not specify any designated testing institutions.



WHO epidemiologist Bruce Aylward explains the process and response to the outbreak at a news conference in Beijing Tuesday. Photo: CGTN

It was Jan. 9 when Chinese authorities finally announced that a novel coronavirus was behind Wuhan's viral pneumonia outbreak. Even then, the

transmissibility of the virus was downplayed, leaving the public unaware of the imminent danger.

Finally, on Jan. 20, Zhong Nanshan, a leading authority on respiratory health who came to national attention in his role fighting SARS, confirmed in a TV interview that the disease was spreading from person-to-person.

Two days later, Wuhan, a city of 11 million, was placed in lockdown. It remains quarantined today.

Social media posts provide clues

The earliest results, for a 65-year-old deliveryman who worked at the Wuhan seafood market, were returned on Dec. 27 by Vision Medicals, a genomics company based in Huangpu district in Guangzhou, South China's Guangdong province.

The patient was admitted to the Central Hospital of Wuhan on Dec. 18 with pneumonia and his condition quickly deteriorated. On Dec. 24, the doctors took fluid samples from his lungs and sent them to Vision Medicals for testing, according to Zhao Su, head of respiratory medicine at the hospital. In an unusual move, the company did not send back results, but instead called the doctor on Dec. 27. "They just called us and said it was a new coronavirus," Zhao said.

Vision Medicals confirmed the tests took place in a post it published on social media late last week. The post said the company was involved in early studies on the new coronavirus and contributed to an [article](#) published on the English version of the Chinese Medical Journal about its discovery. That article makes specific mention of a sample collected on Dec. 24 from a 65-year-old patient who had contact with the seafood market.

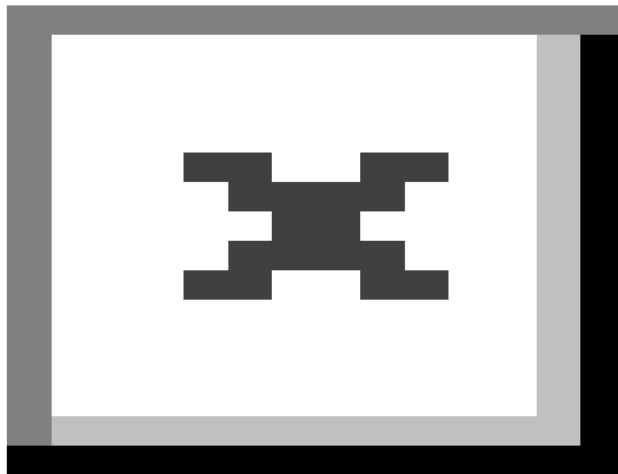
A different social media post, believed to have been made by a Vision Medicals employee, sheds more light on the company's early work. The author of the post, made on Jan. 28, said only that they worked at a private company based in Huangpu, Guangzhou, where Vision Medicals is located. The post's author said they noticed a close similarity with the SARS coronavirus in test results of a sample collected on Dec. 24, but decided to study the results more closely before returning them, due their significance.

The company did, however, share the data with the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, according to the article.

On Dec. 27, the lab worked had sequenced most of the virus's genome and had confirmed it was a coronavirus similar to SARS virus, the article said.

In the following days, company executives paid a visit to Wuhan to discuss their findings with local hospital officials and disease control authorities, the article said. "There was an intensive and confidential investigation underway, and officials from the hospital and disease control center had acknowledged many similar patients," it said.

Little information about this early study has been officially released. The patient, who was transferred to Wuhan Jinyintang Hospital, later died.



The Wuhan Institute of Virology, part of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Photo: Ding Gang/Caixin

Revelations triggered by 'small mistake'

While researchers at Vision Medicals mulled their findings, the Central Hospital of Wuhan sent swabs from another patient with the mysterious pneumonia to a Beijing-based lab, CapitalBio Medlab Co. Ltd., for study. The sample came from a 41-year-old man who had no history of contact with the seafood market, who was admitted on Dec. 27.

Test results delivered by the company showed a false positive for SARS. It was a “small mistake,” a gene sequencing expert told Caixin, which may have been down to a limited gene database or a lack of retesting.

But it was this mistake that triggered the first concerns heard by the public — recalling painful memories of the cover-up that defined the SARS outbreak 17 years before.

On the evening of Dec. 30, several doctors in Wuhan, including the late Li Wenliang, privately shared CapitalBio’s results as a warning to friends and colleagues to take protective measures. Those messages then circulated widely online and sparked a public uproar demanding more information. Several people, including Li and two other doctors who sent the messages that night, were later punished by authorities for “spreading rumors.”

Zhang Jixian, who heads the respiratory department at Hubei Xinhua Hospital, noticed on Dec. 26 that he had received a growing number of patients with symptoms of pneumonia from the neighboring seafood market. He reported the situation to the hospital the next day, with that report passed on to city and provincial health authorities.

Following the reports, disease control authorities in Wuhan and Hubei on Dec. 30 issued an internal notice warning of the emergence of pneumonia patients with links to the seafood market and requiring hospitals to monitor similar cases.

The notice, later leaked online, offered the first glimpse to the public of officials’ acknowledgement of the outbreak.

Silenced alarms

Several other genomics companies also tested samples from patients in Wuhan with the then-unidentified virus in late December, Caixin learned.

Industry leader BGI received a sample from a Wuhan hospital on Dec. 26. Sequencing was completed by Dec. 29, and showed while it was not the virus that causes SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, it was a previously unseen coronavirus that was about 80% similar to the virus that causes SARS.

A BGI source told Caixin that when they undertook the sequencing project in late December the company was unaware that the virus had sickened many people. “We take a lot of sequencing commissions every day,” the source said.

Caixin has learned that the Wuhan hospital sent BGI at least 30 samples from different pneumonia cases for sequencing in December, and three were found to contain the new coronavirus. In addition to the Dec. 26 case, the second and third positive samples were received on Dec. 29 and Dec. 30. They were tested together and the results were reported to the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission as early as Jan. 1.

On Jan. 1, gene sequencing companies received an order from Hubei’s health commission to stop testing and destroy all samples, according to an employee at one. “If you test it in the future, be sure to report it to us,” the person said they were told by phone.

Two days later on Jan. 3, the National Health Commission issued its gag order and said the Wuhan pneumonia samples needed to be treated as highly pathogenic microorganisms — and that any samples needed to be moved to approved testing facilities or destroyed.

One virologist told Caixin that even the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) under the Chinese Academy of Sciences was not qualified for the tests and told to destroy samples in its lab.

But that day, Professor Zhang Yongzhen of Fudan University in Shanghai received biological samples packed in dry ice in metal boxes and shipped by rail from Wuhan Central Hospital. By Jan. 5, Zhang’s team had also identified the new, SARS-like coronavirus through using high-throughput sequencing.

Zhang reported his findings to the Shanghai Municipal Health Commission as well as China's National Health Commission, warning the new virus was like SARS, and was being transmitted through the respiratory route. This sparked a secondary emergency response within the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Jan. 6.

On Jan. 9, an expert team led by the CDC made a preliminary conclusion that the disease was caused by a new strain of coronavirus, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

On Jan. 11, Zhang's team became the first to publish the genome sequence of the new virus on public databases Virological.org and GenBank, unveiling its structure to the world for the first time. The NHC shared the virus genomic information with the World Health Organization the next day.

Also on Jan. 11, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission resumed updating infection cases of the new virus after suspending reports for several days. But the government repeated its claim that there had been no medical worker infections and that there was no evidence of human transmission.

Meanwhile it reported that the number of confirmed cases had dropped to 41.

Contact reporters Flynn Murphy (flynnmurphy@caixin.com), **Han Wei** (weihan@caixin.com) **and Timmy Shen** (hongmingshen@caixin.com, Twitter: [@timmyhmshen](https://twitter.com/timmyhmshen)), **and editor Michael Bellart** (michaelbellart@caixin.com)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 3:10 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Caixin Article

Send me the Caixin article when you have it.

Thanks

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Sender:	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)
	TOKYO ECON Americans DL <TOKYOECNAmericansDL@state.gov>;
Recipient:	(b)(6)
	EAP-J-ECON-DL <EAP-J-ECON-DL@state.gov>;
	(b)(6)
	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6)	(Beijing)	(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6)	(Beijing)	(b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing		
Date:	Wed, 25 Jan 2017 20:35:40 -0500		

Done. Thanks.

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2017 9:17 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing

Please put me down for the meetings on the 7th.

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2017 8:23 AM
To: Beijing ESTH-HHS-FDA-CDC-NIH-NSF
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: FW: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing

Latest agenda for the upcoming GVP meeting is attached. Invitations are starting to go out. Please let us know if you would like an invitation to participate.

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)@ecohealthalliance.org]
Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2017 3:13 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: Fu (George) Gao; 白玉
Subject: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing

This email is sent on behalf of Dr. George Fu Gao, Deputy Director of China CDC, Member of Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Dear Sir/Madam at USAID Beijing Office,

I am pleased to extend an invitation to you to participate the China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting on Feb. 7 at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing.

This meeting will bring together technical experts, scientists, policy-makers, and leaders from a number of organizations and departments to discuss about the strategies and plans to launch a China National Virome Project (CNVP). The core working group members from the Global Virome Project will attend this meeting to provide technical supports and resources for this initiative in China.

Please find more information about the meeting in the attachments. I look forward to your participation in this meeting. Please email to Bai Yu (b)(6) with your RSVP as soon as possible, and let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

George F Gao, DPhil
Deputy Director-General
China CDC
Director and Professor
CAS Key Laboratory of Pathogenic Microbiology and Immunology
Institute of Microbiology
Chinese Academy of Sciences
Beijing 100101
P. R. China
Tel. (b)(6)
Fax (b)(6)

(b)(6)

<http://www.caspmi.cn/gaog/index-ch.html>

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

From:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To:	白玉 (b)(6) (b)(6) <[redacted]@ecohealthalliance.org>
CC:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing
Date:	Wed, 25 Jan 2017 22:47:18 -0500

Hi, (b)(6),

Thank you very much for the invitation. We'd like to register following participants from the US Embassy:

(b)(6) Development Counselor, USAID

(b)(6) Deputy Counselor, ESTH

(b)(6) Public Diplomacy Officer, PAS

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Development Program Specialist, USAID

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Besides, our colleagues would also like to attend some sessions of the GVP Beijing meeting to be held on Feb.6 and the morning of Feb.7. Hope it's ok:

(b)(6) Development Counselor, USAID: Feb. 6 – morning of Feb.7

(b)(6) Deputy Counselor, ESTH: morning of Feb.7

(b)(6) Public Diplomacy Officer, PAS: Feb. 6 – morning of Feb.7

Wish you a happy New Year and warm regards,
Han Zheng

Tele: (b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) [mailto:[redacted]@ecohealthalliance.org]

Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2017 3:13 AM

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

Cc: Fu (George) Gao; 白玉

Subject: Invitation_China National Virome Project Initiative Meeting, Feb. 7 2017, Beijing

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Please find more information about the meeting in the attachments. I look forward to your participation in this meeting. Please email to Bai Yu (b)(6) with your RSVP as soon as possible, and let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely,

George F Gao, DPhil
Deputy Director-General
China CDC
Director and Professor
CAS Key Laboratory of Pathogenic Microbiology and Immunology
Institute of Microbiology
Chinese Academy of Sciences
Beijing 100101
P. R. China
Tel. (b)(6)
Fax (b)(6)

(b)(6)

<http://www.caspmi.cn/gaog/index-ch.html>

Sender:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Recipient:	白玉 (b)(6) Hongying Li (h)@ecohealthalliance.org>; (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6)

From:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	Malaysia: U.S. Funded Programs Shed Light on COVID-19 Transmission, Save Pangolins in Borneo
Date:	Tue, 15 Dec 2020 07:17:55 GMT

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

DeControlled



MRN: 20 KUALA LUMPUR 1036
Date/DTG: Dec 15, 2020 / 150717Z DEC 20
From: AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: TSPL, KCWT, KCRM, KHIV, KNCV, KFLU, ECON, MY, KSCA, CN, TBIO, SHLH
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: Malaysia: U.S. Funded Programs Shed Light on COVID-19 Transmission, Save Pangolins in Borneo

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary:** As a focus country under the END Wildlife Trafficking Act, the United States dedicates resources to countering wildlife trafficking (CWT) and supporting zoonotic disease research in the Borneo region of Malaysia. EcoHealth Alliance, an NGO implementer under USAID's PREDICT program, worked with the Borneo-based Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD) to study zoonotic disease spread in 334 rescued trafficked pangolins in Malaysia. The research findings, published on November 27, shed new light on coronavirus transmission and showcase the instrumental role of U.S.-funded efforts in advancing research and CWT in Malaysian Borneo. U.S. funded training and support from the Bureau on International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) played a key role in carrying out the project. **End Summary.**

Pangolins are Victims of Trafficking and Blamed for Coronavirus Transmissions

2. ~~(SBU)~~ The endangered pangolin is one of the most trafficked mammals in the world. Their scales are used in traditional Chinese medicine, while its meat is deemed an expensive delicacy. Malaysia is a hotspot for the pangolin trade. In one case in February 2019, the state of Sabah, which receives INL training, seized 30,000 kilograms of pangolins. The seizure included 1,800 boxes of frozen pangolins stuffed inside containers, 572 frozen pangolins, 61 live pangolins in cages and 361 kilograms of pangolin scales. These scales alone would have required the killing of 630 pangolins. A member of the team that investigated this case is an

alumnus of the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP).

3. (U) As COVID-19 spread, rumors emerged in China linking coronaviruses to pangolins, leading to calls by Chinese authorities to cull captive pangolins. Such reports prompted EcoHealth Alliance to use USAID funds to research possible links between pangolins and coronaviruses, using pangolins rescued by the SWD, which receives training in wildlife trafficking investigations with INL funds. The study found that pangolins can be carriers of coronaviruses only after they enter the wildlife trade, and no coronavirus was found in their natural state. According to Dr. Peter Daszak, president of EcoHealth Alliance, this work shows, "how scientists working with government agencies can add real value to law enforcement operations. By testing seized pangolins for viruses we've been able to expand our understanding of the origins of the most significant pandemic of this century, and we hope to benefit pangolin conservation."

U.S. Funds are Crucial for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking and Preventing Zoonotic Disease Spread in Malaysia

4. (SBU) The Embassy works with EcoHealth Alliance and the Sabah Wildlife Department to facilitate funding for zoonotic disease research and training for CWT activities. According to Dr. Sen Nathan, the Assistant Director of the SWD and a former IVLP participant, "Sabah Wildlife Department's collaborative efforts with EcoHealth Alliance through the PREDICT Project and other programs have netted some interesting results, identifying novel viruses within Sabah's wildlife, and improving our understanding of zoonotic viruses in general." Furthermore, SWD's head of enforcement told EconOff, "without the training funded by INL, my staff would not be as capable of handling wildlife trafficking cases with pangolins and other species, but we still have some work to do to get to where we want to be."

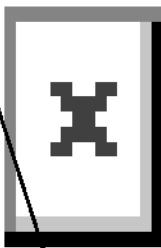


FIGURE 1: Jimmy Lee, EcoHealth Alliance's Field Manager in Malaysia and Pangolin Researcher

Next Steps for U.S. CWT and Zoonotic Disease Research in Malaysian Borneo?

6. (U) SWD and the Danau Girang Field Centre are currently recipients of \$ 934,058 in INL funds and collaborate on a program called "Boosting enforcement and forensic capacity to deter wildlife trafficking in Sabah," which seeks to train law enforcement officials in investigating

wildlife trafficking cases. In addition, the Embassy is partnering with the World Wildlife Fund to develop an airport awareness campaign in Sabah to dissuade tourists from taking part in wildlife trafficking or consuming endangered species that might pose zoonotic disease risks. Another \$725,360 INL program is assisting a local NGO, Rimba, with the creation of a canine wildlife detection unit for airports. Several smaller programs from the Fish and Wildlife Service also support wildlife law enforcement capacity development. Given the COVID-19-related movement control orders and reduction of travel, the participants listed above noted a slowdown in their projects until trainings can be done in person and tourism resumes in Sabah.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ PREDICT funding ended in March 2020, which poses financial constraints for further research on zoonotic disease and pandemic prevention. Tom Hughes, the Director of EcoHealth Alliance in Malaysia, voiced his concern about Malaysia's future capacity to detect pandemic diseases in Malaysian Borneo, especially since PREDICT funding ended in Malaysia. Malaysia has been designated as a lower-priority country under USAID's Strategies to Prevent Spillover (STOP) program, which may consider Malaysia for future rounds of funding if they become available.

Signature: LAKHDHIR

Drafted By: KUALA LUMPUR: (b)(6)

Cleared By: ECON: (b)(6)

ECON:

ECON:

EXEC:

Approved By:

Released By: KUALA LUMPUR: (b)(6)

Info:

BANGKOK, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; JAKARTA, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE;
SINGAPORE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; ASEAN MEMBER
COLLECTIVE ROUTINE

Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

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

From:	"Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
To:	Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) Bremberg, Andrew P (Geneva) (b)(6)
Subject:	FW: PRC MFA Regular Press Conference, August 11, 2020
Date:	Wed, 12 Aug 2020 12:22:53 +0000

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Any indication the WHO will find its voice?

Thanks

(b)(6)

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

From: (b)(6) CTR INDOPACOM PCJO (USA) (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 7:54 PM

To: PACOM.J514 (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)



(b)(6)



(b)(6)

Subject: PRC MFA Regular Press Conference, August 11, 2020

ALCON,

Aloha. Here is a summary of this day's MFA daily press conference. Key takeaways in include:

- * In response to SecState's remarks criticizing the Chinese authorities for an arrest of Hong Kong's media tycoon (and several other journalists and pro-democracy activists), MFA dismissed such remarks and described them as "completely groundless." MFA stated that the Hong Kong has been "applauded" by the populous and the US sanctions are "widely condemned".

- * In response the DoS spokesperson's criticism of the US news station for "regurgitating CCP propaganda" instead of facts in its access and interviews granted to meet with the directors from Wuhan Institute of Virology and Wuhan Branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, MFA stated that such remarks from a DoS official are "not surprising" and the "lie" serves to "attack and smear China." MFA stated that based on the interviews conducted, there is no evidence supporting the claim that the coronavirus came from a lab. MFA continued to press in hopes that Fort Detrick could open up to the media and release information about its 200+ bio-labs overseas.

- * MFA praised the non-authoritative PRC media's work on a survey regarding current US-China relations in which 96% of those surveyed disfavor US and 98% believe that US is attacking the CCP, and 97% support China in taking countermeasures against the US. MFA claimed that such "retrogressive moves" on the US side will make the Chinese people "bond tightly together" based on the survey. The spokesman took this opportunity to urge the US side to "recognize the situation" and "return to the right track."

* Of note. The non-authoritative PRC media entity, Global Times, is popular and widely read news entity and should not be considered as an authoritative mouthpiece of the Chinese government as the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the official positions of the government or military leadership.

* At the heels of the issuance of a statement from ASEAN foreign ministers in the occasion of the 53rd anniversary of ASEAN establishment, MFA expressed the importance of "development and cooperation" of China and ASEAN. MFA stated that China supports ASEAN's role in the region.

* MFA deflected the request for comment with regards to a data center that was built by a tech-giant Huawei in Papua New Guinea. MFA stated that he was not aware of the claim that such data center is built to intercept data and it is vulnerable for cyber theft. The spokesman added that such remarks are "not the first time" that some media entities would make "slandorous" on Chinese enterprises.

* According to press reports, the data center built by Huawei stored Papua New Guinea's government's archived data was portected by outdated encryption software and insufficient firewall settings. This means that due to cyber security gaps, those archived data are reportedly and remotely accessed with ease, without detection.

* According to Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Beijing has provided \$147 million for digital products in Papua New Guinea, to include the data center, a national broadband network, and a biometric identity card.

* At the heels of a US article that depicted France and Germany quitting reform talks on WHO due to attempts by the US side to lead the negotiation, MFA expressed three points in resonance:

* Accused the US side for "quitting international treaties and organization" that hindered international anti-epidemic efforts.

* MFA continued to recognize the WHO as the "most authoritative and professional international organization" in coordinating global COVID-19 response.

* Called for all parties to support actions of multilateralism and global governance system and promote the "cause to build a community of health for all mankind."

That is all.

V/R,

(b)(6)

Very Respectfully,

(b)(6)

Principal Military Analyst
INDOPACOM China Strategic Focus Group
Alion Science and Technology

STE: (b)(6)

DSN: (b)(6)

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Zhao Lijian's Regular Press Conference on August 11, 2020

2020/08/11

Question: Reuters reported that France and Germany are out of G7 negotiations on WHO reforms because the United States, with its announcement of withdrawal from the WHO, is still trying to dictate the terms. Italy's health department said talks on WHO reform are still underway, adding however that Italy's position is in line with Paris and Berlin. Reports say that the US previously expected G7 to roll out relevant reform roadmap in September under its leadership. Do you have any comment?

Answer: I suggest you put raise this question to the German and French sides and hear what they want to say on it. I want to stress three points here.

First, the US pullout of WHO is another example of its unilateral way of doing things: quitting international treaties and organizations. With the developing countries in urgent need of international support bearing the brunt of this decision, it has hindered international anti-epidemic efforts and has been unanimously opposed by the international community, as anyone with a sense of objectivity can see clearly.

Second, as the most authoritative and professional international organization, WHO has played an indispensable role in coordinating global COVID-19 response. To support WHO is to support international anti-epidemic cooperation and to support putting lives first, which is a consensus of the international community.

Third, a common cause calls for extensive participation. We hope all parties will use their concrete actions to support multilateralism, strengthen and improve global governance system with the UN at its center, and support WHO's leading role in global anti-epidemic response. Facing the negativity brought by some party's unilateral withdrawal, the WHO needs more positive input from more sources. It is our common cause to build a community of health for all mankind.

Question: China's embassy in Denmark has released a notice yesterday saying foreign nationals from certain European countries who hold valid residence permits may apply for visas to enter China. Can the foreign ministry confirm if China is reopening its borders to European countries, including the EU?

Answer: I have answered a similar question yesterday. The Chinese government has suspended entry for most foreigners holding valid visa or residence permit starting from March 28, but we never stopped helping process visa applications of foreign nationals who want to come for essential economic, trade, scientific and technological activities or out of emergency humanitarian needs. Recently, as the situation has been brought under control in many countries, people are looking forward to making foreign trips. Thus, China is relaxing in an orderly and gradual manner visa restrictions for foreigners entering China to resume economic activities and for other essential purposes. One more point to highlight is that for those who hold valid visa or residence permit but need visa renewal, Chinese embassies and consulates will provide them visa service for free.

*** Question: The Global Times created on Monday an online survey regarding current China-US relations, and the number of participants in the survey has exceeded 100,000. About 96% of those surveyed disfavor US and 98 % believe that the US is concentrating its firepower on attacking the CPC because it wants to sow discord between the Chinese people and the CPC, destroy the unity of the country, and create momentum for a new Cold War. Over 97% support China in taking countermeasures against US provocations. Some experts believed that almost no one in China believes the US cares about democracy or human rights in our country, as the US has already proven itself to be a trouble maker who destroys other nations' sovereignty with the excuse of promoting democracy and freedom. Such

consensus among the Chinese public has also transformed into overwhelming support for the Chinese government's policy towards the US. Do you have any comment?

*** Answer: A good job to the Global Times in making this survey and I think the US should also have a look at it. They have to be clear that the Chinese people are well aware of certain people's malicious intention to sabotage China-US relations and stoke division and confrontation. Their retrogressive moves will only make the Chinese people bond tightly together and hold their country dearer.

We urge the US to recognize the situation and correct its mistakes, discard the illusion of remolding China as it wishes, stop gross interference in China's internal affairs and unscrupulous oppression of China's legitimate rights and interests and return to the right track of no conflict, no confrontation, mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

*** Question: NBC journalists reportedly were granted access to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) and interviewed its director and president of the Wuhan Branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. US State Department Spokesperson Morgan Ortagus tweeted on August 10: "Eight months later, mystery still surrounds the Wuhan lab...NBC News was granted the first independent media access to the Wuhan lab...They just regurgitated Chinese Communist Party propaganda and didn't press for facts". She also said that the "CCP preferred saving face over saving lives". Does China have a comment?

*** Answer: To be frank, the comments came as no surprise because we know certain individuals in the US have their own "definition" of truth: as long as a lie serves to attack and smear China, it is a fact.

Chinese scientists have shared their professional views of the management and research at the WIV in multiple interviews. The fact is as plain as day that there is no evidence supporting the claim that the novel coronavirus came from a lab. Speaking of facts, we would really hope that the US could open up its research base at Fort Detrick to the media, release more information about its over 200 bio-labs overseas, and invite WHO experts in to conduct origin-tracing so it has a chance to tell the truth and offer an explanation to the American people and the international community.

The US spokesperson talked about preferring "saving face over saving lives". The US should reflect upon its own behavior. The CPC puts people and life front and center. The Chinese government's epidemic response can stand the test of time and history. It stands in sharp contrast with US political parties who put political gains first. As confirmed cases in the US surged over five million and deaths 160,000, focusing on fighting the virus and saving lives should be the one true task at hand for the US, not regurgitating excuses to shift the blame to China.

Question: Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga today expressed deep concern over the arrests of Jimmy Lai and Agnes Chow in Hong Kong. What's your comment? Second question, the arrests made many media staff in Hong Kong worried. Do you think such behavior will hurt China and Hong Kong's image in the world?

Answer: On your first question, Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs that allow no foreign interference. We urge the Japanese side to grasp the situation, know its position, and stop interfering in China's affairs in any way.

On your second question, China is a country with rule of law and Hong Kong is a place with law and order where nobody is entitled to any exceptional prerogative. We support Hong Kong law-enforcement

agencies in fulfilling their duties in accordance with law. Institutions and individuals in the Hong Kong have nothing to worry about so long as they do not break the law.

Question: ASEAN Foreign Ministers issued the Statement on the Importance of Maintaining Peace and Stability in Southeast Asia on the occasion of the 53rd anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN. It closely followed the growing uncertainties resulting from the changing geo-political dynamics in the regional and global landscape and stressed ASEAN's central role and the importance of regional architecture while emphasizing a multilateral approach in addressing emerging challenges. Do you have any comment?

Answer: The statement issued by the ASEAN foreign ministers once again demonstrates that the pursuit of peace, development and cooperation is the common and urgent aspiration of all countries in the region, including China and ASEAN. As an important dialogue partner and friendly neighbor, China firmly supports ASEAN's central role in regional cooperation, stands ready to deepen dialogue and cooperation with ASEAN, improve the regional architecture, support multilateralism and globalization, so as to respond effectively to the regional and global challenges, especially to solve the most pressing issues of fighting COVID-19 and development, and safeguard good momentum of peace and development in the region.

Question: A report about the Papua New Guinea national data center says the data center was built in such a way that data can easily be intercepted. The data center was built by Huawei. What is your comment to those who might look at this and question the reliability of Huawei's digital infrastructure?

Answer: I am not aware of what you said, but I can tell you that the Chinese government consistently requires Chinese enterprises operating overseas to strictly abide by international rules and local laws and regulations.

It is worth noting that this is not the first time that media of a certain country deliberately made slanderous reports on Chinese enterprises. We firmly oppose such action.

*** Question: I have a follow-up question about the media tycoon Jimmy Lai's arrest yesterday in Hong Kong. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said it was further proof that Chinese authorities have eviscerated Hong Kong's freedoms and eroded the rights of its people. We have two questions. First, what's China's comment on this? Second, what does China think of the fact that people in Hong Kong have been rushing to buy copies of Apple Daily as well as buying the shares of Apple Daily's parent company?

*** Answer: On the first question, lately Pompeo has repeatedly issued wrong remarks on Hong Kong-related affairs and made wanton comments on China's justified and lawful measures to safeguard national security. His political lies are completely groundless. China has stated its solemn position on many occasions.

With regard to your second question, I'm afraid that's just selective reporting by relevant media. To my knowledge, the sanctions China has rolled out against the US on Hong Kong-related issues have been applauded by people in Hong Kong while the US sanctions have been widely condemned by Chinese officials and the public in Hong Kong.

Question: We know that a Chinese medical team to Azerbaijan has been working there for a week. Could you please brief us on the work of this team? What support and assistance have they provided to the local epidemic prevention and control efforts?

Answer: At the invitation of the Azerbaijani government, a team of ten Chinese medical experts arrived in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, on August 4. They will stay in Azerbaijan for about two weeks during which time they will help train local medical personnel to enhance their epidemic prevention and control capabilities.

So far, China's medical team has visited several hospitals designated to treat COVID-19 patients, including the Azerbaijan Central Clinic Hospital and Sumgayit City hospital, and the Baku Blood Bank. They also held group seminars with relevant departments and medical experts to analyze the current epidemic situation, epidemic prevention measures and treatment process. They talked about China's hard-won experiences in the relevant fields and then offered specific ways and treatments to suit Azerbaijan's needs.

The efforts by the Chinese medical team have been warmly welcomed and highly affirmed by the Azerbaijani government and people. I can give you an example. The medical team visited the ICU room of Central Hospital of Oil Workers to check on all the critical patients there. When they were about to a leave, a female patient just grabbed the hand of a Chinese expert and called them "friends".

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, China and Azerbaijan have stood together and helped each other through exchanging letters at the leadership level, providing medical supplies and sharing experience, which demonstrates the profound friendship between the two countries. We believe that with the joint efforts of both sides, we will be able to overcome the epidemic at an early date.

Question: Just one more question about that national data center. In addition to the concerns about its vulnerability to hacking, it does not appear to work properly and it's barely being used. What is your comment?

Answer: I have made myself pretty clear. I am not aware of the specific situation you mentions. We firmly oppose the media of a certain country repeatedly making slanderous and malicious reports about a project built by Chinese company.

Question: Yesterday many thousands of people took to the street in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, after the result of presidential elections was revealed. There are people who refuse to recognize this result, and there are many people arrested including journalists. Chinese leader has sent a message of congratulations to Alexander Lukashenko. I was wondering how China comments on the current situation in Belarus?

Answer: We note relevant reports. We hope and believe that the situation in Belarus will be stabilized as soon as possible.

Sender:	"Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Recipient:	Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) Bremberg, Andrew P (Geneva) (b)(6)

From:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject:	Fw: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date:	Thu, 28 Sep 2017 05:13:02 -0400

Cable released. Thanks for everyone's help getting this out.

(b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: SMART Core <svcSmartBtsEwsHPrec@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 15:56

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Reply To: SMART Core

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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Action Office: POL, IMO, ECON, MGT, RSO, SCIENCE
Info Office: IMO_INFO, MED_INFO, ECON_INFO, EXEC_INFO, DAO_INFO

MRN: 17 BEIJING 2458
Date/DTG: Sep 28, 2017 / 280753Z SEP 17
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PREL, SHLH, TBIO, KGHI, CDC, AID, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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2. ~~(SBU)~~ (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

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3. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project as proposed could be an important scientific contribution to the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA). Launched in February 2014, the GHSA is a multi-sectoral effort aiming to accelerate implementation of the World Health Organization's International Health Regulations (IHR) in order to make the world safe and secure from infectious disease threats, whatever their source. Under the Global Health Security Agenda, the United States assists 31 countries and the Caribbean Community, including \$1 billion for 17 at-risk countries to strengthen global health security through a whole-of-government effort to prevent, detect, and respond to disease outbreaks at the local, subnational and national levels.

Pandemic Disease is a Global Threat

4. ~~(SBU)~~ A component to the overall Global Health Security Agenda is reducing the threat of pandemic disease, which is a widespread epidemic of naturally emerging deadly infectious pathogens. According to "The Global Virome Project," a collaborative paper written by several of the foremost experts on pandemic health issues, viruses of animal origin have caused significant outbreaks, such as SARS, influenza, MERS, Ebola, HIV, and Zika. Outbreaks such as these have had major economic and geopolitical impact and have threatened global security. There are an estimated 1.6 million such viruses worldwide. Scientists have estimated that only 1% of the potential viral threats have been identified and hundreds of thousands of unknown viruses in wildlife have the potential to infect people. However, less than 0.1% of all viruses with the potential to pose a threat to global health are estimated to have spilled over from animals to humans. With growing populations, reduced animal habitats and increasing international travel and trade, these types of emerging infectious diseases pose increasing risks of a global nature.

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5. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP grew out of the PREDICT project of USAID, which has, over its seven year history, received \$130 million in U.S. funding and has thus far sampled over 56,000 wild animals and identified about 1000 new viruses. PREDICT hosts the GVP Secretariat at University of California-Davis. The GVP concept was validated at a gathering of international stakeholders in 2016, which included scientists and public health practitioners from the public and private sectors. Its first follow-up meeting was held in Beijing in early 2017, including a half-day session to initiate the associated China National Virome Project (CNVP). GVP expects to be incorporated as an international not-for-profit organization prior to its official launch, which is planned for January 30, 2018 in Thailand at the Prince Mahidol Awards Conference.

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8. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP looks to the Human Genome Project as a model, in which a comprehensive, ambitious approach led to the development of new technologies and a vast data resource now available to all. Unlike the Human Genome Project, GVP is by design not 'owned' by an institution or specific country, because of its international sampling scope. Its infrastructure will also be distributed globally. Thus GVP faces significant challenges as it transitions from a start-up to an independently operating foundation: Who will own the samples that are collected from many countries? Where will they be analyzed? Will all GVP data be freely available to the public? GVP expects to grapple with these legal and ethical issues very early, but it will take time for policies to be proposed and approved by the many countries that will be either allowing sample collection or storing specimens and data.

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12. ~~(SBU)~~ Beyond creating the database of viral sequences which carries the \$1 billion price tag, GVP recognizes the importance of research on the mechanisms and ecology of infectious disease transmission. This type of research already enjoys strong support in both China and the United States, and scientists are increasingly collaborating with each other.

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(b)(5)

Signature:

BRANSTAD

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cleared By: USAID: (b)(6) (Beijing)
HHS/OGA: (b)(6) (Beijing)
CDC: (b)(6) (Beijing)
NSF: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Approved By: ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Released By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Info: TOKYO, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; SEOUL, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*;
ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

Action Post: NONE
Dissemination Rule: POL, IMO_INFO, IMO, MED_INFO, ECON, POL_INFO, MGT_ACTION,
RSO, SCIENCE, DAO_INFO

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

Sender:	(b)(6) (Beijing)	(b)(6)
Recipient:	(b)(6) (Beijing NSF)	(b)(6)
	(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP)	(b)(6)
	(b)(6) (Beijing)	(b)(6)
	(b)(6) (Beijing)	(b)(6)

From:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To:	Beijing EXEC Staffers <BeijingEXEC@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)
Subject:	Fw: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date:	Thu, 28 Sep 2017 04:02:21 -0400

Flagging for the Ambassador given his soon to be sent letter to Secretary Price concerning the GVP.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: SMART Core <svcSmartBtsEwsHPrec@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 15:56

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Reply To: SMART Core

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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Action Office: POL, IMO, ECON, MGT, RSO, SCIENCE
Info Office: IMO_INFO, MED_INFO, ECON_INFO, EXEC_INFO, DAO_INFO

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Signature:

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ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*

Action Post: NONE
Dissemination Rule: POL, IMO_INFO, IMO, MED_INFO, ECON, POL_INFO, MGT_ACTION,
RSO, SCIENCE, DAO_INFO

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

Sender:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Recipient:	Beijing EXEC Staffers <BeijingEXEC@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)