



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 25, 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 August 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 101 responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined all 101 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 'D. Hickson', with a large, stylized initial 'D' and a horizontal line 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: "Feith, David" (b)(6)
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: Wuhan Institute of Virology items
Date: Fri, 17 Apr 2020 08:23:22 +0000

Resurfacing the below, as discussed. These are the highlights as I understand them. Obviously the cables from 2018 are an additional element.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Date: April 13, 2020 at 9:51:31 AM EDT
Subject: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 13)
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6), EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>, NSC Asia (b)(6), Matthew Pottinger (b)(6), (b)(6), Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6), (b)(6), (b)(6) (Geneva) (b)(6), (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L (b)(6), (b)(6), Snyder, Nicholas (b)(6), Storch, Thomas (b)(6) (AID/A), (b)(6) (PPL/AA) (b)(6) (AID/A), (b)(6), (b)(6), Ford, Christopher A (b)(6), Wells, Alice (b)(6), Krittenbrink, Daniel J (Hanoi) (b)(6) (Seoul) (b)(6), (b)(6), (b)(6), (b)(6) (Canberra), (b)(6), (b)(6), C_Policy <C_Policy@state.gov> (b)(6), (b)(6)

Updated timeline attached. 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 CCP member 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 prior review by the Ministry of Science and Technology...

--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 in Taiwan raised concerns about human-human transmission as early as Dec. 31, as did experts 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 presses 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."

December 30: Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher Shi Zhengli (known as "bat-woman" for her research) is called by the Institute's director and summoned back to Wuhan from a conference in Shanghai to study samples of the novel coronavirus. "Could they have come from our lab?" Shi feared.

--2020--

January 7: Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology recalled in a March 11 interview with Scientific American that by January 7 her team found that the novel coronavirus's sequence did not match any of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves. "That really took a load off my mind," she said. But the novel sequence was 96% identical to one her team had sampled previously in Yunnan.

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 6: Researchers from South China University of Technology publish a study concluding that “the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. Safety level may need to be reinforced in high risk biohazardous laboratories.” The paper is soon withdrawn because it “was not supported by direct proofs,” according to author Botao Xiao. “No scientists have confirmed or refuted the paper’s findings,” scholar Yanzhong Huang wrote on March 5.

February 16: The Wuhan Institute of Virology issues a public denial that its former researcher Huang Yanling is “patient zero,” as speculated on Chinese social media based on changes to the Institute’s website and Huang’s unknown whereabouts. Institute researcher Shi Zhengli writes on social media that she “guaranteed with her own life” that the outbreak was unrelated to the lab. [In 2004, China suffered a SARS outbreak due to a lab leak that killed one person and infected nine. PRC authorities blamed negligence and punished five senior officials at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.]

February 23: Xi Jinping delivers speech to PRC officials calling virus “a crisis for us and also a major test.” He stresses “social stability” and 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.

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(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

(c)

(b)(6) @state.gov

On April 2, 2020 at 4:58:00 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated here to include more on the WHO, and some other tweaks. Please use this document (stamped 5pm).

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(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

(c)

(b)(6)

On April 2, 2020 at 3:07:15 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R. (b)(6) wrote:

Would like to include the timeline of WHO requesting access to the site (mid-January, I believe), WHO ADVON getting permission to travel to Beijing (10 Feb), and the investigative team actually heading out to investigate (around 20 Feb).

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2020 11:16 AM

To: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; NSC Asia

<DL.Asia@who.mil>; Matthew Pottinger (b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (Geneva)

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) Snyder, Nicholas

(b)(6) Storch,

Thomas (b)(6) (AID/A) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (PPL/AA) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Wells, Alice (b)(6)

(b)(6) Kritenbrink, Daniel J (Hanoi) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) (Canberra)

(b)(6)

Subject: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 2)

Some of the new items in the attached:

January 4: Amid PRC denials, another expert outside mainland China begins to sound alarms over human-to-human transmission. The head of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for Infection, Ho Pak-leung, warns that Hong Kong "should implement the strictest possible monitoring system for a mystery new viral pneumonia that has infected dozens of people on the mainland, as it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human."

January 23: Chinese authorities lock down Wuhan, after letting some five million people leave the city without screening in the weeks prior, amid the growing outbreak. NYT estimates seven million people left between Jan. 1 and Jan 23. Before the lockdown, some 900 people flew from Wuhan to New York City per month on average, while some 2,200 flew to Sydney and 15,000 to Bangkok (site of the first overseas case of the novel coronavirus in mid-January). Some 85% of infected travelers went undetected.

January 30: WHO special committee on the novel coronavirus states that it "does not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available."

January 31: U.S. shuts down entry from China for non-Americans. By this time, outbreaks were already growing in 30 cities across 26 countries. PRC state media criticize the U.S. travel advisory urging citizens not to travel to China due to health concerns. PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims the U.S. action is "certainly not a gesture of goodwill."

February 1: Referring to travel restrictions, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells his Indian counterpart that China "opposes certain countries' actions that are creating tension and causing panic."

February 3: WHO chief Tedros calls on countries not to take measures that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade." He adds, "The chances of getting this going to anywhere outside China is very low, and even in China, when you go to other provinces, it's very low." This statement was amplified in PRC state media.

February 6: Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Italy's ambassador to China and "requires" Italy to suspend its decision cancelling direct flights between Italy and China. PRC press release states that Beijing "is strongly dissatisfied with the overreaction and restrictions of the Italian side" and claims that Italy agreed to resume some flights.

February 20: At a meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi pressures countries to ease travel restrictions, saying: "In light of the conditions on the ground, countries need to resume people-to-people ties and cooperation."

February 29: WHO announces that it "continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks."

March 31: Chinese National Health Commission announces for the first time that it excluded from its national tally people who were infected with the virus but without symptoms, and that as of April 1 it would begin including these in the tally "in order to respond to society's concern in a timely manner."

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(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

(c)

(b)(6)

On March 22, 2020 at 4:58:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Attached updates thru today, March 22. Thanks for suggestions.

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(b)(6)

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

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

(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 7:53:15 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated coverup timeline attached, including publication of this study March 11.

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(b)(6)

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

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(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 3:52:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Shocking detail here from March 11 University of Southampton study. Estimates that if Beijing had owned up to the Wuhan virus and responded with significant measures just a week before it did, 66% of cases could have been avoided. And had Beijing responded three weeks sooner, 95% could have been avoided.

From <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2020/03/covid-19-china.page>: "The research also found that if interventions in the country could have been conducted one week, two weeks, or three weeks earlier, cases could have been reduced by 66 percent, 86 percent and 95 percent respectively – significantly limiting the geographical spread of the disease."

(b)(6)

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

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

<Wuhan virus coverup timeline 2020 03 18.docx>
<Wuhan virus coverup timeline 2020 03 22.docx>
<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 02.docx>

Sender: "Feith, David" (b)(6)

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

From: Chris Watanabe (b)(6) (b)(6)
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Wired: Inside the Early Days of China's Corona virus Coverup
Date: Mon, 11 May 2020 11:05:17 -1000

This is another example of media bias. The headline grabs you as a definitive bash against the President. But when you read into the article, you'll see that this "study" has as much compelling evidence as the President's original assertion.

Essentially, they conducted an observational study which is widely known in the research industry as a study that simply suggests a correlation to cause and effect. But all scientist know that correlation does not equal causation. You don't see this disclaimer until the very end of the article. Of course, the headline gives you a more definitive perspective on the study and therefore concludes (without a doubt) the president is wrong and this study proves it.

This paragraph is contained in the article.

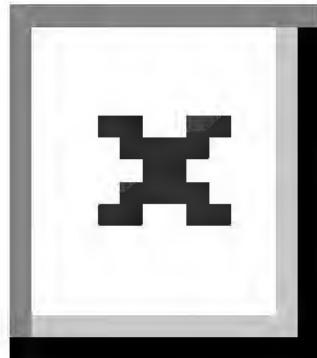
Observational studies aren't considered as conclusive as randomized controlled trials because doctors can prescribe a variety of other drugs to treat an infection. The less formal process, however, can yield faster results and help with the approval process of some treatments.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/11/coronavirus-tump-touted-drug-doesnt-help-patients-but-raises-heart-attack-risk-study-says.html>

Another study shows drug touted by Trump doesn't help coronavirus patients, but it can raise heart attack risk

PUBLISHED MON, MAY 11 2020 4:49 PM EDT

Berkeley Lovelace Jr. @BERKELEYJR



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks to reporters during a meeting with Texas Governor Greg Abbott about coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response in the Oval Office at the White House in Washington, May 7, 2020.

Tom Brenner | Reuters

Another study shows that hydroxychloroquine — a drug President Donald Trump said showed promise in treating the coronavirus — doesn't help Covid-19 patients and, instead, places them at increased risk of heart attack.

Hydroxychloroquine taken in conjunction with azithromycin was associated with “significantly elevated levels of cardiac arrest” even after adjusting for factors such as sex, age, underlying health conditions and more severe illness, according to a new study in the JAMA Network published Monday.

Researchers at the University of Albany's School of Public Health analyzed more than 1,400 medical records of hospitalized patients with Covid-19 across 25 hospitals in New York.

"This observational study has given us an important early look at some key questions related to prescribing patterns of hydroxychloroquine, azithromycin and chloroquine," David Holtgrave, dean at the University of Albany's School of Public Health and a researcher working with the state, said in a statement to CNBC. "Unfortunately, we did not observe benefits of the most used drug (hydroxychloroquine with or without azithromycin) in this group of seriously ill, hospitalized patients."

Observational studies aren't considered as conclusive as randomized controlled trials because doctors can prescribe a variety of other drugs to treat an infection. The less formal process, however, can yield faster results and help with the approval process of some treatments.

On Mon, May 11, 2020 at 9:13 AM Stilwell, David R (b)(6) wrote:

Now that you put it that way I find it hard to disagree--that's really disturbing. You wouldn't have seen that approach during the Cold War—Pro-D or Pro-R, neither was crazy about the Soviets.

I did a podcast with AEI "What the Hell?" last week (very friendly conversation, link below) and will talk with Kylie Atwood (CNN) tomorrow to try to get her to get past the anti-Trump feelings. I'm sure many of these people would prefer having Xi Jinping in the White House. We're doing our best to explain why that's not a good idea. . .kinda obvious.

Who would have thought we'd be here when we were sitting on your steps on a Tuesday night in November 2016? Good thing I listened to your logic on how to vote!

<https://www.aei.org/multimedia/wth-is-going-on-with-chinese-disinformation-assistant-secretary-stilwell-on-beijings-role-in-spreading-coronavirus-propaganda/>

From: Chris Watanabe <(b)(6)@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 11, 2020 2:47 PM
To: Stilwell, David R <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Wired: Inside the Early Days of China's Coronavirus Coverup

Unreal but yet it's the truth. This article is only stating the obvious but both the Chinese Govt and the US media both have separate agendas as to why the truth needs to be suppressed. The Chinese Govt's agenda is obvious but the US media's intent is to ensure that the Republican President take as much heat for this disaster as possible. In fact, they are attempting to suppress this information on their end to ensure this happens.

Ironically, the lies and deceit of the Chinese Govt can be compared to the same lies and deceit of the US media. The Chinese Govt and the US media are one in the same.

On Sat, May 9, 2020 at 1:13 PM Stilwell, David R <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Sentient friends:

This article is just another piece of evidence pointing at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (I'll bet my firstborn that's where COVID19 originated). The E-PAI analysis referenced needs to be validated, but how much evidence do the Chuck Todds and Lester Holts need before they'll acknowledge the obvious?

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/report-says-cellphone-data-suggests-october-shutdown-wuhan-lab-experts-n1202716>

The Wired article below highlights the PRC's attempts to hide and censor public frustration and worry on Chinese social media at the outbreak of the Wuhan virus. There's mention of martyr Dr Li Wenliang as well. My favorite are the last paragraphs. Long but worth every minute.

Also look for Fang Fang's Wuhan Diary on Amazon.



<https://www.wired.com/story/inside-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-coverup/>

Inside the Early Days of China's Coronavirus Coverup

The dawn of a pandemic—as seen through the news and social media posts that vanished from China's internet.

LATE ON THE night of February 2, as her insomnia kicked in, a Beijing woman whom I'll call Yue took out her phone and religiously clicked open WeChat and Weibo. Over the past two fitful weeks, the two Chinese social media platforms had offered practically her only windows into the “purgatory,” as she called it, of Wuhan.

At this point, according to official estimates, the novel coronavirus had infected just over 14,000 people in the world—and nearly all of them were in

the central Chinese city where Yue had attended university and lived for four years. A number of her friends there had already caught the mysterious virus.

An inveterate news junkie, Yue hadn't been able to look away from the ghastly updates pouring out of Wuhan, which—interspersed with a dissonant bombardment of posts praising the Chinese government's iron grip on the outbreak—kept hitting her in an unrelentingly personal way. Her mental health was fraying, and she was “disappointed in humanity,” as she later put it.

That night, just when Yue was about to log off and try to sleep, she saw the following sentence pop up on her WeChat Moments feed, the rough equivalent of Facebook's News Feed: “I never thought in my lifetime I'd see dead bodies lying around without being collected and patients seeking medical help but having no place to get treatment.”

Yue thought that she had become desensitized, but this post made her fists clench: It was written by Xiao Hui, a journalist friend of hers who was reporting on the ground for Caixin, a prominent Chinese news outlet. Yue trusted her.

She read on. “On January 22, on my second day reporting in Wuhan, I knew this was China's Chernobyl,” Xiao Hui wrote. “These days I rarely pick up phone calls from outside of Wuhan or chat with friends and family, because nothing can express what I have seen here.”

Unable to contain her anger, Yue took a screenshot of Xiao's post and immediately posted it on her WeChat Moments. “Look what is happening in Wuhan!” she wrote. Then she finally drifted off.

The next morning, when she opened WeChat, a single message appeared: Her account had been suspended for having “spread malicious rumors” and

she would not be able to unblock it. She knew at once that her late-night post had stepped on a censorship landmine.

What she couldn't have realized, though, was that she had posted her screenshot at what seems to have been a turning point in China's handling of the epidemic: Over the previous two weeks, the government had allowed what felt like an uncharacteristic degree of openness in the flow of information out of Wuhan. But now the state was embarking on a campaign of censorship and suppression that would be remarkable even by the standards of the Chinese Communist Party.

OVER THE PAST several weeks, as the number of new cases in China has tapered off and lockdowns have lifted, China has been positioning itself as a global leader in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic. It has vigorously promoted the narrative that its unprecedented quarantine measures bought time for the world—and that much of the world then botched and squandered that head start. Now, the story goes, China has again come to the rescue as it shares its expertise, experience, and equipment.

To be sure, China did eventually take extraordinary and painful steps to quell its domestic outbreak. But it has also taken extreme measures to curate the information that has emerged from ground zero of the pandemic.

Over the last month or so, China's openness with the rest of the world—or lack thereof—in the early days of the pandemic has become the subject of intense geopolitical debate. "The reality is that we could've been better off if China had been more forthcoming," Vice President Mike Pence told CNN in early April, when asked why the Trump administration had gotten off to such a late start in taking the virus seriously. The debate has become a strange and strained one, given that whatever China did or did not cover up, the US still squandered its chance to prepare for the inevitable even after Beijing's warnings had become loud and clear.

Moreover, it wasn't the rest of the world that Beijing was most intent on keeping in the dark. Nowhere has China been more aggressive in its war for

control of the coronavirus narrative than it has been at home. A vivid and human picture of that information war emerges if you examine all the stories and posts that have been wiped off of the Chinese internet since the outbreak began—which is exactly what I've been trying to do for the past few months.

Seasoned journalists in China often say “Cover China as if you were covering Snapchat”—in other words, screenshot everything, under the assumption that any given story could be deleted soon. For the past two and half months, I've been trying to screenshot every news article, social media post, and blog post that seems relevant to the coronavirus. In total, I've collected nearly 100 censored online posts: 40 published by major news organizations, and close to 60 by ordinary social media users like Yue. In total, the number of Weibo posts censored and WeChat accounts suspended would be virtually uncountable. (Despite numerous attempts, Weibo and WeChat could not be reached for comment.)

Taken together, these deleted posts offer a submerged account of the early days of a global pandemic, and they indicate the contours of what Beijing didn't want Chinese people to hear or see. Two main kinds of content were targeted for deletion by censors: Journalistic investigations of how the epidemic first started and was kept under wraps in late 2019 and live accounts of the mayhem and suffering inside Wuhan in the early days of the city's lockdown, as its medical system buckled under the world's first hammerstrike of patients.

It's not hard to see how these censored posts contradicted the state's preferred narrative. Judging from these vanished accounts, the regime's coverup of the initial outbreak certainly did not help buy the world time, but instead apparently incubated what some have described as a humanitarian disaster in Wuhan and Hubei Province, which in turn may have set the stage for the global spread of the virus. And the state's apparent reluctance to show scenes of mass suffering and disorder cruelly starved Chinese citizens of vital information when it mattered most.

ON JANUARY 20, 2020, Zhong Nanshan, a prominent Chinese infectious disease expert, essentially raised the curtain on China's official response to the coronavirus outbreak when he confirmed on state television that the pathogen could be transmitted from human to human. Zhong was, in many

ways, an ideal spokesperson for the government's effort; he had become famous for being a medical truth-teller during the 2003 SARS outbreak.

Immediately following Zhong's announcement, the Chinese government allowed major news organizations into Wuhan, giving them a surprising amount of leeway to report on the situation there. In another press conference on January 21, Zhong praised the government's transparency. Two days after that, the government shut down virtually all transportation into and out of Wuhan, later extending the lockdown to other cities.

The sequence of events had all the appearances of a strategic rollout: Zhong's January 20 TV appearance marked the symbolic beginning of the crisis, to which the government responded swiftly, decisively, and openly.

But shortly after opening the information floodgates, the state abruptly closed them again—particularly as news articles began to indicate a far messier account of the government's response to the disease. "The last couple of weeks were the most open Weibo has ever been and [offered] the most freedom many media organizations have ever enjoyed," one Chinese Weibo user wrote on February 2. "But it looks like this has come to an end."

On February 5, a Chinese magazine called *China Newsweek* published an interview with a doctor in Wuhan, who said that physicians were told by hospital heads not to share any information at the beginning of the outbreak. At the time, he said, the only thing that doctors could do was to urge patients to wear masks.

Various frontline reports that were later censored supported this doctor's descriptions: "Doctors were not allowed to wear isolation gowns because that might stoke fears," said a doctor interviewed by the weekly publication *Freezing Point*. The interview was later deleted.

"Those were my saddest days. As a medical worker, I had to obey rules. But I don't understand why we couldn't say anything," another health care worker told *Southern People Weekly*, a Guangzhou-based weekly magazine in an article headlined "From discovery to lockdown, Wuhan's frontline medical workers analyze why the epidemic exploded." The story, published in early February, was later censored.

On February 26, Caixin published an article called "Tracing the Gene Sequencing of the Novel Coronavirus: When was the Alarm Sounded?" It offered a detailed timeline of the outbreak. According to Caixin's reporting, the

provincial health commission began actively suppressing scientists' knowledge about the virus as early as January 1. (Despite repeated attempts, the provincial health commission could not be reached for comment.)

By January, according to Caixin, a gene sequencing laboratory in Guangzhou had discovered that the novel virus in Wuhan shared a high degree of similarity with the virus that caused the SARS outbreak in 2003; but, according to an anonymous source, Hubei's health commission promptly demanded that the lab suspend all testing and destroy all samples. On January 6, according to the deleted Caixin article, China's National Center for Disease Control and Prevention initiated an "internal second-degree emergency response"—but did not alert the public. Caixin's investigation disappeared from the Chinese internet only hours after it was published.

When asked to comment on the Caixin story, China's CDC responded, "We have made sure to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak as efficiently as possible and do not condone news reports that accused our center of mishandling the crisis."

That same day, February 26, *Caijing*, a Chinese business magazine, published an interview with one of the experts whom the National Health Commission sent to Wuhan in early January to conduct field research on the mysterious pneumonia outbreak. The expert reported that the group's work was severely hindered by the provincial health commission.

According to the scientist, a representative of the provincial commission vehemently denied that any medical workers in Wuhan had been infected. In fact, at least one infection of a medical worker had occurred at Wuhan Central Hospital two days before, according to a doctor quoted in *Freezing Point*. Soon after it was published, the interview with the scientist disappeared. Wuhan Central Hospital declined to comment on the specifics of its response to the crisis, except to say that it "adhered to all the principles laid out by relevant authorities."

Government censors also appeared to take particular aim at articles that were graphic in their depiction of the apocalyptic scene in Wuhan in the first days of lockdown.

On February 1, *Caijing* revealed that many patients suffering Covid-like symptoms couldn't be tested for the virus due to the severe shortage of testing kits; they were also being turned away at hospitals due to the scarcity of available beds. Many were left to die at home, their deaths never counted in the official tally of Covid-19 fatalities. "80 out of 120 fever patients would have

lung infections, but only 5 of them would be admitted,” the reporter wrote, quoting a frontline administrator at a hospital in Wuhan.

Reports like this, even if they were short-lived, inspired some Chinese Weibo users to create an account called “Those Who Were Not Documented” on February 21. The crowdsourced page asked people to report whether they had relatives or acquaintances who had died outside of the hospital without having been tested—all to make sure there was a more accurate tally of the death toll. That account itself was purged within a day after it was created.

Another article, published on February 4 by *China Business Journal*, essentially confirmed what Yue’s friend Xiao Hui had posted on WeChat about bodies lingering in hospitals. The article, under the headline “You Had to Queue Up to Get Into Funeral Parlors,” reported that Wuhan’s crematoria were so overloaded that corpses were being left in hospital morgues, sometimes for days. This article was later deleted, too.

On February 20, in an article headlined “Who is Lying? A Conversation with a Wuhan Medical Worker,” a local newspaper interviewed a doctor who had been infected by the virus but later recovered. The doctor said that close to 300 medical workers had become infected in her hospital, but management had banned staff from saying or posting anything “sensitive.” This dispatch, too, was later deleted.

In early March, the head nurse of a Wuhan hospital’s ER Department, told a Chinese monthly magazine called *People* (no relation to the American magazine) that many medical workers were on the brink of severe mental breakdown. “My tears are dry and there is nothing moving that will make me cry anymore—not possible,” she said. The article later vanished.

Other articles that were disappeared carried the following headlines: “No Hospital Beds, Family of Five Infected;” “Voices from the Frontline Medics;” “Over 160 Hospitals Turn to the Public for Help, Why Is the Medical Supplies Stockpile Insufficient?” Close to 20 news stories portraying the horrendous situation were abruptly deleted after they were posted.

AMONG JOURNALISTS AND social critics in China, the 404 error code, which announces that the content on a webpage is no longer available, has become a badge of honor. “At this point, if you haven’t had a 404 under your belt, can

you even call yourself a journalist?" a Chinese reporter, who requested anonymity, jokingly asked me.

However, the crackdown on reports out of Wuhan was even more aggressive against ordinary users of social media.

On January 24, a resident posted that nurses at a Hubei province hospital were running low on masks and protective goggles. Soon after that post was removed, another internet user reposted it and commented: "Sina employees—I'm begging you to stop deleting accounts. Weibo is an effective way to offer help. Only when we are aware of what frontline people need can we help them."

Only minutes later, the post was taken down. The user's account has since vanished.

Censors deleted a video that showed a young woman weeping as her mother's corpse is driven away to the cremation center. They pulled down footage of what appeared to be nurses and doctors, overwhelmed by the scale of the outbreak, having mental breakdowns. They culled posts in which relatives of hospital workers made pleas for medical supplies. Nearly any expression of raw grief, pleading, or desperation seemed fair game for removal—at least in the early days of the outbreak.

But the real war between China's censors and its social media users began on February 7.

That day, a Wuhan doctor named Li Wenliang—a whistleblower who had raised alarms about the virus in late December, only to be reprimanded for "spreading rumors"—died of Covid-19.

Within hours, his death sparked a spectacular outpouring of collective grief on Chinese social media—an outpouring that was promptly snuffed out, post by post, minute by minute. With that, grief turned to wrath, and posts demanding freedom of speech erupted across China's social media platforms as the night went on.

A number of posts directly challenged the party's handling of Li's whistleblowing and the government's relentless suppression of the freedom of speech in China. Some Chinese social media users started to post references to the 2019 Hong Kong protests, uploading clips of "Do You Hear People Sing" from *Les Misérables*, which became a protest anthem during last year's

mass demonstrations. Even more daringly, some posted photos from the 1989 Tiananmen Square protest and massacre, one of the most taboo subjects in China.

One image that surfaced from Tiananmen was an image of a banner from the 1989 protest that reads: "We shall not let those murderers stand tall so they will block our wind of freedom from blowing."

The censors frantically kept pace. In the span of a quarter hour from 23:16 to around 23:30, over 20 million searches for information on the death of Li Wenliang were winnowed down to fewer than 2 million, according to a Hong Kong-based outlet *The Initium*. The #DrLiWenLiangDied topic was dragged from number 3 on the trending topics list to number 7 within roughly the same time period.

The #WeWantFreedomofSpeech and #IWantFreedomofSpeech hashtags were deleted as soon as they gained momentum. As the night dragged on, the deletions became more vigorous and even ridiculous: Excerpts from the Chinese Constitution that supposedly guarantee its citizens' right to freedom of speech were censored; even China's national anthem fell under the censors' radar because it begins with the words "Rise Up, People Who Do Not Want To Be Slaves."

"I hope Sina blows up all of our Weibo accounts today, so we can use this debris to build Dr. Li a gravestone," wrote Li Jingrui, a Chinese reporter.

Since the night of February 7, whole publications have fallen to the scythe. On January 27, an opinion blog called Dajia published an article titled "50 Days into the Outbreak, The Entire Nation is Bearing the Consequence of the Death of the Media." By February 19, the entire site was shut down, never to resurface.

On March 10, an article about another medical whistleblower in Wuhan—another potential Li—was published and then swiftly wiped off the internet, which began yet another vast cat-and-mouse game between censors and Chinese social media users. The story, published by *People*, profiled a doctor, who, as she put it, had "handed out the whistle" by alerting other physicians about the emergence of a SARS-like virus in late December. The article reported that she had been scolded by hospital management for not keeping the information a secret.

Soon after it was deleted, Chinese social media users started to recreate the article in every way imaginable: They translated it into over 10 languages;

transcribed the piece in Morse code; wrote it out in ancient Chinese script; incorporated its content into a scannable QR code; and even rewrote it in Klingon—all in an effort to evade the censorship machine. All of these efforts were eradicated from the internet.

WHILE ARTICLES AND posts that displease Chinese censors continue to be expunged across the Chinese internet, the messages that thrive on television and state-sanctioned sites are rosy: News anchors narrate videos of nurses saying how honored they have been to fight for their country despite all the hardships and video clips of China “generously” shipping planeloads of medical equipment to other countries hit hard by the virus are playing on a loop.

As the outbreak began to slow down in mainland China, the government remained cautious in filtering out any information that might contradict the seemingly unstoppable trend of recovery. On March 4, a Shanghai news site called The Paper reported that a Covid-19 patient who had been discharged from the hospital in late February later died in a post-discharge isolation center; another news site questioned whether hospitals were discharging patients prematurely for the sake of “clearing all cases.” Both stories vanished.

On April 8, travel restrictions in Wuhan were finally lifted, and the measures used to contain the outbreak continue to ease. The government, meanwhile, is aggressively pushing for the public to show its gratitude toward the ruling party for its supposedly efficient response. TV stations are playing patriotic documentaries to showcase the government’s measures to combat the pandemic. By constantly comparing the scale of the outbreak in the United States with that in China, the government is feeding its people reasons to be grateful for their authoritarian government.

But it’s unlikely that the masses of people who watched posts being expunged from the internet will forget how they were governed in the pandemic. On March 17, I picked up my phone, opened my Weibo account, and typed out

the following sentence: "You are waiting for their apology, and they are waiting for your appreciation." The post promptly earned me a 404 badge.

Shawn Yuan is a Beijing-based freelance journalist and photographer. He travels between the Middle East and China to report on human rights and politics issues.

Sender: Chris Watanabe (b)(6) (b)(6)
Recipient: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Krach, Keith J (b)(6)
CC: Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Washington Times report on Friday
Date: Mon, 27 Jan 2020 01:28:17 +0000

Yes (b)(6) And thank you for illustrating with an equation. Another equation here:
Freedom of press + spread of virus = a constant.
With zero free press, virus/fear/mistrust spreads much faster.
Wolfowitz has an op-ed on WSJ tonight highlighting that the CCP lies have only worsened since 2003. The actual number today is probably 100 times bigger, and the real cause/source is now in grave doubt.

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State

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

Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 3:27 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: Krach, Keith J; (b)(6) Keshap, Atul; (b)(6) Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC

Subject: FW: Washington Times report on Friday

(b)(5)

Words x Deeds = Trust At this point Words = 0.

From the link below:

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

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

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

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

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

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

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 12:56 PM

To: Krach, Keith J (b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: Washington Times report on Friday

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

Sender: (b)(6)

Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Recipient:

(b)(6)

Krach, Keith J (b)(6)

Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC (b)(6)

From: "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6);
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6)
Krach, Keith J (b)(6)
CC: Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Washington Times report on Friday
Date: Mon, 27 Jan 2020 01:35:53 +0000

Typing too fast leads to faulty algebra. Words = 100; Deeds = 0. But you got the point.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 8:28 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Cc: Krach, Keith J (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
(b)(6) Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Washington Times report on Friday

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With zero free press, virus/fear/mistrust spreads much faster.

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(b)(6)

The Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 3:27 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Krach, Keith J; (b)(6) Keshap, Atul; (b)(6) Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC
Subject: FW: Washington Times report on Friday

(b)(5)

Words x Deeds = Trust At this point Words = 0.

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From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, January 26, 2020 12:56 PM

To: Krach, Keith J (b)(6); Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: Washington Times report on Friday

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

Sender: "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Recipient: Dawson, Cami (b)(6)

Masonis, Melin (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Krach, Keith J (b)(6)

Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Tobin, Elizabeth D. EOP/NSC (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>;
CC: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL <EAP-CM-UnitChiefs-DL@state.gov>
Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable
Date: Sun, 5 Apr 2020 21:50:14 +0000

Thanks! I sent it to all of legal-EAP for their review.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 5:48 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6); EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL <EAP-CM-UnitChiefs-
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

L is fine, I don't see the need for H clearance. I will help with L clearance. Who did you send it to?

(b)(6)
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)
From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 5:46:08 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6); EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL <EAP-CM-UnitChiefs-
DL@state.gov>
Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Thanks! P leadership is reviewing - they just updated me. The L and H clearances were requested by D staff...I don't think those are imperative but defer to you. Best, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 5:44 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)
(b)(6); EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL <EAP-CM-UnitChiefs-
DL@state.gov>
Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Thanks for letting me know. I'll let the powers that be know we are awaiting a lot of clearances, so let's give it another hour to see what you get.

Not sure why you are pursuing H clearance for an AM, unless I am missing something.

Totally fine to use email.

Thank you!!

(b)(6)

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 5:38 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox; (b)(6) EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Hi (b)(6)

I'm going to send it to you in 15 - sorry! I don't have P, D, L, H clearances and EAP/P is running down SPOX/GPA. I'm just going to email you and the staffers if that is okay - because I don't have access to one paper.

Best regards,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 5:29 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Hi (b)(6)! Any luck? Thanks!!

(b)(6)

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) >

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 4:00:36 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Hi (b)(6) - sorry! I need a little longer - 5 p.m. - if that's doable? The memo is out for clearances now.

Separately, I just want to flag that we won't get the clearance for one of the drafters of the cable, (b)(6) because he is in Cambodia. I'll call (b)(6) later this evening when he is awake to have him clear, but will continue moving this through the 7th floor in the meantime.

Also, we are recommending a number of redactions - and defer to you on how to present these to folks for final approval. I can't print the cables from home, so likely someone will need to go into the office to black out the requested sections and attach the final versions to the memo. I can do that - it will just take some time for me to get to the office.

Best regards,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 3:22 PM

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

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Thank you, and thanks to (b)(6)!!

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 3:10 PM

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

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

4 pm will work. Thank you so much for the update and a million thanks to you and (b)(6) for spending your Sunday getting this done.

Best,

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 3:05:21 PM

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

Cc: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; (b)(6)

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Adding (b)(6) who is drafting. We've gotten a few clearances in, but likely will need additional time. Would 4 pm sharp be okay on your end? We'll follow up with phone calls as well.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 2:51 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6); EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

Hi (b)(6)

Checking in— just want to know if the paper will be ready around 3ish or if more time is needed. Thanks!

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 9:38:34 AM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: URGENT: WIV Cable

(b)(6)

I don't have the original cables. Can you send them my way, please?

Thanks & Regards,

(b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, April 5, 2020 9:00 AM

To: EAP-Staffers Mailbox; EAP-FO-Staffer-DL

Cc: (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: URGENT: WIV Cable

(b)(6) – we understand the story by Mr. Rogin may run in the immediate future. Is there any way the drafter can draft and submit the memo to me and staffers by 3 pm today?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 10:02:48 PM

To: EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>; EAP-FO-Staffer-DL <EAP-FO-Staffer-DL@state.gov>

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

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

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

Subject: Fwd: WIV Cable

Staffers, Please task to (b)(6) an AM to S requesting S allow EAP to share two SBU cables with a Washington Post journalist.

Memo must provide policy justification (hence (b)(6) tasking). Must have EAP/P clearance. Due Tuesday at noon. Can be done entirely on the low side.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Office of the Assistant Secretary

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

(b)(6)
From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:55 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants; (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L; EAP-Press
Subject: Re: WIV Cable

ExecSec (b)(6)

Understood, will do. Thank you.

(b)(6)

Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)
From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:16:21 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) S_SpecialAssistants <S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov>;
(b)(6) (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) (b)(6) EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: Re: WIV Cable

EAP to S via the line pls. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 3, 2020, at 8:57 PM, (b)(6) (b)(6)
wrote:

Think this is best coming from EAP because of the policy implications. But defer to (b)(6)

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State
Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 3, 2020, at 6:56 PM, (b)(6) (b)(6) wrote:

S Special Colleagues (b)(6)

A/S Stilwell would like to release the attached SBU cables to Josh Rogin of the Washington Post to respond to a query. We understand S would need to determine whether or not to release.

Could you please let us know if ExecSec (b)(6) would prefer the request come to S via a SPOX public affairs decision memo or via a traditional AM through the Line?

Thank you,

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 6:46 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6) EAP-P-Office-DL <EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: WIV Cable

(b)(6) can someone on your team do a an action memo asking S permission to release these cables to Washington Post for the purposes of responding to Josh Rogin's query?

This might have to go through the Line as an AM instead of treating it like a public decision memo but defer to (b)(6) I can also ask my old team on S staff how it should be handled.

Richard L. Buangan
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State
Email: (b)(6) (b)(6)

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6) (b)(6)
Date: April 3, 2020 at 18:26:16 EDT
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) "Buangan, Richard L" (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

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

Subject: FW: WIV Cable

For the Rogin story. Actual cables attached.

Hopefully we can get them released and have (b)(6) sit down with Josh to discuss.

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:15 PM

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

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

Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6) (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Here are the most relevant elements:

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)

(b)(5) It is interesting that WIV scientists are allowed to study the SARS-like coronaviruses isolated from bats while they are precluded from studying human-disease causing SARS coronavirus in their new BSL-4 lab until permission for such work is granted by the NHFCP.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:14:18 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) Keshap, Atul (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Attached. They're also on an email from a few days ago with (b)(6)

--

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

On April 3, 2020 at 5:11:51 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6) @state.gov wrote:
First one to get me a soft copy of (b)(6) Wuhan cables gets a Samoa Cookie.
drs

David R. Stilwell
Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

<18-WUHAN-38.eml.pdf>
<18-BEIJING-138.eml.pdf>

Sender: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
EAP-Staffers Mailbox <EAP-StaffersMailbox@state.gov>;
Recipient: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
EAP-CM-Unit Chiefs-DL <EAP-CM-UnitChiefs-DL@state.gov>

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 28)
Date: Tue, 28 Apr 2020 16:11:54 +0000

It's got some good material, I'll pass it to (b)(6) again.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 12:02 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 28)

And what about (b)(6)'s first paper? (b)(5)

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 28, 2020, at 11:58 AM, (b)(6) wrote:

I'm sure we can. I'll pass it to (b)(6) (b)(5)
(b)(5) Will forward it now.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 11:56 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 28)

(b)(5)

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 28, 2020, at 11:53 AM, Pratt, Jonathan G (b)(6) wrote:

Very interesting

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 28, 2020 11:50 AM
To: (b)(6); (b)(6); (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 28)

Attached/below is an open source timeline produced by (b)(6) outlining PRC actions prior to/during the COVID-19 outbreak.

[illegible]

Attached includes an additional topline theme (the assault on international transparency), along with updates as of April 28.

Updated major themes:

--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; online activists Cai Wei, Tang, and Chen Mei...

--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 prior review

by the Ministry of Science and Technology, data on asymptomatic “silent carriers” kept secret...

--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 in Taiwan raised concerns as early as Dec. 31, as did experts 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. Throughout February, Beijing presses the U.S., Italy, India, Australia, Southeast Asian neighbors and others not to protect themselves via travel restrictions, even as the PRC imposes severe restrictions at home...

--The assault on international transparency: As EU diplomats prepare a report on the pandemic, PRC successfully presses Brussels to strike language on PRC disinformation. As Australia calls for an independent inquiry into the pandemic, PRC threatens to cut off trade with Australia. (PRC has likewise responded furiously to US calls for transparency.)

New timeline elements in the attached:

— 2020 —

January 26: Major General Chen Wei, the Chinese military’s top epidemiologist and virologist, assumes a senior position at the Wuhan Institute of Virology overseeing coronavirus vaccine research.

January 31: Acclaimed author and Wuhan resident Fang Fang writes online, “How many people have died in Wuhan and their families destroyed? . . . But so far not a single person has said sorry or taken responsibility. I’ve even seen a writer use the phrase ‘complete victory’. What are they talking about?” Her “Wuhan Diary” writings become an increasing target of scorn online, backed by state media outlets, in a campaign she says recalls the Cultural Revolution.

February 6: The leaders of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine write to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on the importance of information-sharing and transparency “for managing the 2019-nCoV outbreak and for preventing future outbreaks.” “Samples collected as early as possible in the outbreak in Wuhan and samples from wildlife would be particularly valuable,” they write, adding that the president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has indicated that the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory “is willing to share isolates of the 2019 nCov with the international community.” This transfer apparently never happened.

February 16: The Wuhan Institute of Virology issues a public denial that its former researcher Huang Yanling is “patient zero,” as speculated on Chinese social media based on the disappearance of Huang’s biographical information from the Institute’s website and Huang’s unknown whereabouts. Institute researcher Shi Zhengli writes on social media that she “guaranteed with her own life” that the outbreak was unrelated to the lab. She instructs

"those who believe and spread malicious media rumors to close their stinky mouths. (In 2004, China suffered a SARS outbreak due to a lab leak that killed one person and infected nine. PRC authorities blamed negligence and punished five senior officials at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.)

April 18: Yuan Zhiming, vice director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and director of the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory, tells state broadcaster CGTN, "There is absolutely no way that the virus originated from our institute. . . . I hope such a conspiracy theory will not affect cooperation among scientists around the world."

April 21: A study published in the Lancet by researchers from Hong Kong estimates that China might have had tens of thousands more coronavirus cases than officials have disclosed.

April 22: Citizen journalist Li Zehua surfaces for the first time since February, saying that his detention included a quarantine in Wuhan and another in his hometown, after which he was reunited with his family. He says in a video: "During the whole process, the police enforced law in a civilised manner, ensured my rest time and food. They also cared about me very much. . . . I'm grateful to all the people who looked after me and cared about me. I wish all people suffering the epidemic can pull through. God bless China. I wish the world can unite together."

April 24: Under pressure from Beijing, the European Union softens a published report on Covid-19 disinformation. The final text removed a draft reference to Beijing's "global disinformation" campaign and struck mention of the diplomatic dispute between China and France over Chinese PPE exports and the aggressive rhetoric of China's ambassador in Paris.

April 25: SCMP reports Chinese police have detained three Beijing residents (Cai Wei, a woman surnamed Tang, and Chen Mei) who helped publish articles about Covid-19 on open-source website Github that were previously censored from mainstream PRC media and social media, including material about Wuhan doctor Ai Fen.

April 27: PRC ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye threatens economic harm if Australia continues pushing for an independent investigation into the coronavirus. "Maybe the ordinary [Chinese] people will say 'Why should we drink Australian wine? Eat Australian beef?'," Cheng said, also citing the tourism and higher-education sectors. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne answered: "We reject any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment, when what we need is global cooperation."

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(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

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

On April 17, 2020 at 7:19:08 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated timeline attached, through April 17. New elements include:

— 2015 —

November 9: Researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (including Shi Zhengli) and several U.S. labs (including the FDA's National Center for Toxicological Research) publish a study in *Nature Medicine* entitled "A SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows potential for human emergence." It stated: "To examine the emergence potential (that is, the potential to infect humans) of circulating bat CoVs, we built a chimeric virus encoding a novel, zoonotic CoV spike protein—from the RsSHC014-CoV sequence that was isolated from Chinese horseshoe bats—in the context of the SARS-CoV mouse-adapted backbone."

— 2019 —

March 2: Researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology publish a study in the medical journal *Viruses* noting that "it is highly likely that future SARS- or MERS-like coronavirus outbreaks will originate from bats, and there is an increased probability that this will occur in China."

March 5: Gao Fu, director of the PRC's CDC, says in a speech: "Viruses like SARS could emerge anytime, but there'll never be another SARS incident. That's thanks to how well our national contagious disease surveillance system works."

— 2020 —

January 3: The Wuhan Health Commission sets narrow criteria for confirming that a case is officially part of the outbreak, saying patients can be counted only if they had ties to the Huanan seafood market, excluding the growing number of cases with no such ties. An official from a district disease control center in Wuhan also tells a hospital doctor handling infection reports that "this was a special contagious disease and we should report only after superiors had notified us."

January 6: The head of an expert team sent to Wuhan from Beijing, Xu Jianguo, reports that "China has many years of disease control, there's absolutely no chance that this will spread widely because of Spring Festival travel," and there is "no evidence of human-to-human transmission."

January 10: After leading a second expert team from Beijing to Wuhan, prominent PRC government expert Wang Guangfa tells state broadcaster CCTV that the Wuhan pneumonia was "under control" and mostly a "mild condition." His team reported no clear signs of human-to-human transmission, though more than half a dozen doctors already were ill. [On March 15, Wang wrote on social media that he "always suspected it was human-to-human transmissible."]

January 14: In a confidential teleconference with provincial health officials, PRC National Health Commission chief Ma Xiaowei reportedly warns that the novel virus is "the most severe challenge since SARS in 2003, and is likely to develop into a major public health event," adding

that "clustered cases suggest that human-to-human transmission is possible." Citing the case reported in Thailand the day prior, Ma warns of spread overseas and during China's coming Lunar New Year festivities. It would be another six days before any of these official concerns are made public.

January 15: A day after the confidential teleconference, China's CDC initiates the highest-level emergency response internally and the National Health Commission distributes 63 pages of instructions to provinces on identifying cases and equipping doctors with protective gear. These instructions are marked "internal," "not to be spread on the internet," and "not to be publicly disclosed."

February 15: Finance magazine Barron's finds that China's official coronavirus data fit a near-perfect model that is almost impossible to naturally occur, as the number of cumulative deaths reported could be predicted by a simple mathematical formula to a 99.99% accuracy.

March 3: WHO chief Tedros plays down the risk of asymptomatic silent carriers, citing official PRC data: "COVID-19 does not transmit as efficiently as influenza, from the data we have so far. With influenza, people who are infected but not yet sick are major drivers of transmission, which does not appear to be the case for COVID-19. Evidence from China is that only 1% of reported cases do not have symptoms, and most of those cases develop symptoms within two days." Later reports cited classified PRC data showing up to 33% of cases were asymptomatic (see March 22).

April 17: Wuhan raises its official tally of Covid-19 fatalities by 1,290, to nearly 3,900, blaming the initial undercount on cases unrecognized, untreated, or underreported by overstressed hospitals.

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(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

(c)

(b)(6)

On April 13, 2020 at 9:51:31 AM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated timeline attached. 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 CCP member 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 prior review by the Ministry of Science and Technology...

--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 in Taiwan raised concerns about human-human transmission as early as Dec. 31, as did experts 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 presses 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.”

December 30: Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher Shi Zhengli (known as “bat-woman” for her research) is called by the Institute’s director and summoned back to Wuhan from a conference in Shanghai to study samples of the novel coronavirus. “Could they have come from our lab?” Shi feared.

--2020--

January 7: Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology recalled in a March 11 interview with Scientific American that by January 7 her team found that the novel coronavirus’s sequence did not match any of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves. “That really took a load off my mind,” she said. But the novel sequence was 96% identical to one her team had sampled previously in Yunnan.

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 6: Researchers from South China University of Technology publish a study concluding that “the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. Safety level may need to be reinforced in high risk biohazardous laboratories.” The paper is soon withdrawn because it “was not supported by direct proofs,” according to author Botao Xiao. “No scientists have confirmed or refuted the paper’s findings,” scholar Yanzhong Huang wrote on March 5.

February 16: The Wuhan Institute of Virology issues a public denial that its former researcher Huang Yanling is “patient zero,” as speculated on Chinese social media based on changes to the Institute’s website and Huang’s unknown whereabouts. Institute researcher Shi Zhengli writes on social media that she “guaranteed with her own life” that the outbreak was unrelated to the lab. [In 2004, China suffered a SARS outbreak due to a lab leak that killed one person and infected nine. PRC authorities blamed negligence and punished five senior officials at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.]

February 23: Xi Jinping delivers speech to PRC officials calling virus “a crisis for us and also a major test.” He stresses “social stability” and 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.

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(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On April 2, 2020 at 4:58:00 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

Updated here to include more on the WHO, and some other tweaks. Please use this document (stamped 5pm).

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(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On April 2, 2020 at 3:07:15 PM EDT, [REDACTED] (b)(6) wrote:
Would like to include the timeline of WHO requesting access to the site (mid-January, I believe),
WHO ADVON getting permission to travel to Beijing (10 Feb), and the investigative team
actually heading out to investigate (around 20 Feb).

From: [REDACTED] (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2020 11:16 AM

[illegible]

Subject: Updated timeline of PRC coverup (April 2)

Some of the new items in the attached:

January 4: Amid PRC denials, another expert outside mainland China begins to sound alarms over human-to-human transmission. The head of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for Infection, Ho Pak-leung, warns that Hong Kong "should implement the strictest possible monitoring system for a mystery new viral pneumonia that has infected dozens of people on the mainland, as it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human."

January 23: Chinese authorities lock down Wuhan, after letting some five million people leave the city without screening in the weeks prior, amid the growing outbreak. NYT estimates seven million people left between Jan. 1 and Jan 23. Before the lockdown, some 900 people flew from Wuhan to New York City per month on average, while some 2,200 flew to Sydney and 15,000 to Bangkok (site of the first overseas case of the novel coronavirus in mid-January). Some 85% of infected travelers went undetected.

January 30: WHO special committee on the novel coronavirus states that it “does not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available.”

January 31: U.S. shuts down entry from China for non-Americans. By this time, outbreaks were already growing in 30 cities across 26 countries. PRC state media criticize the U.S. travel advisory urging citizens not to travel to China due to health concerns. PRC Ministry of Foreign

Affairs claims the U.S. action is "certainly not a gesture of goodwill."

February 1: Referring to travel restrictions, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells his Indian counterpart that China "opposes certain countries' actions that are creating tension and causing panic."

February 3: WHO chief Tedros calls on countries not to take measures that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade." He adds, "The chances of getting this going to anywhere outside China is very low, and even in China, when you go to other provinces, it's very low." This statement was amplified in PRC state media.

February 6: Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Italy's ambassador to China and "requires" Italy to suspend its decision cancelling direct flights between Italy and China. PRC press release states that Beijing "is strongly dissatisfied with the overreaction and restrictions of the Italian side" and claims that Italy agreed to resume some flights.

February 20: At a meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi pressures countries to ease travel restrictions, saying: "In light³¹ of the conditions on the ground, countries need to resume people-to-people ties and cooperation."

February 29: WHO announces that it "continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks."

March 31: Chinese National Health Commission announces for the first time that it excluded from its national tally people who were infected with the virus but without symptoms, and that as of April 1 it would begin including these in the tally "in order to respond to society's concern in a timely manner."

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(b)(6)

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

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

(b)(6)

On March 22, 2020 at 4:58:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Attached updates thru today, March 22. Thanks for suggestions.

--

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(o)

(c)

(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 7:53:15 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated coverup timeline attached, including publication of this study March 11.

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(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(o)

(c)

(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 3:52:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

Shocking detail here from March 11 University of Southampton study. Estimates that if Beijing had owned up to the Wuhan virus and responded with significant measures just a week before it did, 66% of cases could have been avoided. And had Beijing responded three weeks sooner, 95% could have been avoided.

From <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2020/03/covid-19-china.page>: "The research also found that if interventions in the country could have been conducted one week, two weeks, or three weeks earlier, cases could have been reduced by 66 percent, 86 percent and 95 percent respectively – significantly limiting the geographical spread of the disease."

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(b)(6)

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

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(b)(6)

<Wuhan virus coverup timeline 2020 03 18.docx>
<Wuhan virus coverup timeline 2020 03 22.docx>
<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 02.docx>
<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 13.pdf>
<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 17.pdf>
<Coronavirus coverup timeline 2020 04 28.pdf>

Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)
To: Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 Feith, David (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 13)
Date: Wed, 15 Apr 2020 14:38:47 +0000

Will do.

So far, here's what I've found on HUA Sheng (华生) dates:

- **HUA states there were 5 COVID cases "around" (前后) December 13.**
 - This can be found in HUA's second article, "Let Facts Speak," (让事实说话) in the two-part series, "What We Must Genuinely Conclude from the COVID-19 Epidemic"--我们要从这次疫情真正总结什么
- **HUA states although Wuhan Municipal Health Commission (WMHC, 武汉市卫生健康委员会) reported an epidemic on Dec. 31, there were already 27 cases before this date.** If WMHC knew about these cases in early- to mid-December, and were reporting these cases daily according to the "Network Direct Reporting System" (网络直报系统), China CDC would have started to pay attention to the unexplained pneumonia when cases reached 5--around Dec. 13.
 - NOTE: HUA provides a great overview of the "Network Direct Reporting System" (rough translation of full name: Infectious Disease Information Reporting Management and Outbreaks in Public Health Incident Reporting System, 传染病信息报告管理和突发公共卫生事件报告系统), who manages it, and how its supposed to work. Not a shocker here, it's jointly supervised by the Party.
- HUA's first article, "HUA Sheng: If the groups attacking GAO Fu are wrong--what we must genuinely conclude from the COVID-19 epidemic"
华生：如果群殴高福是搞错了对象——
我们要从新冠病毒疫情真正总结什么（上）, is also of some interest with his analysis of China CDC Director GAO Fu (高福), and his response/responsibility. HUA states GAO--"the highest level person in the Network Direct Reporting System"--sounded the alarm to authorities on Dec. 30 once he discovered reports from doctors circulating online regarding an unexplained pneumonia.

From what I can tell, HUA is still an econ professor at Southeastern University and his last Weibo post was 3 days ago on April 12.

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 9:42 PM

To: (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) Fritz,
Jonathan D (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 13)

Thanks. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 9:40 PM

To: (b)(6) Buangan, Richard L; Fritz, Jonathan D; (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 13)

Hi Rick,

Per FO request, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 9:25 PM

To: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
(Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 13)

Reflecting on this, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, April 13, 2020 9:51 AM

To: Stilwell, David R; EAP-FO-Principals-DL; NSC Asia; Matthew Pottinger; (b)(6)

Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6) (Geneva); (b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L; (b)(6) Snyder, Nicholas (b)(6)

(b)(6) Storch, Thomas; (b)(6) (AID/A) (b)(6) (PPL/AA) (b)(6)
(AID/A); (b)(6) Wells, Alice; (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Hanoi); (b)(6) (Seoul); (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Canberra); (b)(6)
(b)(6) C_Policy; (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 13)

Updated timeline attached. This version notes at the top that major themes include:

(b)(5)

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."

December 30: Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher Shi Zhengli (known as “bat-woman” for her research) is called by the Institute’s director and summoned back to Wuhan from a conference in Shanghai to study samples of the novel coronavirus. “Could they have come from our lab?” Shi feared.

--2020--

January 7: Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology recalled in a March 11 interview with Scientific American that by January 7 her team found that the novel coronavirus’s sequence did not match any of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves. “That really took a load off my mind,” she said. But the novel sequence was 96% identical to one her team had sampled previously in Yunnan.

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 6: Researchers from South China University of Technology publish a study concluding that “the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. Safety level may need to be reinforced in high risk biohazardous laboratories.” The paper is soon withdrawn because it “was not supported by direct proofs,” according to author Botao Xiao. “No scientists have confirmed or refuted the paper’s findings,” scholar Yanzhong Huang wrote on March 5.

February 16: The Wuhan Institute of Virology issues a public denial that its former researcher Huang Yanling is “patient zero,” as speculated on Chinese social media based on changes to the Institute’s website and Huang’s unknown whereabouts. Institute researcher Shi Zhengli writes on social media that she “guaranteed with her own life” that the outbreak was unrelated to the lab. [In 2004, China suffered a SARS outbreak due to a lab leak that killed one person and infected nine. PRC authorities blamed negligence and punished five senior officials at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.]

February 23: Xi Jinping delivers speech to PRC officials calling virus “a crisis for us and also a major test.” He stresses “social stability” and 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.

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On April 2, 2020 at 4:58:00 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Updated here to include more on the WHO, and some other tweaks. Please use this document (stamped 5pm).

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On April 2, 2020 at 3:07:15 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R. (b)(6) wrote:
Would like to include the timeline of WHO requesting access to the site (mid-January, I believe), WHO ADVON getting permission to travel to Beijing (10 Feb), and the investigative team actually heading out to investigate (around 20 Feb).

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 2, 2020 11:16 AM

To: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; NSC Asia

(b)(6); Matthew Pottinger (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6); Ortagus, Morgan D. (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Geneva)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Buangan, Richard L. (b)(6)

(b)(6) Snyder, Nicholas

(b)(6) Storch,

Thomas (b)(6) (AID/A) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (PPL/AA) (b)(6) (AID/A) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Wells, Alice (b)(6)

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

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) (Canberra)

(b)(6)

Subject: Updated timeline (b)(5) (April 2)

Some of the new items in the attached:

January 4: Amid PRC denials, another expert outside mainland China begins to sound alarms over human-to-human transmission. The head of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for

Infection, Ho Pak-leung, warns that Hong Kong "should implement the strictest possible monitoring system for a mystery new viral pneumonia that has infected dozens of people on the mainland, as it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human."

January 23: Chinese authorities lock down Wuhan, after letting some five million people leave the city without screening in the weeks prior, amid the growing outbreak. NYT estimates seven million people left between Jan. 1 and Jan 23. Before the lockdown, some 900 people flew from Wuhan to New York City per month on average, while some 2,200 flew to Sydney and 15,000 to Bangkok (site of the first overseas case of the novel coronavirus in mid-January). Some 85% of infected travelers went undetected.

January 30: WHO special committee on the novel coronavirus states that it "does not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available."

January 31: U.S. shuts down entry from China for non-Americans. By this time, outbreaks were already growing in 30 cities across 26 countries. PRC state media criticize the U.S. travel advisory urging citizens not to travel to China due to health concerns. PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims the U.S. action is "certainly not a gesture of goodwill."

February 1: Referring to travel restrictions, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells his Indian counterpart that China "opposes certain countries' actions that are creating tension and causing panic."

February 3: WHO chief Tedros calls on countries not to take measures that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade." He adds, "The chances of getting this going to anywhere outside China is very low, and even in China, when you go to other provinces, it's very low." This statement was amplified in PRC state media.

February 6: Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Italy's ambassador to China and "requires" Italy to suspend its decision cancelling direct flights between Italy and China. PRC press release states that Beijing "is strongly dissatisfied with the overreaction and restrictions of the Italian side" and claims that Italy agreed to resume some flights.

February 20: At a meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi pressures countries to ease travel restrictions, saying: "In light³¹ of the conditions on the ground, countries need to resume people-to-people ties and cooperation."

February 29: WHO announces that it "continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks."

March 31: Chinese National Health Commission announces for the first time that it excluded from its national tally people who were infected with the virus but without symptoms, and that as of April 1 it would begin including these in the tally "in order to respond to society's concern in a timely manner."

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On March 22, 2020 at 4:58:25 PM EDT (b)(6) wrote:
Attached updates thru today, March 22. Thanks for suggestions.

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 7:53:15 PM EDT (b)(6) wrote:
Updated coverup timeline attached, including publication of this study March 11.

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On March 18, 2020 at 3:52:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:
Shocking detail here from March 11 University of Southampton study. Estimates that if Beijing had owned up to the Wuhan virus and responded with significant measures just a week before it did, 66% of cases could have been avoided. And had Beijing responded three weeks sooner, 95% could have been avoided.

From <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2020/03/covid-19-china.page>: "The

research also found that if interventions in the country could have been conducted one week, two weeks, or three weeks earlier, cases could have been reduced by 66 percent, 86 percent and 95 percent respectively – significantly limiting the geographical spread of the disease.”

(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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<Wuhan virus (b)(5) timeline 2020 03 18.docx>

<Wuhan virus (b)(5) timeline 2020 03 22.docx>

<Coronavirus (b)(5) timeline 2020 04 02.docx>

Sender: (b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)

Recipient:

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: State Department News Briefing (4-20-20 - 9 PM ET)
Date: Tue, 21 Apr 2020 03:35:19 +0000

The President tonight issued a directive ordering Agencies to begin the process of returning employees to their offices.

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 9:30 PM
To: Keshap, Atul (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: FW: State Department News Briefing (4-20-20 - 9 PM ET)

(b)(5)

From: TechMIS - DOS Daily <dos@techmis.com>
Sent: Monday, April 20, 2020 8:42 PM
To: noreply@techmis.com
Subject: State Department News Briefing (4-20-20 - 9 PM ET)

STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING

Prepared for the U.S. Department of State
By TechMIS
www.TechMIS.com

Mobile User Copy

TO: State Department & Staff
DATE: Monday, April 20, 2020 9:00 PM ET

State Department News

With Trump Facing Virus Crisis, U.S. Warns Rivals Not to Seek Advantage

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 8:27 AM, Gordon Lubold and Dion Nissenbaum, Neutral] reports that while President Donald Trump is absorbed with confronting the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic at home, administration officials and their allies are seeking to head off any attempt by adversaries around the world to test U.S. resolve. In a succession of public warnings, Trump, his key aides, military officials and allies

in recent weeks have voiced concern that attention to the health crisis by the White House and military could give rise to challenges. "I think some of this stuff is profoundly and clearly taking advantage of a bad situation," said an administration official, who pointed to China's actions in the South China Sea as particularly troubling. In recent weeks, Beijing has conducted operations to gain more of a foothold in the Spratly and Paracel island chains in the South China Sea, emblematic of China's attempts to assert its influence around the world. Since the outbreak of the global health crisis, China has begun operating various military aircraft from Fiery Cross Reef in the South China Sea, including an airborne early warning and control aircraft that has begun to use an airstrip on the reef as a "forward operating base" to conduct reconnaissance flights, military and State Department officials said. While some of the operations might have been planned before the pandemic swept the globe, U.S. officials said American rivals like China are capitalizing on the Trump administration's diverted attention and the strains on its military. Chinese forces were accused earlier this month of sinking a Vietnamese fishing vessel in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands, prompting a protest from the State Department. "We call on [China] to remain focused on supporting international efforts to combat the global pandemic, and to stop exploiting the distraction or vulnerability of other states to expand its unlawful claims in the South China Sea," spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said.

Wearing face masks, Syria's Assad and Iran's Zarif condemn West at Damascus meeting

Reuters [4/20/2020 1:48 PM, Suleiman Al-Khalidi, Neutral] reports that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javid Zarif wore face masks on Monday for their meeting in Damascus where they said the West was exploiting the coronavirus pandemic for political ends, state media said. State media said Assad conveyed condolences to Iran, where more than 5,200 people have died from the disease. Echoing comments by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Zarif, who was also wearing gloves, was quoted as saying the U.S. administration showed its "inhumane reality" by its refusal to lift sanctions on Syria and Iran when coronavirus was spreading around the world. Assad said the handling of the crisis showed the West's moral failure. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has held out the possibility that the United States may consider easing sanctions on Iran and other nations to help fight the epidemic but given no concrete sign it plans to do so. Speaking last month, Pompeo said humanitarian supplies were exempt from sanctions Washington reimposed on Tehran after President Donald Trump abandoned Iran's 2015 multilateral deal to limit its nuclear programme. The United States has also ratcheted up sanctions on Syria since the uprising against Assad began in March 2011. The State Department says it is "trying to deprive the regime of the resources it needs to continue violence against civilians."

IMF may need 'exceptional measures' to facilitate pandemic response: Georgieva

Reuters [4/20/2020 12:35 PM, Andrea Shalal, Neutral] reports that the IMF may need to step outside its comfort zone and consider "exceptional measures" to help countries deal with the coronavirus pandemic and mitigate its economic impact, Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said on Monday. Georgieva, in a blog published on the International Monetary Fund's website, said the Fund had already taken extraordinary steps to free up resources, especially for emerging markets and developing economies that have seen an outflow of \$100 billion in recent months – the highest on record. But more resources might be needed if market pressures continued to mount, and lending – even on

easy terms – was not always the best solution, given already high debt burdens faced by many countries, she said. "The IMF, like our member countries, may need to venture even further outside our comfort zone to consider whether exceptional measures might be needed in this exceptional crisis," she said, suggesting solutions could include increased collaboration with other international institutions and the private sector.

Nations credited with fast response to coronavirus moving to gradually reopen businesses

The Washington Post [4/20/2020 12:07 PM, Rick Noack and Loveday Morris, Neutral] reports that several countries moved ahead with plans for the gradual reopening of their economies this week, signaling cautious optimism among their governments that measures to combat the coronavirus are working. Germany and South Korea – role models in handling the outbreak in their regions – are slowly reversing some of the restrictions put in place weeks ago, embarking on a careful and long path back to normality that could serve as a template for other nations. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, however, extended a lockdown on Monday but did so amid mounting hopes that her country can eliminate the coronavirus by tracing transmissions and preventing new infections. Her move underscores the uncertainty over the best path forward as countries emerge from lockdown. In Germany, some scientists have argued that the country should ramp up restrictions until new infections reach a rate that makes tracking and contact tracing more easy, a strategy they say will allow for a greater degree of freedom in the long run. The number of coronavirus deaths in Europe surpassed 100,000 this weekend. Many European nations, including Britain and France, remain under tight lockdowns and are expected to stay under heavy restrictions for weeks.

Coronavirus Sparks Rise in Anti-Semitic Sentiment, Researchers Say

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 2:03 PM, Felicia Schwartz, Negative] reports that the new coronavirus pandemic is fueling anti-Semitic sentiment, Israeli researchers said Monday, as messages online and elsewhere falsely blame Jews for the spread of the disease and the ensuing economic impact. Researchers from the Kantor Center at Tel Aviv University, which released its annual assessment of global anti-Semitism Monday, said the virus that causes the Covid-19 illness had revived centuries-old habits of faulting Jews for things that go wrong, such as natural disasters, plagues, world wars and economic crises. Far-right groups, ultraconservative Christian circles, Islamists and the far left are seen as common sources of such accusations, the report found. "Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a significant rise in accusations that Jews, as individuals and as a collective, are behind the spread of the virus or are directly profiting from it," Moshe Kantor, president of the European Jewish Congress, said in connection with the report's unveiling. "The language and imagery used clearly identifies a revival of the medieval 'blood libels' when Jews were accused of spreading disease, poisoning wells or controlling economies."

Oil Prices Skid, With May Contract in Negative Territory

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 3:58 PM, David Hodari and Joe Wallace, Neutral] reports that an oil-price futures contract tumbled into negative territory for the first time ever Monday, illustrating the overwhelming glut of crude that is decimating the global energy industry. The June contract for West Texas Intermediate futures, considered the benchmark

for U.S. crude prices, dropped 18% to \$20.43 a barrel. Brent crude oil, the global benchmark, fell 8.9% to \$25.57 a barrel. But the fall was more severe for the front-month May contract, which made history by plunging into negative territory in the afternoon, a first in oil-futures-market data going back to 1983. It ended the day at minus-\$37.63 a barrel, highlighting the dilemma facing energy companies. Producers in some parts of the world have to pay buyers to take oil away or store it. Still, with the May contract expiring Tuesday and no longer the most actively traded, oil watchers don't consider it the most accurate reflection of price action. When futures contracts come close to expiration, their price typically converges with the underlying price of physical barrels of oil. Otherwise, traders could profit from the difference between oil futures and oil barrels. Physical oil prices have been hit hard by the collapse in demand and surge in supply. The price of some regional crudes in the U.S. recently fell below \$10 a barrel and on Monday also sank below zero. The drop in oil prices comes despite output reductions agreed on between countries of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Group of 20 nations.

Saudi Arabia gets physical with Russia in underground oil bout

Reuters [4/20/2020 10:52 AM, Olga Yagova, Neutral] reports that behind a Saudi-Russian truce to stabilize oil markets with a record output cut, market players are seeing the two production heavyweights still trading blows in the physical market. It is here, rather than in the world of futures prices, that a long-standing battle for market share carries on, particularly in Asia, shipping data analyzed on Monday by Reuters shows. The rivals said last week they were ready to take measures if necessary to balance the market by cutting combined output with other OPEC+ members from May. "Beyond the cooperative statements the fight is still going on," a source at a trading firm told Reuters, adding that Saudi Arabia's official selling prices (OSPs) signalled that the kingdom was targeting the Asian market, where demand remains relatively resilient during a global slowdown.

Turkey's Erdogan accuses Syrian government of violating Idlib ceasefire

Reuters [4/20/2020 1:12 PM, Staff, Neutral] reports that Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that the Syrian government was violating a ceasefire in the northwestern Idlib region, warning that Damascus would suffer "heavy losses" if it persisted. Turkey and Russia, which back opposing sides in Syria's war, agreed on March 5 to halt hostilities in northwestern Syria after an escalation of clashes there displaced nearly a million people and brought the two sides close to confrontation. Speaking in Istanbul after a cabinet meeting, Erdogan said the Syrian government was using the coronavirus outbreak as an opportunity to ramp up violence in Idlib, and added that Turkey would not allow any "dark groups" in the region to violate the ceasefire either.

FCC approves Ligado plan to deploy mobile broadband network

Reuters [4/20/2020 10:49 AM, David Shepardson, Neutral] reports that the five-member Federal Communications Commission voted unanimously to approve an order to allow Ligado Networks to deploy a low-power nationwide 5G network despite objections from the U.S. Defense Department, other federal agencies and major U.S. airlines. The telecommunications regulator said on Monday the approval order included stringent conditions aimed at ensuring global positioning systems would not experience harmful interference. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said via Twitter on Friday that the "Ligado proposal would needlessly imperil GPS-dependent national security

capabilities." Ligado will be able to use the L-Band spectrum, for which it holds some licenses. The L-Band is also used for GPS and other navigation systems because the signals can penetrate cloud cover. Last Wednesday, Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Jim Inhofe and the panel's top Democrat, Jack Reed, asked President Donald Trump to bar Ligado from moving forward, citing interference with GPS reception. U.S. Attorney General William Barr said last week the approval "would greatly reduce the cost and time it will take to deploy 5G throughout the country and would be a major step toward preserving our economic future." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also backed the plan.

Federal, New York Authorities Fine South Korean Bank Used for Iran Payments

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 1:36 PM, Andrew Jeong, Neutral] reports that federal and New York authorities fined a South Korean bank over long-running gaps in its defenses against money laundering, after the lender's Manhattan branch was used to launder cash for Iran. The state-backed Industrial Bank of Korea must pay a combined \$86 million for lapses dating back to 2010, which centered on failing to install and maintain an adequate transaction-monitoring system. The New York State Department of Financial Services is fining the bank \$35 million. Separately, federal investigators and the New York State Attorney General's office have required the bank to pay \$51 million. Senior Trump administration officials have recently brushed aside calls to ease economic sanctions on Tehran due to concern that Iran would use cash for military investments. However, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said the U.S. has offered to provide food and other humanitarian aid to Iran, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

[Iran] Iran Begins Soft Reopening After Coronavirus Shutdowns

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 3:25 PM, Sune Engel Rasmussen and Aresu Egbali, Neutral] reports that Iran's government allowed local bazaars and shopping malls to reopen on Monday, a potential milestone for a country that was one of the first outside of China to be hit by the new coronavirus and that has suffered extensive economic damage from the pandemic. Tehran's main bazaar reopened after more than a month and restrictions on travel between provinces were eased. But the tentative reopening of Iran's economy drew warnings from some health officials, who said they feared a premature return to normalcy would jeopardize hard-won gains against the virus. Authorities continue to fight the spread of the virus and worry about fresh outbreaks, and Iranian officials urged people to continue to stay home and practice social distancing. The virus had spread into Iran's leadership, sickening senior officials and ministers, and has dealt a heavy blow to an economy already struggling from damaging U.S. sanctions. In the past week, Iran's health ministry reported its lowest daily death toll and infections in a month. It logged 91 deaths on Monday, down from a peak in late March of over 150 daily deaths from Covid-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus. The number of new infections decreased from more than 3,000 daily in late March to about half that in recent days. Iran has reported a total of 5,209 deaths and 83,505 cases.

[Iran] U.S. pressure on Iran during coronavirus outbreak is 'inhumane': Rouhani

Reuters [4/20/2020 1:38 PM, Staff, Neutral] reports that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that American pressure on Iran in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic was "inhumane," according to a statement on the official presidency website. Iran is the Middle Eastern country hardest hit by the virus and Iranian officials say U.S. sanctions have

hampered its response. U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed economic sanctions on Iran in 2018 after withdrawing from a multilateral nuclear deal struck three years earlier. "In these difficult conditions, American pressure on the people of Iran is more inhumane than at any other time and the continuation of it is a barbaric crime against a great people and against all human principles and international regulations," Rouhani said during a phone call with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. Rouhani expressed sympathy for the people of Italy, who have also been hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak. Trump says the multilateral deal was not strong enough to ensure that Iran would not be able to develop and build nuclear weapons. He wants to apply "maximum pressure" on Iran to accept tougher curbs to its nuclear programme, halt its ballistic missile work and end its support for proxy forces in the Middle East. Iran says it will not negotiate unless Washington lifts sanctions.

[Iran] Iran's Guard Says It Has Higher Range Anti-Warship Missiles

The AP [4/20/2020 3:16 PM, Nasser Karimi, Neutral] reports that Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard announced on Monday that it has significantly upgraded the range of its anti-warship missiles, the state-run news agency reported. The Guard says it now possesses surface-to-surface and subsurface anti-warship missiles with a range as high as 700 kilometers (430 miles), according to its top naval officer, Adm. Ali Reza Tangsiri. In September, Iranian officials said the country's most advanced anti-warship missiles had a range of about 300 kilometers, some 180 miles. Iran periodically announces major advances in its weapons capabilities that cannot be verified independently. Its armed forces are believed to have surface-to-surface missiles with a range of 2,000 kilometers, or 1,250 miles, that can reach Israel and U.S. bases in the Mideast. Tangsiri's remarks came a day after the Guard acknowledged its naval forces had a tense encounter with U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf last week. Tensions between Iran and the U.S. remain high in the Gulf, following a year of escalating clashes between the two countries.

[Israel] Deal Extends Netanyahu's Rule as Rival Accepts Israeli Unity Government

The New York Times [4/20/2020 1:45 PM, Isabel Kershner and David M. Halbfinger, Neutral] reports that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and his former challenger, Benny Gantz, agreed Monday night to establish a unity government, a deal that finally breaks a yearlong political impasse and keeps Netanyahu in office as he faces trial on corruption charges. After three inconclusive elections in the past year, the creation of the new government forestalls what had appeared to be an inevitable fourth election and offers a deeply divided Israel a chance for national healing and unity as it battles the coronavirus pandemic. The deal, announced by the two men's political parties at 7:15 p.m., extends Netanyahu's tenure as Israel's longest-serving leader and, coming after his conservative coalition failed to win a majority, cements his reputation as a canny political survivor who can never be counted out. For Gantz, a former army chief and relative political novice, however, the agreement may end up having the opposite effect. The move was a stunning turnabout after his repeated campaign vows that he would never serve with a prime minister under criminal indictment, and a disappointment to many of his supporters who see it as a capitulation to a leader they had wanted to oust. Under the deal, which the two leaders cast as an emergency government to fight the coronavirus, Gantz will be named deputy prime minister and is to get a turn as prime minister halfway through their three-year term, in October 2021.

[Czech Republic] What's behind State's warning on Czech hospital attacks

Politico [4/20/2020 10:00 AM, Tim Starks, Neutral] reports that Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has warned cyber criminals that they should "expect consequences" if they target the health care sector as it battles the coronavirus pandemic. The warning came as part of the State Department's public support of the Czech Republic on Friday after a Czech government agency predicted a wave of cyberattacks on its critical infrastructure. Some Czech hospitals said they deflected attacks the same day, and Prague's airport over the weekend said it recently endured some hacking attempts. The statements come one month after a cyberattack hit a Czech hospital involved in coronavirus testing. It was a smart move from Pompeo designed to indicate that the U.S. is prepared to take collective action with allies against the kind of attacks that might cause deaths, said Christopher Painter, who served as the top cyber diplomat from 2011 through 2017. With threats of consequences, "it's always better if we do that collectively," Painter told MC. "It's not just about us, it's about our allies and our partners." While Pompeo didn't specify the kind of consequences he had in mind, Painter suggested they should be catered to the responsible party. A Czech official told Reuters that the expected attacks were by a "serious and advanced adversary." Painter said those responses could be diplomatic, economic or even military, but shouldn't be excessively escalatory.

[France] France Virus Fatalities Surpass 20,000 Since Start of Outbreak

Bloomberg [4/20/2020 1:49 PM, Rudy Rutenberg and Ania Nussbaum, Negative] reports that France reported 547 new deaths linked to the coronavirus on Monday, becoming the fourth country to report more than 20,000 fatalities from the pandemic, behind Italy, Spain and the U.S. The virus toll climbed to 20,265 deaths, Director General for Health Jerome Salomon said in a briefing in Paris. New cases rose by 2,832 infections to 178,774, increasing from Sunday but still lower than other days in the recent weeks. The number of hospitalized patients fell for a sixth day. Even as deaths rise, France will unveil plans within two weeks to progressively lift the restrictions aimed at curbing the epidemic, Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said on Sunday. Falling numbers for patients in hospitals and in intensive care are signs lockdown measures are working, Salomon has said. France has been on lockdown since March 17, and President Emmanuel Macron announced a week ago that confinement measures would be extended to May 11. Less than 10% of the French population has been exposed to the virus, Salomon said.

[Russia] Putin warns Russia's coronavirus crisis yet to peak as cases surpass 47,000

Reuters [4/20/2020 7:27 AM, Staff, Neutral] reports that President Vladimir Putin said Russia had managed to slow the spread of the new coronavirus but warned the peak of the outbreak still lay ahead after the number of confirmed infections surged past 47,000 nationwide on Monday. Russia reported 4,268 new confirmed coronavirus cases on Monday, down from more than 6,000 the day before. Forty-four people died overnight, bringing the death toll to 405, Russia's coronavirus task force said. Russia's new coronavirus infections have risen quickly in April even as Moscow and an array of Russian regions have imposed lockdown restrictions now already three weeks old. But despite the clampdown, infections have spread from Russia's worst-hit area in Moscow and penetrated all of its more than 80 regions, Putin said at a televised meeting with officials and health experts on Monday. "We have nonetheless managed to slow down this process and hold it back," he said, but added, "...The peak of the incidence rate is yet to come." Reuters [4/20/2020 11:19 AM, Alexander Marrow and Maria Tsvetkova, Neutral]

also reports that hundreds of people protested against regional authorities in southern Russia on Monday over what they said were restrictive and unnecessary coronavirus measures, state-owned TV and demonstrators said. The forced closure of businesses across Russia and the imposition of strict self-isolation measures has caused economic pain to many households, particularly in Russia's regions, where salaries are lower and the virus less entrenched.

[Russia] U.S. envoy blasts Moscow's 'secret' trial of ex-marine charged with spying

Reuters [4/20/2020 1:06 PM, Tom Balmforth, Neutral] reports that the U.S. ambassador in Moscow accused Russian authorities on Monday of making a mockery of justice after he was turned away for a second time from what he called a "secret" trial behind closed doors of an ex-U.S. Marine charged with espionage. Russia last month began the trial of U.S. national Paul Whelan on charges of spying after his arrest by Russian security agents in a hotel room sting operation in December 2018. He denies the charge. The case, as well as that of Michael Calvey, a U.S. investor charged with embezzlement in Russia, has complicated already strained relations between Moscow and Washington. Whelan, who also holds British, Canadian and Irish citizenship, faces up to 20 years if found guilty. The Moscow court had said the trial would involve classified information and would therefore not be open to the public, but U.S. Ambassador John Sullivan said he had tried to attend the hearing in Moscow on Monday and had been turned away. "The fact that it is a closed hearing, that it is a secret trial – Paul hasn't seen the evidence against him – it makes a mockery of justice," Sullivan said in remarks carried on the U.S. Embassy's website. He urged Russia's authorities to ensure Whelan would receive a fair and impartial trial, to grant him a phone call to his family and to allow him medical treatment. "He hasn't been allowed to make a phone call, to speak to anyone in his family in 16 months," Sullivan said.

[Russia] Russia intercepts U.S. Navy aircraft over Mediterranean Sea

CNN [4/20/2020 8:39 AM, Ryan Browne and Chandelis Duster, 5551K, Neutral] reports that a Russian fighter aircraft approached a U.S. Navy aircraft over the Mediterranean Sea Sunday, both governments confirmed while offering different accounts of the incident. U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a statement Sunday the Russian aircraft, a SU-35 jet, "flew in an unsafe and unprofessional manner" while intercepting the U.S. Navy P-8A Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft. The U.S. Navy it said was the second time in four days that Russian pilots made unsafe maneuvers while intercepting US aircraft. "The unnecessary actions of the Russian SU-35 pilot were inconsistent with good airmanship and international flight rules, seriously jeopardizing the safety of flight of both aircraft," the U.S. Navy said. "While the Russian aircraft was operating in international airspace, this interaction was irresponsible. We expect them to behave within international standards set to ensure safety and to prevent incidents."

[Spain] Spain coronavirus cases top 200,000 but infection rate falling 'a lot'

Reuters [4/20/2020 5:00 PM, Vincent West and Nathan Allen, Neutral] reports that the new coronavirus has infected more than 200,000 people in Spain, although the spread of the disease is slowing, officials said on Monday, as the Supreme Court ordered the government to guarantee that medical workers receive adequate protective equipment. With 200,210 recorded infections, Spain is second only to the United States in terms of confirmed cases, according to Reuters data. The cumulative death toll from the virus rose to 20,852 after 399

fatalities were recorded in the previous 24 hours. But Health Emergency Chief Fernando Simon told a news conference that the rate of new infections continues to fall despite an increase in testing, suggesting the overall prevalence of the disease could be lower than expected in the population. "Fortunately occurrence is falling a lot, even more than we had thought," he said.

[Turkey] Coronavirus puts missile showdown between Turkey and U.S. on hold

Reuters [4/20/2020 11:15 AM, Dominic Evans and Orhan Coskun, Neutral] reports that Turkey's plans to switch on its new Russian missile defense systems have been delayed by the coronavirus outbreak but it does not intend to reverse a decision which has raised the threat of U.S. sanctions, a senior Turkish official said. Tensions between NATO allies Turkey and the United States over the S-400 air defense systems had looked set to reach a showdown in April, when President Tayyip Erdogan and the government had said they would be activated. But the coronavirus outbreak has focused Turkish efforts on combatting the pandemic and ring-fencing an economy which only just pulled out of recession last year. In recent weeks Erdogan and his government have not raised the S-400 issue publicly. "There is no going back on the decision to activate the S-400s (but) due to COVID-19 ... the plan for them to be ready in April will be delayed," the senior official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. It could be several months before the Russian system is activated, the official said, adding some technical issues remained to be overcome. The United States says the S-400s, which Moscow delivered to Turkey last July, are incompatible with NATO defences and would jeopardise U.S. F35 stealth jets which Turkey planned to buy. Their acquisition by Turkey means Ankara could face U.S. sanctions under legislation designed to punish countries which buy defence equipment from Russia. Deploying the S-400s in the same airspace as U.S. planes would be a "massive problem" which would create a new crisis between the two countries, Richard Outzen, a senior adviser at the State Department, told an online discussion last week.

[Turkey] Istanbul Death Toll Hints Turkey Is Hiding a Wider Coronavirus Calamity

The New York Times [4/20/2020 4:43 PM, Carlotta Gall, Neutral] reports that for weeks President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has presented Turkey's performance in handling the coronavirus as one of the world's most successful, as he maintained strict control over information about the outbreak. The presidential palace rolled out a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign, ensuring reports from hospitals, grave sites and mourning relatives remained virtually absent. Doctors who spoke out on social media were reprimanded, and 410 people were detained in March for "provocative and abusive" posts. But data compiled by The New York Times from records of deaths in Istanbul indicate that Turkey is grappling with a far bigger calamity from the coronavirus than official figures and statements would suggest. The city recorded about 2,100 more deaths than expected from March 9 to April 12, based on weekly averages from the last two years, far more than officials reported for the whole of Turkey during that time. While not all those deaths are necessarily directly attributable to the coronavirus, the numbers indicate a striking jump in fatalities that has coincided with the onset of the outbreak, a preliminary indicator that is being used by researchers to cut through the fog of the pandemic and assess its full toll in real time. Even by the official count, confirmed cases in Turkey rose to more than 90,000 by Monday, lifting Turkey above China to become the seventh most affected country in the world. Deaths have reached 2,140. Bloomberg [4/20/2020 2:31 AM, Kerim Karakaya, 6400K, Neutral] reports that Turkey said it will keep working with the U.S. to parry the coronavirus's danger

to their economies, as the central bank in Ankara seeks to exchange currencies with peers. In a phone call, Erdogan and U.S. President Donald Trump "agreed to maintain close cooperation against the threat from the coronavirus pandemic on public health and our economies," Erdogan's office said in a statement late Sunday, without elaborating. In a March 31 call with Trump, Erdogan suggested that the U.S. Federal Reserve include Turkey's monetary authority in its currency-swap arrangements with other central banks. Ankara also asked to be included in other developed nations' swap lines, people familiar with the efforts said earlier this month, and on Sunday, central bank Governor Murat Uysal confirmed that Turkey is holding such talks.

[United Kingdom] Tech rivals urge U.K. to find 5G alternative to Huawei

Axios [4/20/2020 9:43 AM, Ina Fried, Neutral] reports that a group of tech firms are urging the U.K. to find alternatives to using Huawei gear in 5G networks. The approach they propose has also been pursued by some in the White House, though many have cast doubt on its viability, especially in the short term. A letter, addressed to House of Commons Defense Committee chair Tobias Ellwood, calls on Britain to scrap its current plan, which would allow "high-risk" vendors like Huawei to build up to 35% of its 5G network, as long as they don't supply gear for the network core. The letter is signed by nine less well-known tech companies who have been pursuing what's known as "ORAN," an alternative to traditional radio access network gear using standard servers and open source software. The best-known company is Japan's NEC, along with Airspan, Mavenir, Parallel Wireless, Microelectronics Technology, Super Micro Computer, AltioStar, GigaTera Communications and World Wide Technology.

[China] GOP lawmakers ask Barr, Pompeo to bring case against China to the International Court of Justice

FOX News [4/20/2020 2:00 PM, Andrew O'Reilly, Neutral] reports that Indiana GOP Rep. Jim Banks has sent a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Attorney General William Barr urging them to bring a case against China to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for the country's actions during the coronavirus pandemic. The letter, obtained by Fox News on Monday, was co-signed by 22 other lawmakers in the lower house of Congress. It claims that China has violated the 2005 International Health Regulations by suppressing information about the COVID-19 outbreak in the city of Wuhan earlier this year and underreporting the number of infections and deaths caused by the contagion. "The Chinese state made intentional false claims to its own people and the world about the nature of the virus," Banks wrote in his letter. "China rejected repeated offers from the [World Health Organization] and [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] in late January and early February to study the new disease without explanation." Banks added: "If China fails to submit itself to a fair trial in the International Court of Justice, the Charter of the United Nations gives guidance to injured parties: Articles 49-51 explain how states could suspend their obligations to China as means to induce Beijing to fulfill its responsibility for the calamitous damages inflicted on the world." China in recent weeks has come under intense scrutiny for its handling of the virus' outbreak and how it allowed it to spread worldwide. "We know that there is the Wuhan Institute of Virology just a handful of miles away from where the wet market was," Pompeo said. U.S. officials say the American Embassy in Beijing flagged concerns about potential safety issues at the lab in Wuhan in 2018, but stressed there's no evidence the virus originated there nearly two years later.

[China] U.S. calls on Beijing to grant freedom of movement to Chinese rights lawyer

Reuters [4/20/2020 9:41 AM, Humeyra Pamuk, Neutral] reports that the United States on Monday called on China to allow freedom of movement to prominent rights lawyer Wang Quanzhang, whom it said has been released after five years of unjust detention, the U.S. State Department said in a statement. "We remain very concerned about reports of his declining physical and mental health, and of his mistreatment in prison," the State Department said, adding that it continued to call on Beijing for the release of "all those unjustly detained," saying Washington remained concerned by China's "weak rule of law, arbitrary detentions and torture in custody." A Chinese court in January 2019 had imprisoned the prominent rights lawyer for 4-1/2 years for subversion of state power, after he was tried a month before that in a hearing that rights groups had called a sham. Wang, who had taken on cases deemed sensitive by Chinese authorities, such as accusations of police torture, had gone missing in August 2015 amid a sweeping crackdown on rights activists and lawyers. Tensions between Washington and Beijing have escalated over the past month over the coronavirus outbreak, which originated in China late last year and since then has infected more than 2.3 million people across the globe. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has repeatedly accused China of attempting to cover up the spread of the outbreak in its early days and failing to share accurate data about the scale of the cases.

[China] Wuhan Lab Denies Any Link to First Coronavirus Outbreak

Bloomberg [4/20/2020 6:10 AM, Staff, 6400K, Neutral] reports that a top Wuhan laboratory official has denied any role in spreading the new coronavirus, in the most high profile response from a facility at the center of months of speculation about how the previously unknown animal disease made the leap to humans. Yuan Zhiming, director of the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory, hit back at those promoting theories that the virus had escaped from the facility and caused the outbreak in the central Chinese city. "There is absolutely no way that the virus originated from our institute," Yuan said in an interview Saturday with the state-run China Global Television Network. Yuan rejected theories that the yet-to-be identified "Patient Zero" for Covid-19 had contact with the institute, saying none of its employees, retirees or student researchers were known to be infected. He said U.S. Senator Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican, and Washington Post journalists were among those "deliberately leading people" to mistrust the facility and its "P4" top-level-security pathogen lab.

[China] China Raises Easing Coronavirus Border Controls With Other Countries

The Wall Street Journal [4/20/2020 11:58 AM, Chun Han Wong, Neutral] reports that China has approached a number of countries to discuss the possibility of easing border controls to allow some business travel to resume, part of broader efforts to restart economic activity stalled by the coronavirus pandemic. With China signaling initial success in containing its domestic contagion, its officials have in recent weeks proposed efforts to facilitate essential travel with foreign counterparts from more than a dozen countries across the Asia-Pacific region, diplomats familiar with the matter said. Chinese officials have raised the idea – in formal and informal settings – with counterparts from Japan, South Korea and Southeast Asia, among other governments, the diplomats said. South Korea and Singapore have formally agreed to discuss ways to facilitate essential travel with China, according to government statements. Beijing has also reached out to some European countries about allowing some travel necessary for sustaining supply chains, some diplomats said. The identity of those countries couldn't be confirmed.

[Hong Kong] Under cover of coronavirus pandemic, Hong Kong arrests pro-democracy protest leaders

CBS News [4/20/2020 11:50 AM, Ramy Inocencio, Neutral] reports that with much of the world focused on battling the coronavirus pandemic, Hong Kong police over the weekend arrested 15 of the city's highest-profile political, legal and media opposition figures linked to the 2019 pro-democracy protests. The surprise crackdown included 81-year-old lawyer Martin Lee, dubbed the "father" of Hong Kong democracy; media tycoon and long-time critic of China's Communist party Jimmy Lai; and leading social activist and former legislator Lee Cheuk-yan. Police allege the 15 coordinated and joined three unapproved protests: the first on August 18 in which organizers estimated 1.7 million attended, the second on the October 1 anniversary of the founding of modern-day China and the third on October 20. A Hong Kong government spokesperson said their cases would be handled in a "fair, just and impartial manner." Critics are accusing authorities of intimidation. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the arrests "inconsistent with commitments made under the Sino-British joint declaration that include transparency (and) the rule of law."

[Hong Kong] China says condemns some western politicians' interference in Hong Kong affairs

Reuters [4/20/2020 3:49 AM, Gabriel Crossley, 5304K, Neutral] reports that China's foreign ministry said on Monday it condemns certain western politicians' interference in China's internal affairs, responding to criticism by foreign governments of the arrests of 15 Hong Kong democracy activists. Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters during a daily briefing that Hong Kong is a society ruled by rule of law and said that the relevant parties must respect this.

[Afghanistan] Afghan Officials: Taliban Attacks on Checkpoints Kill 29

The AP [4/20/2020 6:15 AM, Rahim Faiez, Negative] reports that a wave of Taliban attacks on checkpoints across Afghanistan has killed 29 members of the security forces, officials said Monday. In northern Takhar province, 19 security personnel were killed in a battle Sunday night in the district of Khwaja Ghor, according to Jawad Hajri, spokesman for the provincial governor. The Taliban fled the scene after reinforcement arrived, Hajri added. Meanwhile, in northern Balkh province, a Taliban attack on Sunday morning in the Sholgara district killed seven, according to Adil Shah Adil, spokesman for the provincial police chief. A child was caught in the crossfire and wounded during the attack, which also killed five Taliban, he added. And in western Badghis province, the Taliban struck an army checkpoint early on Sunday morning, killing three soldiers and wounding 10, said Tahsel Haideri, spokesman for the provincial police chief. The Taliban, who have not claimed responsibility for the attacks, and President Ashraf Ghani's government in Kabul are in the process of exchanging prisoners as part of a peace deal signed by the U.S. and the Taliban at the end of February in Doha, Qatar.

[Afghanistan] More than a dozen staff members in Afghanistan's presidential palace test positive for coronavirus

The Washington Post [4/20/2020 4:19 PM, Sharif Hassan and Susannah George, Negative] reports that more than a dozen staff members at the Afghan presidential palace have tested positive for coronavirus, and the country's 70-year-old president, Ashraf Ghani, has mostly isolated himself, according to two Afghan officials. Ghani remains in good health, has tested

negative for the virus and continues to run the country by conducting most meetings with video teleconferencing, one official said. Both officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the press. The outbreak at the heart of Afghan political power comes as transmission of the virus is escalating in the country. Testing in Afghanistan remains low, but health officials say they expect to see a spike in confirmed cases in the next two weeks. Following the coronavirus outbreak, the United Nations called for a humanitarian cease-fire in Afghanistan to facilitate the delivery of medical aid. The Taliban said it is willing to cease attacks if there are large outbreaks in territory it controls, but violence in Afghanistan has spiked in recent weeks as the start of talks between the Taliban and the government are repeatedly delayed.

[India] India reports biggest one-day virus spike as lockdown eased

The AP [4/20/2020 3:30 AM, Emily Schmall, Negative] reports that India recorded its biggest single-day spike in coronavirus cases on Monday as the government eased one of the world's strictest lockdowns to allow some manufacturing and agricultural activity to resume. An additional 1,553 cases were reported over 24 hours, raising the national total past 17,000. At least 543 people have died from COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the virus, and epidemiologists forecast the peak may not be reached before June. The shelter-in-place orders imposed in India on March 24 halted all but essential services, sparking an exodus of migrant workers and people who survive on daily wages out of India's cities and toward villages in rural areas. Authorities picked up travelers in a fleet of buses and quarantined many of them in empty schools and other public buildings for 14 days. Starting Monday, limited industry and farming were allowed to resume where employers could meet social distancing and hygiene norms, and migrant workers were allowed to travel within states to factories, farms and other work sites.

[Canada] Trudeau promises gun control legislation after deadliest shooting in Canadian history

The Washington Post [4/20/2020 4:20 PM, Amanda Coletta, Neutral] reports that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday his government would move ahead on the gun control legislation he promised during last year's election campaign after the deadliest shooting in his country's history, though it was not clear how soon he would do so. "I can say that we were on the verge of introducing legislation to ban assault-style weapons across this country," he told reporters. "It was interrupted when the pandemic caused Parliament to be suspended, but we have every intention of moving forward on that measure, and potentially other measures, when Parliament returns." Authorities say a single gunman shot and killed at least 18 people in rural Nova Scotia during a rampage Saturday and Sunday before he himself died. On Monday, a coalition of gun control groups implored Public Safety Minister Bill Blair to ban the new sale of military-style assault weapons. Authorities have not said what firearms suspect Gabriel Wortman used in the shootings, or how he obtained them. Blair said he intended to introduce gun control legislation "as quickly as possible."

[Burkina Faso] Rights group accuses Burkina security forces of killing 31 unarmed detainees

Reuters [4/20/2020 2:41 PM, Henry Wilkins, Negative] reports that international advocacy group Human Rights Watch (HRW) said on Monday that it believed security forces in

Burkina Faso had summarily executed 31 unarmed detainees earlier this month during operations against Islamist militants. The bullet-riddled bodies of the men from the Fulani ethnic group were discovered in the northern town of Djibo on April 9, shortly after they had been arrested by security forces and taken away in a convoy, 17 witnesses and people with knowledge of the situation told HRW. The defence ministry said in a statement that the minister had ordered an investigation on April 10 and that perpetrators would be sanctioned if the allegations proved to be true. The government is struggling to contain jihadist groups in northern Burkina Faso, who have stoked ethnic conflict by closely associating themselves with Fulani herders. As a result, Fulani civilians have borne the brunt of reprisals by soldiers and vigilantes, rights groups say. Since 2017, armed Islamist groups, some with ties to al Qaeda and Islamic State, have killed more than 300 civilians in Burkina Faso, while the government has killed several hundred men for their alleged support of these groups, according to HRW. Burkinabe officials have promised to investigate similar allegations in the past but rights group say the government has not done enough to hold perpetrators accountable.

[South Africa] South Africa Gangs Call Truce as Lockdown Stifles Drug Trade

Bloomberg [4/20/2020 2:49 AM, Loni Prinsloo and Pauline Bax, 6400K, Neutral] reports that gangs in South Africa, which has one of the world's highest homicide rates, have agreed to a cease-fire during a nationwide lockdown that's caused a slump in narcotics supply and demand – with an unprecedented drop in murders as a result. A network of gang leaders across the country's nine provinces, known as the Council, have made funds available to members of the groups until June so they can feed their families during the shutdown, which aims to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, said Welcome Witbooi, a former gang member who mediates between gangs, local communities and the police in the Western Cape province. "When our government announced the lockdown regulations, everyone started panicking about health but also about business prospects," Witbooi said in an interview. "We had a meeting with the Council and with them we decided to put out a national call to all gangs to cease fire." Some gangs are even trying to "rebuild the relationship with the community" and are handing out food parcels to residents, he said.

{End of Report}

Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient: Stilwell, David R. (b)(6)
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) INDOPACOM (USA) (b)(6)
(b)(6) OSD OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6)
(b)(6) DIA DAO (USA) (b)(6) (b)(6)
To: Tobin, Elizabeth (b)(6)
(b)(6)
OSD Pentagon OUSD Policy List ALL DASD China (b)(6)
(b)(6)
CC: (b)(6) OSD OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6)
(b)(6) USINDOPACOM JO
Subject: RE: Shifting CPC rhetoric on COVID-19
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 2020 17:24:02 +0000

(b)(6) Thanks for keeping us in the loop. See attached for some add'l insights.

V/R

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) OSD OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2020 7:15 AM
To: Kanapathy, Ivan J (b)(6) Tobin, Elizabeth
(b)(6) (b)(6) OSD Pentagon OUSD Policy List ALL DASD China
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) OSD OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: Shifting CPC rhetoric on COVID-19

BLUF: CPC adopting a new approach to shaping wrt COVID-19

1. CPC rhetoric continues to concentrate on external mechanisms to wage a whole-of-nation "People's War"—a "siege war"—against the virus, to include amplifying its external efforts. In light of the recent elevation of the virus war to one of now five CPC "tests" (or trials), "war" is not hyperbole in the leadership's view. And, in war, nations' options sets for response expand greatly.
2. In this context, (b)(5)
(b)(5)
3. Further, after Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang's daily news briefing on February 19 that associated the revocation of the press credentials of three WSJ correspondents to "racist articles," the CPC is actively promoting a media/social media campaign to advocate overseas Chinese to support the February 7 online petition to the White House. SEE: Attached.
4. A key indicator of this effort includes Xi's statements (and follow-up stories) during a February 14 meeting of the Central Committee for Deepening Overall Reform (the CPC's overall Governance system) that "stressed the need to strengthen areas of weakness and close the loopholes exposed by the current epidemic," according to a report by Xinhua, "highlighted

speeding up establishing a law on biosecurity" and underscored that "biosecurity should be included in the system of national security."

- a. In itself, adding another security strategy to the existing 11 that compose China's national security strategy is important, but leaves open an interpretation of something else.
 - b. Xi's remarks on biosecurity may suggest a problem with laboratory safety in the PRC or even external causes, which softens the CPC narrative that COVID-19 conceived naturally from in Wuhan.
 - c. This remark has enabled a so-called "fringe theory" that COVID-19 had emerged from a laboratory, specifically the P4 biosafety lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology or even from the United States.
5. On February 15, the CPC journal Qiushi published Xi's speech that was delivered to the Politburo on February 3, where Xi said that he "made a request for the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus epidemic situation" during a meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee on January 7, and proceeded to list what else he had done to deal with the epidemic.
- a. Xi's Qiushi speech drew the attention because he essentially admitted to knowing about the virus outbreak at least nearly two weeks before the central government acknowledged the epidemic on January 20. That it is rare for Qiushi to publish a Xi speech just two weeks after he had delivered it, only underscores the seriousness to the CPC and "war" footing.

With growing interest in the origins of the virus, as well as increasing skepticism about the CPC's COVID-19 "natural" origins narrative, why did Xi raise biosecurity at this point and, more importantly, is the CPC propaganda machine fueling a controversial "man-made bioweapon" or "laboratory accident" theory...especially one attributed to the United States?

RECOMMENDATION:

(b)(5)

"US Youtuber questions CDC transparency in COVID-19 numbers, citing leaked message" (People's Daily Online) 16:29, February 24, 2020

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is hiding information (on the novel coronavirus outbreak) from the American public to prevent panic," said Paul Cottrell in a YouTube video he recently recorded.

Cottrell, a youtuber with about 27,000 subscribers, claimed that he received a text message he said was exchanged between a CDC employee and a listener to his channel who is close to the source from the CDC.

He then went on to read out the text message in which the alleged person from the CDC said it's worse than what is being said on social media and national news. "There have already been over 1,000 cases in the US, although on the news, they are just keeping things quiet for now and reporting far less to the public," Cottrell reads in his video quoting the message.

According to the CDC official webpage, the number of total confirmed coronavirus cases in the US was 35 as of February 21.

In the message Cottrell reads, the alleged source from the CDC also advised wearing masks when traveling even short distances as "CDC suspects cases in over 32 states at this point".

"This is much bigger than I thought," Cottrell then commented in the video: "I'm revealing this because our safety is at risk here."

Cottrell further adds that he has "a data point with a caller from Buffalo, New York, stating that there are six confirmed COVID-19 cases that the CDC has not released to the public."

"By them (CDC) not being transparent, they are going to make things worse," Cottrell said.

A comment below the video by a netizen named John Maldonado said: "CDC doesn't want mass panic. It's simple. All we can do is prepare and stockpile supplies."

Admitting that he cannot verify the message, Cottrell said: "We have to, in the fog of war, sometimes shoot first and then aim later."

Paul Cottrell's LinkedIn info shows that he's currently studying biology for a master's degree at Harvard University, and that he obtained a Ph.D in finance at Walden University and finished his Pre-Medical studies at Fordham University. He updates his YouTube videos on a daily basis covering topics on economics, medicine and current events.

Sender: (b)(6) INDOPACOM (USA) (b)(6)
(b)(6) OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6)
Kanapathy, Ivan J (b)(6)
Tobin, Elizabeth (b)(6)
Recipient: FritzJD (b)(6);
OSD Pentagon OUSD Policy List ALL DASD China (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) OSD OUSD POLICY (USA) (b)(6)
(b)(6) USINDOPACOM JO (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)
Date: Sat, 14 Jan 2017 06:41:44 -0500

OK. We just returned to Beijing. I will raise this at the Tuesday CT if it has not already been discussed. Thanks.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Monday, January 9, 2017 08:24
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Hi (b)(6)

I don't believe this raises to the level of something that the DCM needs a separate brief on. I would just raise it today at Country Team as an FYI and that should cover it.

(b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Saturday, January 07, 2017 9:35 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Fw: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Can we bring this to the attention of the DCM for his awareness and to ascertain if he has any concerns that need to be addressed? (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Sent: Saturday, January 7, 2017 08:25
To: (b)(6) (GH/AA)
Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DE)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Yes. I am referring this to the Chargé but do not expect this to be a problem, quite the contrary since other embassy sections and agencies are conversant with the initiative and seem to agree that we should continue down this road until or unless directed not to.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 6, 2017 10:32
To: Toder, Miles F (Beijing)
Subject: Fwd: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

I read today that all political ambassadors are being told to stand down. Is there someone on Embassy side that you can consult with about this visit and timing ?

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6)
Date: January 6, 2017 at 10:09:21 AM EST
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (USAID) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (b)(6) (PPL/DE)"
(b)(6) (b)(6) (GH/AA) (b)(6) @usaid.gov (b)(6)
(GH/PRH/RTU:AAAS) (b)(6) (b)(6) (GH/SDI)"
(b)(6)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

(b)(6) thanks. Regarding your points:

Chinese New Years - George Gao is navigating the timing to maximize peoples availability so we expect no conflict

Hotels - we are working through UC Davis/EcoHealth who are making all the reservations. no assistance from Embassy is needed

Travel Clearance - all eCC's and other travel requests will be submitted by today

That said, to move forward with airline reservations (which are needed before the issuance of visas for many of our travelers) - can we assume that there will be no objection from the Embassy for this trip?

thanks again.

(b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 8:33 PM, (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) wrote:
Hi (b)(6)

Thanks for the information. There are some points concerning logistic part of the travel:

Chinese Lunar New Year time

I'd like to inform you about the Chinese holiday arrangements for the lunar year. The Chinese will have days off on Jan. 27-Feb. 2. In order to make a week long holiday, they work on Jan. 22 and Feb. 4. But Embassy Beijing never works on weekends so US Embassy holiday time is from Jan. 27-31. I think most of the colleagues of Embassy Beijing health team (ESTH, HHS, USCDC, NIH, FDA, MED, NSF?, ECON) would have been back to office that time.

eCC

Another issue is about the eCC. According to RSO, visitors (direct hire and contractors) traveling to posts in support of USAID programs must request and obtain country clearance. Pls. select USAID/Beijing for approval. In this case, just a few should submit the eCC to us?

Hotel

Pls. work with China CDC for hotel arrangement since they are hosting the Global Virome Project Working Group meeting to take place February 5-7, 2017. If not, we'd like to offer a hand to work with Embassy VIP unit to book a hotel close to the Embassy compound with corporate rate within per diem.

Thank you very much!

(b)(6)

USAID/Beijing

US Embassy Beijing

Tel: (b)(6) E-mail: (b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)>

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)]

Sent: Friday, January 06, 2017 3:25 AM

To: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)

Cc: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (Beijing);

(b)(6) (USAID) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)

(PPL/DE) (b)(6) (GH/AA) (b)(6) (GH/PRH/RTU:AAAS) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (GH/SDI) (b)(6) (Beijing)

Subject: Re: Fw: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

(b)(6) we just heard from George Gao. Following the closure of the GVP meeting on the morning of the 7th he is now organizing a workshop for the afternoon - inviting China Academy of Science, technical Ministries, the Beijing Genome Institute etc to discuss GVP. There will not be a press conference. He is interested in inviting interested parties from the Embassy. Can you suggest who would be interested/appropriate?

thanks

(b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 11:29 AM, (b)(6)

(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:

(b)(6) to offer a further response to your questions:

Timing: the timing for the meeting was set by George Gao, who with the China CDC is hosting this meeting. He has advised that the timing works well given the holiday season and there will be full Chinese engagement

USAID Project (or not): while USAID is a key player in the Global Virome Project it is NOT an USAID project. GVP evolved out of a "proof of concept" work that USAID has been investing in over the past decade (our Predict Project) which allowed us for the first time to begin thinking about identifying and characterizing every future viral threat NOW before it emerges. GVP is the consequence of that thinking. It's an evolving venture that has received a lot of enthusiastic support. USAID at this point is supporting the translation of the "proof of concept" into a larger global venture. In August we were able to hold a meeting of key stakeholders at the Rockefeller retreat in Bellagio, Italy. George Gao was one of the participants. He is now one of the key champions for GVP - hence his interest in China hosting the first post-Bellagio meeting of the GVP Steering Committee. He is also keen to see China play a leadership role by example in launching a China Virome Project that will set the stage for a global exercise in country-level virome projects all knitted together against a shared global framework. As GVP evolves USAID will look to be a partner, much as we are with the Global Fund and other international efforts.

UC Davis is providing the logistics support for the participants - using resources we've provided. You will note the participant list is very much an impressive cross-section of global health leaders

I hope this helps

I would be more than interested in briefing the Embassy should you be interested.

(b)(6)

On Wed, Jan 4, 2017 at 9:27 PM, (b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:

Good morning (b)(6)

(b)(6) has addressed several of the issues you raise. I would only add that my understanding is that China Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is hosting the meeting, with the support of the GVP secretariat at UC Davis. As referenced below, CDCD Deputy Director George Gao and Virology lead Yue Long Shu are serving as points of contact.

While the GVP secretariat is USAID funded, it serves in a global coordination role for an envisioned network of decentralized centers that will undertake the surveillance and viral discovery efforts. More on the vision and architecture for GVP is here<<http://www.globalviromeproject.org/about/>>.

(b)(6) and team are copied here for further details as necessary.

Best,

(b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 9:00 AM, (b)(6)

(b)(6) <[\(b\)\(6\)](mailto:(b)(6))> wrote:

Happy New Year (b)(6) thanks for flagging this.

Your insights are spot-on, this sort of activity not only typifies the desired type of cooperation but also provides a much better image for the Chinese in taking responsibility to map pathogens that could impact on health security in regional and global terms.

We should defer to you on timing, I'll check with (b)(6) team if they checked whether their Chinese counterparts have agreed to be available to meet that week, which I believe is sandwiched between two major holiday festivals.

I understand that the collaboration is with the China CDC, and their leadership (Dr George Gao) and their relevant institutions as well as the Beijing Genomics Institute have been looking forward to engaging with the Global Virome Project. Pulling back may convey an impression that we are withdrawing on our commitments due to political winds. Perhaps you can get a read from your ESTH counterparts. It would be disappointing if we cannot move ahead on getting the scientific community from the two countries to engage closer on these issues.

In any case, the implementing partner is UC Davis, which is a leading force on genetic research rather than the usual beltway bandits, and we can assure that USAID is bringing credible expertise to the activity. (b)(6) would be able to give a more accurate picture but I presume that once the Global Virome Project is launched, USAID experts would be directly interacting with the Chinese government on strategy and policy direction of the program. One key concern in this context would be how the press conference would be staged.

I've CCed (b)(6) to confer with (b)(6) and we'll get back to you asap on your concerns.

Warm regards to you all for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2017,

(b)(6)

(b)(6) Office of the Assistant Administrator
Bureau for Global Health
US Agency for International Development

2100 Crystal Drive, Arlington VA 22202

Tel: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>

Email: (b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)>

On Wed, Jan 4, 2017 at 7:42 PM, (b)(6)

(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:

(b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 5, 2017 at 6:41 AM (b)(6) (Beijing)

(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:

This is a very interesting initiative as it looks forward to get ahead of the next pandemic spread from animals to people and represents the sort of global cooperation needed to effectively use existing resources and share information and depends on a leading role for the US and China. If we believe that the best chance to continue US China development cooperation rests on a global health focus then this is exactly the sort of initiative we should embrace and support.

I have two concerns. One is that the work has been projectized and has an implementing partner I assume managed by AID. While this fits our Agency approach to implementing development activities it may create challenges for our government to government approach to cooperation here in China but nothing insurmountable.

My second concern is one of timing. The event in Beijing happens just after our new Administration takes office, a time of confusion, uncertainty and related challenges. The other timing question is how the Chinese New Year holiday which occurs at the of January may impact participation as well as logistics. Thoughts?

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)>

Sent: Wednesday, January 4, 2017 09:47

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

Cc: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN); (b)(6) (b)(6) (GH/HIDN); (b)(6) (GH/PRH/RTU:AAAS); (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH); (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Good Morning (b)(6) and (b)(6)

In September 2016, (b)(6) met with you to briefly introduce the Global Virome Project. The proposed travel below is regarding the progression of the Global Virome Project. This meeting is USG funded. Our division (Emerging Threats Division) has allocated funds to UC Davis to be the secretariat for GVP.

The following travel approval requests has come in from PREDICT. We appreciate your concurrence and welcome any questions you may have.

1. UC Davis would like to request approval for the individuals listed below to travel from their respective departure locations (listed below) to Beijing, China from February 4-8, 2017 for a Global Virome Project Working Group meeting to take place February 5-7, 2017.

Trip purpose: All travelers are invited participants of the Global Virome Project. The meeting will provide an opportunity for working groups to meet and collaborate on project strategies development. There will also be a press event to announce the China National Virome Project.

Traveler Name

Departure Location

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Boston, Massachusetts

(b)(6)

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

(b)(6)

Lagos, Nigeria

(b)(6)

New Delhi, India

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

(b)(6)

Seattle, Washington

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Jacksonville, Florida

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Geneva, Switzerland

(b)(6)

Hong Kong

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

*Business class airfare required (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Telephone: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> Cell: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>
(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>>

Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2016 at 10:41 PM

Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
to:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>>

Cc: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)"
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>>, (b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov>>> (b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)
 @usaid.gov>>> (b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:cc
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov>>> (b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)
 (b)(6)@usaid.gov>>>

Hi All,

This is USAID funded? If so, you'll have to reach out to the USAID rep in country. (b)(6)

(<mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov>>

(b)(6)@state.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov>) and USAID staff (b)(6)@state.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@state.gov>>). We have not discussed GVP with (b)(6) so I'm not sure if he's aware of this, nor of the plans for this event and size of the delegation. He'll advise further how to handle this with Emb Beijing.

Don't hesitate to let us know how we can be of assistance.

Best,

(b)(6)

On Thu, Dec 22, 2016 at 1:10 AM, (b)(6)

(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>> wrote:

Hello team RDMA,

the following travel approval requests has come in from PREDICT. We appreciate your concurrence and welcome any questions you may have.

1. UC Davis would like to request approval for the individuals listed below to travel from their respective departure locations (listed below) to Beijing, China from February 4-8, 2017 for a Global Virome Project Working Group meeting to take place February 5-7, 2017.

Trip purpose: All travelers are invited participants of the Global Virome Project. The meeting will provide an opportunity for working groups to meet and collaborate on project strategies development. There will also be a press event to announce the China National Virome Project.

Traveler Name

Departure Location

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

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New York, New York

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New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

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Washington, DC

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Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Boston, Massachusetts

(b)(6)

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

(b)(6)

Lagos, Nigeria

(b)(6)

New Delhi, India

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

(b)(6)

Seattle, Washington

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6) (if requested and appropriate)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Jacksonville, Florida

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Geneva, Switzerland

(b)(6)

Hong Kong

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

*Business class airfare required (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Telephone: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> <tel:(b)(6)> Cell: (b)(6)
(b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> <tel:(b)(6)>
(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
(b)(6) @usaid.gov>>>

Date: Wed, Dec 21, 2016 at 1:01 PM

Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

To: (b)(6)
(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> <mailto:(b)(6)> <mailto:(b)(6)>
o: (b)(6) >>>

Cc: (b)(6)
(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>> (b)(6)
(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>
to: (b)(6) @usaid.gov>>>, (b)(6)
(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> <mailto:(b)(6)> <mailto:(b)(6)>
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 o:(h)(6)>>, (b)(6)
 (b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(b)(6) @usaid.gov> <mailto:(b)(6) @usaid.gov <mailto:(h)(6)
 (b)(6) @usaid.gov>>>

All approved except (b)(6) (who is a USG employee) subject to mission concurrence.

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division/Office of Infectious Diseases/Bureau for Global Health

U.S. Agency for International Development

Mobile phone: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)

Email:

(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov><mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)@usaid.gov>>

On Dec 21, 2016, at 5:56 PM, (b)(6)

(b)(6)mailto:(b)(6)<mailto:(b)(6)>mailto:
o:(b)(6)>> wrote:

Please find below a group international travel request for your review and approval. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thanks!!

1. UC Davis would like to request approval for the individuals listed below to travel from their respective departure locations (listed below) to Beijing, China from February 4-8, 2017 for a Global Virome Project Working Group meeting to take place February 5-7, 2017.

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Traveler Name

Departure Location

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

Sacramento, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

San Francisco, California

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

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New York, New York

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New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

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Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Boston, Massachusetts

(b)(6)

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

(b)(6)

Lagos, Nigeria

(b)(6)

New Delhi, India

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

(b)(6)

Seattle, Washington

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

New York, New York

(b)(6)

Newark, New Jersey

(b)(6) (if requested and appropriate)

Washington, DC

(b)(6)

Jacksonville, Florida

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Bangkok, Thailand

(b)(6)

Geneva, Switzerland

(b)(6)

Hong Kong

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Paris, France

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

(b)(6)

Rome, Italy

*Business class airfare required (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Bureau for Global Health
U.S. Agency for International Development

Office: (b)(6) tel: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6) <tel: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Bureau for Global Health
U.S. Agency for International Development

Office: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

Official - ~~SBU~~

UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(6)

Bureau for Global Health
U.S. Agency for International Development

Office: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

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

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

From: "Stilwell, David R"
To: (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown
Date: Thu, 30 Apr 2020 15:26:00 +0000

Just talked to S about issues related to this. He's looking forward to the outcomes of the project. There will be follow-on tasks that will require significant IA coordination.

Worth a secure discussion later today; maybe 1730? I have to leave by 1800 (survival—Ft Myer commissary run).

Best

Dave

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 10:01 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Hi (b)(6)

I wanted to flag this journal article I ran across the other day, (b)(5)
(b)(5)

This paper was submitted by Yuan Zhiming, the Wuhan Institute of Virology's Communist Party chief and Vice Director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and was published in the Journal of Biosafety and Biosecurity journal on September 11, 2019

Current status and future challenges of high-level biosafety laboratories in China



Current status and future challenges of high-level biosafety

laboratorie...

High-level biosafety laboratories are safe and secure platforms which integrate reliable containment, well-train...

Relevant Points:**3.2. Inadequate biosafety management systems**

Since the promulgation and implementation of "Regulations on Biosafety Management of Pathogenic Microorganism Laboratories," issued by State Council in 2004, a series of other regulations have been formulated by different ministries and local governments. These have considered the examination and approval of laboratory construction and accreditation, authorization of research activities, as well as pathogen, waste, and laboratory animal management regulations. Although these regulations wholesomely cover all aspects of construction, management, and eventual operation of BSLs, their enforcement still needs to be strengthened. Furthermore, due to different investment sources, affiliations, and management systems, the implementation of these laboratories faces difficulties converging objectives and cooperation workflows. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3.3. Insufficient resources for efficient laboratory operation

Depending on the size and location, building a modern BSL costs millions of US dollars, and in China the funds for construction are typically raised by the state, local governments, upstream authorities, and institutions. Additionally, 5–10% of construction costs are needed for annual operation. However, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3.4. Deficiency of professional capacity

In the process of BSL construction, operation, and management, highly skilled professional teams from diverse disciplines such as architectural science, materials science, aerodynamics, automatic controlling, environmental science, microbiology, botany, biosafety, and systems engineering are required. In addition, biosafety measures and practices are vital in daily laboratory operations hence a highly qualified, motivated, and skilled biosafety supervisor is needed not only for overseeing solid containment but also in laboratory risk management. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:50 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(5)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:47:14 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Thanks, (b)(6) This is very helpful.

The former deputy director of the PRC CDC is the wife of a prominent Chinese dissident. Both are living in NYC. She knows all about (b)(5)

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:37 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Actually there is a CDC press release from 2004:

<https://www.cdc.gov/sars/media/2004-05-19.html>

NOTICE

This website is archived for historical purposes and is no longer being maintained or updated.

During April 22-29, the Chinese Ministry of Health (MOH) reported a total of nine cases of SARS in China ; seven of the patients were from Beijing , and two were from Anhui Province , located in east-central China . One of the patients died.

Two of the nine patients were graduate students who worked at the China 's National Institute of Virology Laboratory (NIVL) in Beijing , which is known to conduct research on SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) . The laboratory was closed on April 23, potentially exposed personnel are being monitored for signs of illness, and possible sources of infection for the two laboratory workers are being investigated.

Of the seven other SARS cases, two were directly linked to close personal contact with one of the graduate students who worked at NIVL; these two cases were in the graduate student's mother (who died) and in a nurse who provided care to the graduate student. The remaining five cases were linked to close contact with the nurse.

No further cases of SARS in China or anywhere else in the world have been reported since April 29. Chinese authorities have carried out active surveillance activities to identify other possible cases of SARS, including enhanced surveillance for any flu-like illness and pneumonia of unknown etiology. They also initiated measures to prevent the spread of SARS among travelers, including health screening of travelers at ports of exit/entry.

On May 18, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported on its websiteExternal that the outbreak in China appears to have been contained, but that biosafety concerns remain and further investigation is under way. WHO and Chinese health officials are still in the process of determining precisely what caused the outbreak.

CDC is in close communication with WHO and is working with its public health partners to reinforce the need for strict adherence to applicable biosafety precautions to reduce the risk of laboratory-related exposures to SARS-

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From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:30:12 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Happy to keep sending what I know. One thing I missed from this morning is that there was a 2004 leak of SARS from a BSL3 lab in China. (b)(5)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:17:58 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Thanks, Stilly, for sharing (b)(7)'s brilliant contributions to this project.

(b)(6) truly appreciate your input. Please do not hesitate to keep sending it. (b)(5)
(b)(5) Good stuff.
(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:10 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

(b)(6) wrote/resurrected the 2018 cables. (b)(7) foresaw this disaster long ago. . . To me this is the key point. (b)(5)
(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Cheers

Stilly

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:59 AM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Attached is the Nature article I referenced below.

Relevant Summary: The laboratory in Wuhan is on the cusp of being cleared to work with the world's most dangerous pathogens. The move is part of a plan to build between five and seven biosafety level-4 (BSL-4) labs across the Chinese mainland by 2025, and has generated much excitement, as well as some concerns. ***Some scientists outside China worry about pathogens escaping***, and the addition of a biological dimension to geopolitical tensions between China and other nations. But Chinese microbiologists are celebrating their entrance to the elite cadre empowered to wrestle with the world's greatest biological threats.

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

Sir,

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

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

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

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

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

Per our call I will get you my initial thoughts this morning (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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

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

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

(b)(5) Figured I'd start with you.

Some questions like:

1. Current CCP virology/pathogen/bio labs (civilian and military); where they are, when they opened; what they do; do we have any confidence in them?
2. Last time they were inspected by outside world;
3. How many did Americans help create?
4. Previous known lab shortcomings and failures.

Feel free to call. I understand you probably don't have all the data (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks

Dave

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

Sender: "Stilwell, David R"

Recipient:

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: FW: WIV Cable
Date: Tue, 7 Apr 2020 23:24:58 +0000

Thanks for letting me know.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 7:02:44 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FW: WIV Cable

Verdict.

--

(b)(6)
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

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

----- Forwarded message -----

From: (b)(6)
Date: April 7, 2020 at 6:45:59 PM EDT
Subject: FW: WIV Cable
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6), Keshap, Atul
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

FYSA.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2020 6:45 PM
To: (b)(6); Kenna, Lisa D (b)(6) (b)(6)
Ramnath, Steph (b)(6)
Cc: S_SpecialAssistants <S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov>; (b)(6)
Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: RE: WIV Cable

All,

S reviewed these cable and
declined to release them.

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

NOTE: Please
always
include the S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov distro to ensure your message is received.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:55 PM

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

Cc: S_SpecialAssistants (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L (b)(6); EAP-Press (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

ExecSec (b)(6)

Understood, will do. Thank you.

(b)(6)

Special Assistant
Office of the Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 9:16:21 PM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6); S_SpecialAssistants

<S_SpecialAssistants@state.gov>; (b)(6); Buangan, Richard L

(b)(6); EAP-Press (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

EAP to S via the line pls. Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 3, 2020, at 8:57 PM, (b)(6) wrote:

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 3, 2020, at 6:56 PM, (b)(6) wrote:

S Special Colleagues/(b)(6)

A/S Stilwell

(b)(5)

Could you please let us know if ExecSec (b)(6) would prefer the request come to S via a SPOX public affairs decision memo or via a traditional AM through the Line?

Thank you,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Special Assistant

Office of the Assistant Secretary

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 6:46 PM

To: (b)(6); EAP-P-Office-DL (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: WIV Cable

(b)(6) can someone on your team do a an action memo (b)(5)

(b)(5)

This might have to go through the Line as an AM instead of treating it like a public decision memo but defer to (b)(6) I can also ask my old team on S staff how it should be handled.

Richard L. Buangan

Deputy Assistant Secretary

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

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

Begin forwarded message:

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

Date: April 3, 2020 at 18:26:16 EDT

To: "Ortagus, Morgan D" <(b)(6)>

Cc: (b)(6) "Buangan, Richard L" (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: FW: WIV Cable

For the Rogin story. Actual cables attached.

Hopefully we can get them released and have (b)(6) sit down with Josh to discuss.

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

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:15 PM

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

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

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Here are the most relevant elements:

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) It is interesting that

WIV scientists are allowed to study the SARS-like coronaviruses isolated from bats while they are precluded from studying human-disease causing SARS coronavirus in their new BSL-4 lab until

permission for such work is granted by the NHFCP.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:14:18 PM

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

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

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Attached. They're also on an email from a few days ago with (b)(6) others.

--

(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6) (o)

(b)(6) (c)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On April 3, 2020 at 5:11:51 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6) wrote:

First one to get me a soft copy of (b)(6)'s Wuhan cables gets a Samoa Cookie.

drs

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

<18-WUHAN-38.eml.pdf>

<18-BEIJING-138.cml.pdf>

Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: "Keshap, Atul" (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Feith, David (b)(6)
(b)(6)
CC: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: FRaTG13 (shared in confidence)—

Date: Mon, 30 Nov 2020 14:56:16 +0000

Chinese state media continue their efforts to displace blame:

x]

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, November 29, 2020 5:58:17 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6) Feith, David
(b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
Subject: FRaTG13 (shared in confidence)—

(b)(6)

The attached note from (b)(6) seems important. I asked (b)(6) to respond specifically to (b)(6) who were among the early proponents that COVID 19, undoubtedly, was of natural zoonotic origin. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Deigin. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/bies.202000240>

Prospects&Overviews ThegeneticstructureofSARS-CoV-2doesnotruleouta laboratoryorigin

2of9 SEGRET0ANDDEIGIN adaptation to human cells. We here describe how the two main SARS-CoV-2features,(1)thepresenceofafurincleavagesitemissinginother ...

onlinelibrary.wiley.com

(b)(5)

Thanks.

(b)(6)

From: Steven Quay (b)(6)

Sent: Sunday, November 29, 2020 8:24 AM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Fw: RaTG13 (shared in confidence)

(b)(6)

Here is my response to (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Regards, Steve

On Sun, 29 Nov 2020 at 03:45, (b)(6) wrote:

Steve, Here are the same authors laying out why COV-19 had to be natural. Have you considered a response letter? David

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0820-9.pdf>

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Saturday, November 28, 2020 2:32 PM

To: Steven Quay (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Fw: RaTG13 (shared in confidence)

Below: Nature commentary pointing out the futility, waste, and opportunity costs associated projects pursued by Ecohealth, WIV, NIAID, et al, in the name of "predicting the next outbreak". Though they don't address the grave hazards, and BW dual use issues, involved with the gain of function work in WIV's prediction research, they laid out other important fundamental flaws with Ecohealth and WIV's approach. The authors go on to make the more compelling case for better bio surveillance instead. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05373-w>



COMMENT

07 JUNE 2018

Pandemics: spend on surveillance, not prediction

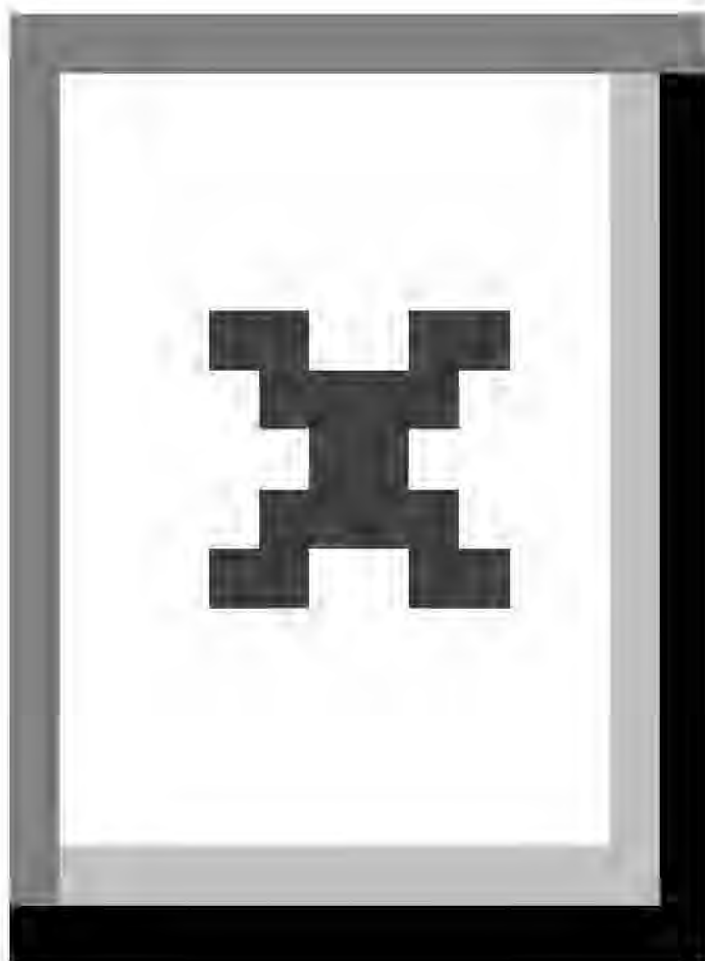
Trust is undermined when scientists make overblown promises about disease prevention, warn Edward C. Holmes, Andrew Rambaut and Kristian G. Andersen.

The resurgence of Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo this May is a stark reminder that no amount of DNA sequencing can tell us when or where the next virus outbreak will appear. More genome sequence data were obtained for the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic than for any other single disease outbreak. Still, health workers in Mbandaka, the country's northwestern provincial capital, are scrambling to contain a growing number of cases.

Over the past 15 years or so, outbreaks caused by viruses such as Ebola, SARS and Zika have cost governments billions of US dollars. Combined with a perception among scientists, health workers and citizens that responses to outbreaks have been inadequate, this has fuelled what seems like a compelling idea. Namely, that if researchers can identify the next pandemic virus before the first case appears, communities could drastically improve strategies for control, and even stop a virus from taking hold¹. Indeed, since 2009, the US Agency for International Development has spent US\$170 million on evaluating the “feasibility of preemptively mitigating pandemic threats”¹.

Various experts have flagged up problems with this approach (including the three of us)^{2,3}. Nonetheless, an ambitious biodiversity-based approach to outbreak prediction — the _____ — was announced in February this year, with its proponents soliciting \$1.2 billion in funding from around the world (see ‘High stakes’). They estimate

that other mammals and birds contain 1.67 million unknown viruses from the families of viruses that are most likely to jump to humans, and will use the funding to conduct a genomic survey of these unknown viruses, with the aim of predicting which might infect people¹.



Sources: NIH; Global Virome Project

Broad genomic surveys of animal viruses will almost certainly advance our understanding of virus diversity and evolution. **In our view, they will be of little practical value when it comes to understanding and mitigating the emergence of disease.**

We urge those working on infectious disease to focus funds and efforts on a much simpler and more cost-effective way to mitigate outbreaks — proactive, real-time surveillance of human populations.

The public has increasingly questioned the scientific credibility of researchers working on outbreaks. In the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic, for instance, the international response was repeatedly criticized for being too slow. And during the 2009 H1N1 influenza epidemic, people asked whether the severity of the virus had been overblown, and if the stockpiling of pharmaceuticals was even necessary⁵. Making promises about disease prevention and control that cannot be kept will only further undermine trust.

Forecasting fallacy

Supporters of outbreak prediction maintain that if biologists genetically characterize all of the viruses circulating in animal populations (especially in groups such as bats and rodents that have previously acted as reservoirs for emerging viruses), they can determine which ones are likely to emerge next, and ultimately prevent them from doing so. With enough data, coupled with artificial intelligence and machine learning, they argue, the process could be similar to predicting the weather⁶.

Reams of data are available to train models to predict the weather. By contrast, it is exceedingly rare for viruses to emerge and cause outbreaks. Around 250 human viruses have been described, and only a small subset of these have caused major epidemics this century.

Advocates of prediction also argue that it will be possible to anticipate how likely a virus is to emerge in people on the basis of its sequence, and by using knowledge of how it interacts with cells (obtained, for instance, by studying the virus in human cell cultures).

This is misguided. Determining which of more than 1.6 million animal viruses are capable of replicating in humans and transmitting between them would require many decades' worth of laboratory work in cell cultures and animals. Even if researchers

managed to link each virus genome sequence to substantial experimental data, all sorts of other factors determine whether a virus jumps species and emerges in a human population, such as the distribution and density of animal hosts. Influenza viruses have circulated in horses since the 1950s and in dogs since the early 2000s, for instance⁷. These viruses have not emerged in human populations, and perhaps never will — for unknown reasons.

In short, there aren't enough data on virus outbreaks for researchers to be able to accurately predict the next outbreak strain. Nor is there a good enough understanding of what drives viruses to jump hosts, making it difficult to construct predictive models.

Biodiversity-based prediction also ignores the fact that viruses are not fixed entities. New variants of RNA viruses appear every day. This speedy evolution means that surveys would need to be done continuously to be informative. The cost would dwarf the proposed \$1.2-billion budget for one-time sequencing.

Even if it were possible to identify which viruses are likely to emerge in humans, thousands of candidates could end up being identified, each with a low probability of causing an outbreak. What should be done in that case? Costs would skyrocket if vaccines and therapeutics were proposed for even a handful of these.

Screen and sequence

Currently, the most effective and realistic way to fight outbreaks is to monitor human populations in the countries and locations that are most vulnerable to infectious disease. This can be done by local clinicians, health workers in non-governmental organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF; also known as Doctors Without Borders), and global institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO).

We advocate the detailed screening of people who are exhibiting symptoms that cannot easily be diagnosed. Such tests should use the latest sequencing technologies to characterize all the pathogens that have infected an individual — the human 'infectome'⁸. To track previous infections, investigators should also assess each person's immune response, by analysing components of their blood using broad-scale serology⁹.

Emerging diseases are commonly associated with population expansions — when people encroach on habitats occupied by animals — as well as with environmental disturbances and climate change. Deforestation, for instance, can promote human interactions with animals that carry new threats, and can increase encounters with new vector species such as ticks and mosquitoes¹⁰. Animal die-offs, for example that of bar-headed geese (*Anser*

indicus) at Lake Qinghai in China in 2005 (which was caused by the H5N1 influenza virus), can also flag problem regions or emerging pathogens. Surveillance efforts should therefore focus on communities that live and work in such environments.

Identifying which pathogen is causing an outbreak is no longer the bottleneck it once was. It took researchers two years to determine HIV as the cause of AIDS in the early 1980s using microscopy and other techniques. By contrast, in 2012 it took only weeks for investigators using genomic technologies to discover the coronavirus that caused Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

Rapid identification of viruses can be achieved only if such technologies — and the people trained to use them — are globally available, including in resource-limited regions where the risk of outbreaks might be higher. Thankfully, relevant capacity-building programmes are now beginning to be established, such as the Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) Initiative, run by the UK Wellcome Trust and the US National Institutes of Health¹¹.

Once an emerging outbreak virus has been identified, it needs to be analysed quickly to establish what type it is; which molecular mechanisms (such as receptor type) enable it to jump between individuals; how it spreads through human populations; and how it affects those infected. In other words, at least four kinds of analysis are needed: genomic, virological, epidemiological and clinical. And the data must be passed to key stakeholders, from researchers and health workers on the ground to international agencies such as the WHO and the MSF. Data must be kept as free of restrictions as possible, within the constraints of protections of patient privacy and other ethical issues.

This will best be achieved through an established global network of highly trained local researchers, such as the WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). Real-time tools for reconstructing and tracking outbreaks at the genomic level, such as portable sequencing devices, are improving fast¹². Information gathered during recent outbreaks has quickly had tangible impacts on public-health decisions, largely owing to data generation and analysis by many research teams within days of people being infected¹².

For instance, in the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic, genome sequencing of the virus proved that a person could sexually transmit the disease more than a year after becoming infected. This prompted the WHO to increase its recommended number of tests for persistent infection in survivors of the disease.

Ultimately, the challenge is to link genomic, clinical and epidemiological data within days of an outbreak being detected, including information about how people in an affected community are interacting. Such an open, collaborative approach to tackling the emergence of infectious disease is now possible. This is partly thanks to technology, but is mainly due to a shift in perception about the importance of this approach. At least in genomic epidemiology, there is a growing move towards real-time, open-access data and analysis, aided by the use of preprint servers and wikis such as Virological (<http://virological.org>). This type of collaborative effort can complement the work of agencies including the WHO and the MSF, which focus predominantly on providing information, isolating those who have been infected, and so on.

So far, researchers have sampled little of the viral universe. Surveys of animals will undoubtedly result in the discovery of many thousands of new viruses. These data will benefit studies of diversity and evolution, and could tell us whether and why some pathogens might jump species boundaries more frequently than others. But, given the rarity of outbreaks and the complexity of host-pathogen interactions, it is arrogant to imagine that we could use such surveys to predict and mitigate the emergence of disease.

New viruses will continue to emerge unexpectedly. There is a lot we can and must do to be better prepared.

*Nature***558**, 180-182 (2018)

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-018-05373-w>

From: Steven Quay (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, November 26, 2020 4:03 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Fw: RaTG13 (shared in confidence)

(b)(6)

Tank you for your kind words. We will be (b)(6) and I'm not sure of Internet access but please feel free to send me things. I hope you can have a happy Thanksgiving in some fashion this year.

Regards, (b)(6)

On Wed, Nov 25, 2020, 11:31 PM (b)(6) wrote:

Steve,

Very helpful! Thank you.

We are working hard on (b)(5)

Please let me know if (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Also, if (b)(6)

(b)(5)

You are superb scientific detective and scientific researcher. A rare combination!
We are indebted for your insight and assistance,

(b)(6)

From: Steven Quay (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, November 25, 2020 9:15 AM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: Lawrence Rimmel (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Fw: RaTG13 (shared in confidence)

(b)(6)

See answers attached. Regards, Steve

On Wed, 25 Nov 2020 at 14:56, (b)(6) wrote:

Steve,

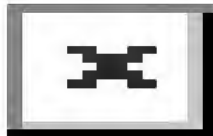
Please let us know your thoughts. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks.

(b)(6)

<https://www.newsweek.com/controversial-wuhan-lab-experiments-that-may-have-started-coronavirus-pandemic-1500503>



Why The Wuhan Lab Remains A Suspect In the Coronavirus Investigation

After reporting that Covid-19 occurred naturally, U.S. intelligence modified its stance to say it might have leaked from a lab.

www.newsweek.com

From: Feith, David (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 7:29 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: RaTG13

With Q&A attached...

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Feith, David

Sent: Tuesday, November 24, 2020 7:25 PM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RaTG13

(b)(5)

It seems that WIV's original Nature article of Feb. 3, 2020 didn't include this history:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2012-7>. After public challenges, WIV published an addendum just last week, on Nov. 17 2020: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2951-z>. Shi Zhengli also gave an interview to Science published July 31

(<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/369/6503/487?rss=1>); the full Q&A attached includes her statement that WIV "didn't isolate this virus" (page 5).

(b)(5)

Appreciate any thoughts. Thanks.

--

David Feith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6) (o)

(c)

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

--

Steven C Quay, MD, PhD, FCAP

(b)(6)

Dr. Quay Official Website

STAY SAFE: #1 Best Seller Amazon Medical eBooks

--

Steven C Quay, MD, PhD, FCAP

(b)(6)

Skype: (b)(6)

Dr. Quay Official Website

STAY SAFE: #1 Best Seller Amazon Medical eBooks

Sender: "Keshap, Atul" (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Stillwell, David R (b)(6)

Feith, David (b)(6)

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: "Moore, Jessica L" (b)(6)
To: Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: FOIA and WIV Cable
Date: Thu, 16 Jul 2020 11:08:17 +0000

Attached are the final, FOIA-ready cables.

Jess Moore
Deputy Assistant Secretary, House Affairs
U.S. Department of State

~~SBU - DELIBERATIVE PROCESS~~

From: Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 11:01 PM
To: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FOIA and WIV Cable

(b)(5) Would be interested to see the redactions...

~~SBU - DELIBERATIVE PROCESS~~

From: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:28 PM
To: (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: FW: FOIA and WIV Cable

DAS Fritz and (b)(6) - After a few weeks of latency, this request is now live again and I was hoping to give you a brief update on this proposed response to the Hill and the FOIA litigation. If either of you have a few minutes to give me a quick call, you can reach me at my desk at (b)(6) Thank you!

Jess Moore
Deputy Assistant Secretary, House Affairs
U.S. Department of State

~~SBU - DELIBERATIVE PROCESS~~

From: Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 11:16 PM
To: Martin, Kathryn (Katie) (b)(6)
Cc: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FOIA and WIV Cable

Mary Elizabeth Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State
Legislative Affairs (H)
202-647-1807

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 10:06:29 PM

To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) > Fritz, Jonathan (b)(6)

Subject: Re: FOIA and WIV Cable

Sir,

I made some edits to the below (b)(5)

(b)(5) The NIAD funded grants to EcoHealth Alliance were used to support cooperative research on bat coronaviruses that was solely focused on academic research and not related to lab safety.

Text:

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 9:27 PM

To: Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (b)(6); Seagroves, Cliff C (b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

Subject: FOIA and WIV Cable

Let's use this to identify again our concerns (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Need you and Jonathan to check the language as we put this out with the FOIA'ed cable.

Text:

(b)(5)

How's that?

Dave

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:15 PM

To: (b)(6); Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D

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

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Here are the most relevant elements:

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)

(b)(5) It is interesting that WIV scientists are allowed to study the SARS-like coronaviruses isolated from bats while they are precluded from studying human-disease causing SARS coronavirus in their new BSL-4 lab until permission for such work is granted by the NHFCP.

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:14:18 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Attached. They're also on an email from a few days ago with (b)(6) others.

--

(b)(6)
Senior Advisor
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State
(b)(6) (o)
(b)(6) (c)
(b)(6)

On April 3, 2020 at 5:11:51 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6) wrote:
First one to get me a soft copy of (b)(6) Wuhan cables gets a Samoa Cookie.
drs

David R. Stilwell
Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific
(202) 647-9596

Sender: "Moore, Jessica L" (b)(6)
Recipient: Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6)
Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FOIA and WIV Cable
Date: Wed, 15 Jul 2020 18:33:15 +0000

Hi (b)(6)

Happy to talk anytime. I am free until 3pm or after 330pm today if that works for you.

Best,

(b)(6)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, July 15, 2020 2:28:10 PM
To: (b)(6) Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: FW: FOIA and WIV Cable

DAS Fritz and (b)(6) – After a few weeks of latency, this request is now live again and I was hoping to give you a brief update on this proposed response to the Hill and the FOIA litigation. If either of you have a few minutes to give me a quick call, you can reach me at my desk at (b)(6) Thank you!

Jess Moore
Deputy Assistant Secretary, House Affairs
U.S. Department of State

~~SBU - DELIBERATIVE PROCESS~~

From: Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 11:16 PM
To: Martin, Kathryn (Katie) (b)(6)
Cc: Moore, Jessica L (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: FOIA and WIV Cable

Mary Elizabeth Taylor
Assistant Secretary of State
Legislative Affairs (H)
202-647-1807

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 10:06:29 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (b)(6)
Seagroves, Cliff C (b)(6)
Cc: Brechbuhl, Thomas U (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FOIA and WIV Cable

Sir,

I made some edits to the below (b)(5)

(b)(5) The NIAD funded grants to EcoHealth Alliance were used to support cooperative research on bat coronaviruses that was solely focused on academic research and not related to lab safety.

Text:

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Tuesday, June 9, 2020 9:27 PM

To: Taylor, Mary Elizabeth (h)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (h)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)

(h)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: FOIA and WIV Cable

Let's use this to identify again our concerns (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Need you (b)(6) to check the language as we put this out with the FOIA'ed cable.

Text:

(b)(5)

How's that?

Dave

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:15 PM

To: (b)(6); Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D

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

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

Here are the most relevant elements:

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)

(b)(5)

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Sent: Friday, April 3, 2020 5:14:18 PM

To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6) (b)(6)

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(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Subject: Re: WIV Cable

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--

(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

202.647.4612 (o)

(b)(6) (c)

(b)(6)

On April 3, 2020 at 5:11:51 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R. (b)(6) wrote:
First one to get me a soft copy of (b)(6)'s Wuhan cables gets a Samoa Cookie.
drs

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(202) 647-9596

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

Moore, Jessica L. (b)(6)

Fritz, Jonathan D. (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
CC: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: RE: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses
Date: Tue, 14 Apr 2020 11:26:42 +0000

Yes indeed. Thank you.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 7:14 AM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: WP: State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses

Hi, S will be interested to see this.

State Department cables warned of safety issues at Wuhan lab studying bat coronaviruses

Josh Rogin

Two years before the novel coronavirus pandemic upended the world, U.S. Embassy officials visited a Chinese research facility in the city of Wuhan several times and sent two official warnings back to Washington about inadequate safety at the lab, which was conducting risky studies on coronaviruses from bats. The cables have fueled discussions inside the U.S. government about whether this or another Wuhan lab was the source of the virus — even though conclusive proof has yet to emerge.

In January 2018, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing took the unusual step of repeatedly sending U.S. science diplomats to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), which had in 2015 become China's first laboratory to achieve the highest level of international bio research safety (known as BSL-4). WIV issued a news release in English about the last of these visits, which occurred on March 27, 2018. The U.S. delegation was led by Jamison Fouss, the consulate general in Wuhan, and Rick Switzer, the embassy's counselor of environment, science, technology and health. Last week, WIV erased that statement from its website, though it remains archived on the Internet.

What the U.S. officials learned during their visits concerned them so much that they dispatched two diplomatic cables categorized as Sensitive But Unclassified back to Washington. The cables warned about safety and management weaknesses at the WIV lab and proposed more attention and help. The first cable, which I obtained, also warns that the lab's work on bat coronaviruses and their potential human transmission represented a risk of a new SARS-like pandemic. "During interactions with scientists at the WIV laboratory, they noted the new lab has a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory," states the Jan. 19, 2018, cable, which was drafted by two officials from the embassy's environment, science and health sections who met with the WIV scientists. (The State Department declined to comment on this and other details of the story.)

The Chinese researchers at WIV were receiving assistance from the Galveston National Laboratory at the University of Texas Medical Branch and other U.S. organizations, but the Chinese requested additional help. The cables argued that the United States should give the Wuhan lab further support, mainly because its research on bat coronaviruses was important but also dangerous.

As the cable noted, the U.S. visitors met with Shi Zhengli, the head of the research project, who had been publishing studies related to bat coronaviruses for many years. In November 2017, just before the U.S. officials' visit, Shi's team had published research showing that horseshoe bats they had collected from a cave in Yunnan province were very likely from the same bat population that spawned the SARS coronavirus in 2003.

"Most importantly," the cable states, "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 diseases. From a public health perspective, this makes the continued surveillance of SARS-like coronaviruses in bats and study of the animal-human interface critical to future emerging coronavirus outbreak prediction and prevention."

The research was designed to prevent the next SARS-like pandemic by anticipating how it might emerge. But even in 2015, other scientists questioned whether Shi's team was taking unnecessary risks. In October 2014, the U.S. government had imposed a moratorium on funding of any research that makes a virus more deadly or contagious, known as "gain-of-function" experiments.

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

"The cable tells us that there have long been concerns about the possibility of the threat to public health that came from this lab's research, if it was not being adequately conducted and protected," he said. There are similar concerns about the nearby Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention lab, which operates at biosecurity level 2, a level significantly less secure than the level-4 standard claimed by the Wuhan Institute of Virology lab, Xiao said. That's important because the Chinese government still refuses to answer basic questions about the origin of the novel coronavirus while suppressing any attempts to examine whether either lab was involved.

Sources familiar with the cables said they were meant to sound an alarm about the grave safety concerns at the WIV lab, especially regarding its work with bat coronaviruses. The embassy officials were calling for more U.S. attention to this lab and more support for it, to help it fix its problems.

"The cable was a warning shot," one U.S. official said. "They were begging people to pay attention to what was going on."

No extra assistance to the labs was provided by the U.S. government in response to these cables. The cables began to circulate again inside the administration over the past two months as officials debated whether the lab could be the origin of the pandemic and what the implications would be for the U.S. pandemic response and relations with China.

Inside the Trump administration, many national security officials have long suspected either the WIV or the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention lab was the source of the novel coronavirus

outbreak. According to the New York Times, the intelligence community has provided no evidence to confirm this. But one senior administration official told me that the cables provide one more piece of evidence to support the possibility that the pandemic is the result of a lab accident in Wuhan.

"The idea that it was just a totally natural occurrence is circumstantial. The evidence it leaked from the lab is circumstantial. Right now, the ledger on the side of it leaking from the lab is packed with bullet points and there's almost nothing on the other side," the official said.

As my colleague David Ignatius noted, the Chinese government's original story — that the virus emerged from a seafood market in Wuhan — is shaky. Research by Chinese experts published in the Lancet in January showed the first known patient, identified on Dec. 1, had no connection to the market, nor did more than one-third of the cases in the first large cluster. Also, the market didn't sell bats.

Shi and other WIV researchers have categorically denied this lab was the origin for the novel coronavirus. On Feb. 3, her team was the first to publicly report the virus known as 2019-nCoV was a bat-derived coronavirus.

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

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

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

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

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

Sender: (b)(6)

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

From: "Stilwell, David R"
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: Virus-hit Wuhan has two laboratories linked to Chinese bio-warfare program
Date: Sun, 26 Jan 2020 00:33:05 +0000

Good call.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Saturday, January 25, 2020 7:26 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Virus-hit Wuhan has two laboratories linked to Chinese bio-warfare program

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

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

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

Virus-hit Wuhan has two laboratories linked to Chinese bio-warfare program

By Bill Gertz - The Washington Times - Friday, January 24, 2020

The deadly animal virus epidemic spreading globally may have originated in a Wuhan laboratory linked to China's covert biological weapons program, according to an Israeli biological warfare expert.

Radio Free Asia this week rebroadcast a local Wuhan television report from 2015 showing China's most advanced virus research laboratory known the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Radio Free Asia reported.

The laboratory is the only declared site in China capable of working with deadly viruses.

Dany Shoham, a former Israeli military intelligence officer who has studied Chinese bio warfare, said the institute is linked to Beijing's covert biological weapons program.

"Certain laboratories in the institute have probably been engaged, in terms of research and development, in Chinese [biological weapons], at least collaterally, yet not as a principal facility of the Chinese BW alignment," Mr. Shoham told The Washington Times.

Work on biological weapons is conducted as part of a dual civilian-military research and is "definitely covert," he said in an email.

Mr. Shoham holds a doctorate in medical microbiology. From 1970 to 1991 he was a senior analyst with Israeli military intelligence for biological and chemical warfare in the Middle East and worldwide, holding the rank of lieutenant colonel.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The World Health Organization is calling the microbe novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV. At a meeting in Geneva Thursday, the organization stopped short of declaring a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.

The virus outbreak causes pneumonia-like symptoms and prompted China to deploy military forces to Wuhan this week in a bid to halt the spread. All travel out of the city of 11 million people was halted.

The Wuhan institute has studied coronaviruses in the past, including the including the strain that causes Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, H5N1 influenza virus, Japanese encephalitis, and dengue. Researchers at the institute also studied the germ that causes anthrax – a biological agent once developed in Russia.

"Coronaviruses (particularly SARS) have been studied in the institute and are probably held therein," he said. "SARS is included within the Chinese BW program, at large, and is dealt with in several pertinent facilities."

It is not known if the institute's array of coronaviruses are specifically included in biological weapons program but it is possible, he said.

Asked if the new coronavirus may have leaked, Mr. Shoham said: "In principle, outward virus infiltration might take place either as leakage or as an indoor unnoticed infection of a person that normally went out of the concerned facility. This could have been the case with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, but so far there isn't evidence or indication for such incident."

After researchers sequence of the genome of the new coronavirus it might be possible to determine or suggest its origin or source.

Mr. Shoham, now with the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar Ilan University in Israel, said the virology institute is the only declared site in China known as P4 for Pathogen Level 4, a status indicating it uses the strictest safety standards to prevent the spread of the most dangerous and exotic microbes being studied.

The former Israeli military intelligence doctor also said suspicions were raised about the Wuhan Institute of Virology when a group of Chinese virologists working in Canada improperly sent samples to China of what he said were some of the deadliest viruses on earth, including the Ebola virus.

In a July article in the journal Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Mr. Shoham said the Wuhan institute was one of four Chinese laboratories engaged in some aspects of the biological weapons development.

He identified the secure Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory at the institute as engaged in research on the Ebola, Nipah, and Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever viruses.

The Wuhan virology institute is under the Chinese Academy of Sciences. But certain laboratories within it "have linkage with the PLA or BW-related elements within the Chinese defense establishment," he said.

In 1993, China declared a second facility, the Wuhan Institute of Biological Products, as one of eight biological warfare research facilities covered by the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) which China joined in 1985.

The Wuhan Institute of Biological Products is a civilian facility but is linked to the Chinese defense establishment, and has been regarded to be involved in the Chinese BW program, Mr. Shoham said.

China's vaccine against SARS is probably produced there.

"This means the SARS virus is held and propagated there, but it is not a new coronavirus, unless the wild type has been modified, which is not known and cannot be speculated at the moment," he said.

The annual State Department report on arms treaty compliance stated last year that China engaged in activities that could support biological warfare.

"Information indicates that the People's Republic of China engaged during the reporting period in biological activities with potential dual-use applications, which raises concerns regarding its

compliance with the BWC," the report said, adding that the United States suspects China failed to eliminate its biological warfare program as required by the treaty.

"The United States has compliance concerns with respect to Chinese military medical institutions' toxin research and development because of the potential dual-use applications and their potential as a biological threat," the report added.

The biosafety lab is located about 20 miles from the Hunan Seafood Market that reports from China say may have been origin point of the virus.

Rutgers University microbiologist Dr. Richard Ebright told London's Daily Mail that "at this point there's no reason to harbor suspicions" the lab may be linked to the virus outbreak.

Sender: "Stilwell, David R"

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)
To: Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: Trade war, tech war, financial war, cold war...Real war?; Five Eyes split over virus origin?; Hong Kong
Date: Tue, 5 May 2020 20:58:08 +0000

Only so much we can do. . . We'll recover.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 4:35 PM
To: Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6); Stilwell, David R (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: Trade war, tech war, financial war, cold war...Real war?; Five Eyes split over virus origin?; Hong Kong

I'm think you all get this newsletter; thought the excerpts were interesting, to say the least.

From: (b)(6) on
behalf of Bill Bishop at Sinocism (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 4:24 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Trade war, tech war, financial war, cold war...Real war?; Five Eyes split over virus origin?; Hong Kong

[Read in browser](#)

I decided to make today's issue of the newsletter free. If you like what you see please [sign up](#) for

Trade war, tech war, financial war, cold war...Real

[Bill Bishop](#) May 5   

The PRC will be back to work Wednesday after the five day May Day holiday. There was no rest however for the

When US officials started really ramping up the claims that the virus came from a Wuhan lab I wrote this in the

The stakes involved are astronomical. This “devil” virus as Xi so accurately called it has caused a pandemic, and he is held accountable, which could lead to all sorts of unpredictable domestic and international outcomes.

If US officials want to convince the world the virus leaked from a Wuhan Lab they are going to have to do a much better job than they did in convincing allies into the disastrous 2003 Iraq invasion. From what I am hearing, and from media reports, the intelligence

Three weeks later, the accusations have only intensified, but key allies still do not look to be convinced. In fact,

Intelligence shared among Five Eyes nations indicates it is “highly unlikely” that the coronavirus outbreak was caused by a leak from a lab. Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

“We think it's highly unlikely it was an accident,” a Western diplomatic official with knowledge of the intelligence community said. This assessment, the official said, and a second official, from a Five Eyes country, concurred with it. The US has

A third source, also from a Five Eyes nation, told CNN that the level of certainty being expressed by Pompeo is not as high as that a legitimate theory yet.

Why do US officials need to oversell the case against China? PRC officials are doing a bang-up job of it themselves, including those in Five Eyes?

Could someone please tell me how this ends well?

Thanks for reading.

Internal Chinese report warns Beijing faces Tiananmen-like global backlash over virus - Reuters

The report, presented early last month by the Ministry of State Security to top Beijing leaders including President Xi Jinping,

As a result, Beijing faces a wave of anti-China sentiment led by the United States in the aftermath of the pandemic. The report also warned of the matter.

The report was drawn up by the China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations (CICIR), a think tank

One of those with knowledge of the report said it was regarded by some in the Chinese intelligence community as "the end of the Cold War Two."

Novikov's missive was a response to U.S. diplomat George Kennan's "Long Telegram" from Moscow that set the stage for the Cold War.

The two documents helped set the stage for the strategic thinking that defined both sides of the Cold War.

Comment: Interesting time for this to leak. And another reminder if anyone still needed one that there is no

China and US in 'new Cold War' as relations hit lowest point in 'more than 40 years', spurred on by pandemic

"The United States and China are actually in the era of a new Cold War," said Shi Yinong, an international relations expert.

"Different from the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union, the new Cold War between the US and China is more complex."

May 5 PLA Daily Page 3 essay on the importance of financial security.-"We should guard against the "high explosive point"

[Lightly edited machine translation] "Financial strength is the "strong backing" of national defense strength. In the current era of the second to tenth economies in the world. The spread of the New Coronary Pneumonia epidemic in the world has caused various countries, and promote the accelerated evolution of the global defense military strength.

The financial game is the "high explosive point" of the strategic game. The contemporary game of great power competition has provided many examples of games in the financial sector. The spread of the new coronavirus epidemic in the world has caused the global economy to enter a period of games and strategic confrontation. This has affected the already weak global economy. The situation is getting more and more complicated.

金融实力是国防实力的“强后盾”。为维持军队的装备水平和作战能力，近20年来美国军费支出总额始终位居全球第一，推动全球国防军事力量对比加速演变。

金融博弈是战略博弈的“高爆点”。当代的大国博弈已经不仅局限于军事上的直接冲突，也表现在金融领域的博弈。全球金融危机作为政治博弈和战略对抗的“急先锋”，使受疫情影响本就十分疲软的全球经济形势雪上加霜，国际局势更加复杂。

Was Coronavirus Outbreak From Wuhan Lab? Pompeo Says 'Evidence' - Bloomberg

Trump pledged the report Sunday in a “virtual town hall” with Fox News, in which he added that he had little Chinese city of Wuhan, without providing evidence to support his claims.

“We’re going to be giving a very strong report as to exactly what we think happened. And I think it will be ve

Mike Pompeo: 'enormous evidence' coronavirus came from Chinese lab | Guardian

Pompeo’s claims, made in an interview with ABC’s This Week, represented an escalation in rhetoric. He had

On Sunday, Pompeo said: “There is enormous evidence that that’s where this began,” later adding: “I can tell

Wuhan lab virus claim knocked back by Australian intelligence - Sydney Morning Herald

Australian intelligence agencies have questioned evidence trumpeted by United States officials supposedly lin

Senior members of the Australian intelligence community told The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age a re

Multiple senior intelligence sources who spoke to The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age in recent days ha

Five Eyes network contradicts theory Covid-19 leaked from lab | The Guardian

There is no current evidence to suggest that coronavirus leaked from a Chinese research laboratory, intelligen

The sources also insisted that a “15-page dossier” highlighted by the Australian Daily Telegraph which accus

British and other Five Eyes agencies do believe that Beijing has not necessarily been open about how coronav

Dossier lays out case against China bat virus program | Daily Telegraph

The 15-page research document, obtained by The Saturday Telegraph, lays the foundation for the case of negl

It states that to the “endangerment of other countries” the Chinese government covered-up news of the virus b

Fauci: No scientific evidence the coronavirus was made in a Chinese lab

"If you look at the evolution of the virus in bats and what's out there now, [the scientific evidence] is very, very clear," Fauci says. Based on the scientific evidence, he also doesn't entertain an alternate theory that some

WHO says it has no evidence to support 'speculative' Covid-19 lab theory | The Guardian

"Like any evidence-based organisation, we would be very willing to receive any information that purports to

"If that data and evidence is available, then it will be for the United States government to decide whether and

Tucker Carlson warns that Beijing sees coronavirus pandemic as 'beginning of a new Chinese century' | Fox M

Tucker Carlson opened his show Monday night by reacting to a research dossier compiled by the so-called "F

"This new information is not thanks to our press corps," Carlson began. "Reporters are supposed to be open-m

For months, they demanded we not think about where this virus came from, and a suggestion it may have com

"Tying this pandemic to China is not racist," Carlson said after playing a montage of media figures decrying T

Apolitical scientific tracing of virus urged after earlier cases found in France - Global Times

Chinese experts urged international communities and regions to carry out apolitical scientific research to trace they previously reported and showed no direct relation with China.

Tracing the origins through scientific investigation would help in the development of a vaccine, according to C

Russian MP speaks out against the West's anti-Chinese campaign - People's Daily Online

"The publication in the Western press about the results of the investigation of the Five Eyes alliance about Be May 4.

Pompeo Ties Coronavirus to China Lab, Despite Spy Agencies' Uncertainty - The New York Times

Senior American officials, including those who have looked at intelligence and who favor the lab theory, have accident. And among scientists and especially virologists, there is largely agreement that the chances that a lab

Some American officials say even intercepts of Chinese officials in Beijing discussing questions surrounding

the way of intelligence collection focused on Wuhan officials before the outbreak.

Comment: One of the things I have heard is that there are intercepts of Chinese officials asking each other if

China's 'Bat Woman' Shi Zhengli refutes rumor of 'defecting with intelligence files' - Global Times

Chinese virologist Shi Zhengli denied rumors of "defecting to the West," saying Saturday on her WeChat that

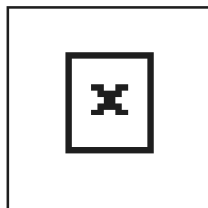
In the post, Shi said that, "No matter how difficult things are, it (defecting) shall never happen. We've done no

Remarks by Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger to the Miller Center at the University of Virginia

So who embodies the May Fourth spirit in China today? To my mind, the heirs of May Fourth are civic-minded ophthalmologist and a young father who committed a small act of bravery and then a big act of bravery. ..

As the May Fourth Movement today marks the inaugural year of its second century, what will its ultimate legacy be? Will its ideas be deleted or distorted through official censorship and disinformation? Will its champions be slandered?

The speech, which he gave in Chinese:



Trump official's Chinese speech reaches few listeners in China - Inkstone

In the hours following his speech, there were scant mentions of Pottinger on China's Twitter-like Weibo, altho

The lack of reaction to Pottinger's speech owes partly to internet censorship. Some Weibo users have reported

Inkstone tested the censorship by posting the text of the speech in Chinese paragraph by paragraph and found

Trump blames China for coronavirus spread - NY Post interview with Trump

“Well I know of the intelligence. And they report to me,” Trump said. “Bad things happened, let’s face it, bad

Trump clarified that he meant the virus “got out” of Wuhan, not the lab specifically.

Trump's anti-China rhetoric aimed at boosting US leverage - AP

The State Department, the Department of Homeland Security and the White House have all launched public e
More than 250,000 people have died globally from COVID-19, including more than 68,000 in the U.S.

The Trump administration, a senior administration official says, is trying to convince the world that China isn
condition of anonymity.

DHS report: China hid virus' severity to hoard supplies - AP

Chinese leaders “intentionally concealed the severity” of the pandemic from the world in early January, accor
with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo saying Sunday that that country was responsible for the spread of diseas

U.S. Moves to Address ‘Extraordinary Threat’ From Some Foreign Electric Gear - WSJ \$\$

Friday’s order reflects a consensus among senior intelligence officials that foreign adversaries including Russ

Trump administration pushing to rip global supply chains from China: officials | Reuters

The Trump administration is "turbocharging" an initiative to remove global industrial supply chains from Chi

The U.S. Commerce Department, State and other agencies are looking for ways to push companies to move b

“There is a whole of government push on this,” said one. Agencies are probing which manufacturing should b

Clouded thinking in Washington and Beijing on COVID-19 crisis - Ryan Haas

By getting drawn into a tit-for-tat mud-slinging contest with China, the Trump administration is becoming per

contribution to the dysfunction in relations between the world's two most capable powers.

'Not the World's Number One': Chinese Social Media Piles On the U.S. - POLITICO

As coronavirus has spread outward from its Wuhan origins, the Chinese government has worked hard to spin China has outperformed, while America has disastrously faltered. It's a sentiment shared by even educated, in

The coronavirus response — now playing out on Weibo, within the private discussion rooms on mobile social that the United States was more paper than tiger.

Congress Republicans accuse China of seeking to indoctrinate U.S. students - Reuters

The ranking Republicans on seven House committees sent a letter to Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, asking

Congressman: Pelosi Blocking Investigation into China Coronavirus Origins - Breitbart

Appearing on Breitbart News Saturday on SiriusXM 125 the Patriot Channel, Reschenthaler discussed his efforts to focus their oversight efforts on politically harming President Trump again just like they tried and failed with

U.S. Probes University of Texas Links to Chinese Lab Scrutinized Over Coronavirus - WSJ \$\$

The request for records of gifts or contracts from the Wuhan Institute of Virology and its researcher Shi Zhengli

The Education Department's letter, reviewed by The Wall Street Journal, also asks the UT System to share documents

The department is also seeking documents related to any university system contracts or gifts from Eric Yuan,

Chinese state media step up attacks on 'evil' and 'insane' Mike Pompeo after he blames China for coronavirus

"If evil politicians like Pompeo continue to lie and bluff, then the Americans 'becoming great again' can only

An editorial by state news agency Xinhua described Pompeo as a "liar" for promoting the theory that Covid 19 virus data.

国际锐评：美国疫情防控疑点重重 理应接受国际调查 CCTV

May 5 CCTV Evening News "international sharp commentary" - "The United States deserves an international

"Why the incredible failure of the us epidemic response? What exactly is America's responsibility for the spre

Critics stress that America's own muddle over the outbreak should be sorted out. Including all kinds of biolog
community to give an account to the people of the United States and the world!"

美国疫情防控为何令人难以置信地溃败至此？美国对全球疫情扩散到底应当承担什么样的责任？美国

锐评强调，美国自身疫情上的这笔糊涂账，该理清楚了！包括其境内外的各种生物实验室，从媒体

国际锐评：病急乱投医！邪恶蓬佩奥在科学面前大肆喷毒造谣 CCTV

May 4 CCTV "international sharp commentary" again attacks Pompeo over his comments about the origins o

锐评指出，面对全球科学界此起彼伏的新冠病毒源于自然界等一致结论，美国政客或许是找不到抹黑
”。

颇具讽刺意味的是，就在美国政客声称“看到证据”的时候，美国国家情报总监办公室发表声明表示，

U.S. practice to claim compensation for COVID-19 outbreak a shame for human civilization (人民日报署名文

There are also questions that need to be raised to the U.S. Why are the CT images of the patients of electronic
infection happen in the U.S., since a COVID-19 patient without travel history to China died on Feb. 6? Why a
novel coronavirus, and why doesn't the U.S. release its studies as the top power in biogenetic studies? The U.

人民日报署名文章：空喊“爱人如己” 实则自私冷血——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（六）-新华

6th piece so far in the Zhong Sheng series criticizing the US, Pompeo and "some American politicians" (Most

病毒是人类的共同敌人，疫情是各国的共同挑战。大疫当前，各国在做好自身防控的同时，尽己所能
物资支持是“口罩外交”，其内心之偏狭、操弄之恶劣，令人错愕。

The virus is the common enemy of mankind, epidemic situation is the common challenge of all countries. At the same time, some people, on the one hand, say the biblical motto "love your neighbor as yourself" but do it in cold blood.

The other pieces in this series so far:

人民日报署名文章：污名化是危险的“政治病毒”——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（一）

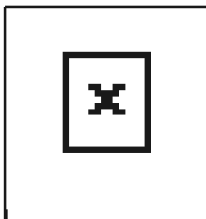
人民日报署名文章：“甩锅”岂能拯救生命——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（二）

人民日报署名文章：追责索赔闹剧是文明之耻——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（三）

人民日报署名文章：漠视“生命至上”何谈人权——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（四）

人民日报署名文章：怀疑中国病亡率纯属政治化的臆测——造谣中伤“中国抗疫”有悖国际正义（五）

Accusations of violating Christian precepts is an interesting line of attack for CCP propaganda, and seems like



Hu Xijin 胡锡进 @HuXijin_GT

Pompeo, a devout evangelical Christian, lied against and harmed the Wuhan Institute of Virology. H

May 5th 2020

209 Retweets984 Likes

'Cover-up,' a label China shall return to the White House - Xinhua

Some U.S. politicians have suggested that China should be held accountable for the global pandemic, accusing

However, this "cover-up" label should be put on the U.S. administration as its incapability in handling the disaster.

Lies never to be allowed to distort true history of global COVID-19 fight - China Daily

As the COVID-19 situation continues to worsen in the United States, their smearing campaign against China must be stopped. The U.S. must "compensate" for the losses caused by COVID-19....

During this year's pandemic, China's early warning is worth remembering, China's experience is worth learning from.

Liars should never be allowed to reconstruct reality.

Opinion: Washington, disruptor-in-chief in global pandemic fight - Xinhua

Many politicians in Washington love to boast of America's leading role in the world. The country is truly leading the world.

Being the world's epicenter in the COVID-19 pandemic, the country now has about one third of the world's cases.

Clearly, despite all the warnings flashed by China or the World Health Organization (WHO), or even its own officials.

The human race today faces a myriad of daunting challenges, like climate change and fatal infectious diseases. The U.S. should be more inspirational. Otherwise, "American exceptionalism" would only become a laughing stock, for which the international community should be ashamed.

Sunday CCTV Evening News comment attacks Steve Bannon as an "anti-China element" for his criticism of China

锐评指出，美国极右民粹分子史蒂夫·班农近日在接受媒体采访时诋毁中国抗疫模式，妄称中国要对此负责。

锐评说，无论班农编造怎样的谎言，寻找怎样的借口，其所谓的“追责索赔”既不符合国际惯例，也没有法律依据。班农的言论，是典型的推卸责任、转嫁矛盾，是典型的控制不力的事实，以及某些美国政客企图趁火打劫、谋取更大政治利益的险恶图谋。

“冷战活化石”兜售的都是什么货色--国际--人民网

People's Daily May 4 commentary attacks Bannon, calls him a "cold war fossil". May 4 CCTV Evening News also attacks Bannon.

社评：班农熬制一锅鸩毒，美国人会喝吗

Global Times editorial also attacks Bannon

Comment: Call it a “trifecta” for Bannon, he is no doubt very pleased to be attacked by CCTV, People’s Daily

Chinese mainland reports no new domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases - Xinhua

Chinese health authority said Tuesday that no new domestically transmitted cases of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) were reported.

One confirmed case arriving from overseas was reported in Shanghai Monday, the National Health Commission said.

No deaths related to the disease were reported for Monday, according to the commission.

Coronavirus Survivors Want Answers, and China Is Silencing Them - The New York Times

The Chinese authorities are clamping down as grieving relatives, along with activists, press the ruling Communist Party for answers.

Lawyers have been warned not to file suit against the government. The police have interrogated bereaved families.

WHO says Taiwan did not warn about possible human-to-human transmission in December message - The Wall Street Journal

At a briefing on Monday, WHO legal officer Steven Solomon said he wanted to “set the record straight” and address concerns about a December message from Taiwan.

“That email was not a warning. It was a request for more information on cases of atypical pneumonia reported in Taiwan that same day.”

China to strengthen COVID-19 infection control in medical institutions

Medical institutions are urged to enforce management requirements of fever clinics, and all medics working in the front line to strengthen the infection control mechanism against the coronavirus.

The capability of nucleic acid testing for COVID-19 should be improved in medical institutions.

China's State Council sends group to Wuhan for further prevention work - CGTN

A special liaison group sent by China's Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council arrived in Wuhan on Monday.

The group's primary responsibility is to evaluate the epidemic prevention and control work in Hubei Province

国务院联防联控机制联络组赴武汉调研重点场所疫情防控-新华网

Baidu Uses AI Temperature Measurement System in Elementary Schools in Beijing- PingWest

Chinese tech giant Baidu has rolled out its AI temperature measurement system in a number of elementary schools

A personal account of gaming and life in Wuhan during the COVID-19 Outbreak – Niko

Coronavirus: China gets defensive during high-level EU event on fundraising and vaccine development | South China Morning Post

The European Union's effort to raise new funds for developing and distributing Covid-19 vaccines has met with

Not only was China the country that sent the lowest-level official to the online event on Monday, it also made

Instead, Chinese ambassador to the EU Zhang Ming asked the world to stop the "blame games" over the coronavirus

Zhang's attendance was announced at the last minute, since earlier EU documents indicated Premier Li Keqiang

Allegations of doctored films fuel concerns about Beijing propaganda | Financial Times \$

Days after Beijing had announced it was sending urgent medical supplies to Italy in its hour of need, Chinese

A close analysis of the videos conducted by the FT alongside work by two Italian fact-checking and manipulation

Australia's coronavirus disputes with China are growing. So are debates over its deep economic ties to Beijing

"This 'Wolf Warrior' diplomacy hasn't made it any easier for those hoping to inject some balance into an increasingly
intended to sway sentiment and encourage business to call for a reversal of the government's position, they w

China confident Indonesia will win the fight against COVID-19 soon: ambassador - Xinhua

Ambassador Xiao stressed that China will continue to provide support and assistance for Indonesia in dealing

As China and Indonesia are battling the COVID-19 outbreak, both offer sympathies and mutual support. In M

Xiao said China would soon send a second batch of assistance to Indonesia in the near future. A number of pr

Global Backlash Builds Against China Over Coronavirus - The New York Times

Chinese diplomats are encouraged to be combative by Beijing, said Susan Shirk, a China scholar and director
so you get this megaphone effect,” she said, adding that it makes any negotiations more difficult...

But in the longer run, China is seeding mistrust and damaging its own interests, said Ms. Shirk, who is workin

Beijing liaison office slams US-funded report ‘filled with lies’ about national security law, Hong Kong protest

On Sunday, the office targeted the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a US Congre
further moves that undermine Hong Kong’s high degree of autonomy”...

“[The report] glorified the series of inhuman, terrifying, criminal acts of extremists who ignored the rule of la
interference in the affairs of Hong Kong and China by external forces.”

The report - The Promise of Democratization in Hong Kong | National Democratic Institute

The Liaison Office response -

香港中联办发言人强烈谴责西方反华政客和组织干预香港事务 发言人指出，近日，美英个别反华政客对
制责任，纯属中国内政，其他任何国家无权干涉。这些政客的错误言论严重违反国际法和国际关系基本

Hong Kong Protests and China: Liaison Office Comments - Bloomberg

China’s Liaison Office in Hong Kong accused protesters of jeopardizing the future of the city, calling demons

In a statement published on Saturday on its website, the Liaison Office said “extremist radicals” were involve

coronavirus pandemic.

The Liaison Office statement - 香港中联办发言人：严厉谴责极端激进分子无视民生疾苦再启“暴力揽炒”

5月2日，中央人民政府驻香港特别行政区联络办公室发言人发表谈话，严厉谴责极端激进分子在“五一”期间在公共场所放置炸弹，如果任由他们胡作非为，香港还能有未来吗？！

Tam tells of the right time for Article 23 | The Standard

Hong Kong should enact legislation on national security law under Article 23 by August next year, says National Education Commission Chairman Tam Yiu-kwai.

Tam said it should be up to the SAR government to decide how to legislate the Basic Law's Article 23 and the timing of the legislation.

"Although the government should decide how and when to enact the laws, making it a national law and putting it in the Basic Law is a better option," he said.

Annex 3 is a list of national laws to be applied in Hong Kong. There are five currently listed - including laws on national security, anti-terrorism, and anti-subversion.

Hong Kong Coalition launched to uphold 'one country, two systems' - Global Times

The launch ceremony of the Hong Kong Coalition took place on Tuesday in Hong Kong. In a joint declaration, the coalition members called for the government to uphold the "one country, two systems" principle.

The coalition was started by vice chairmen of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Tung Chee-hwa and Leung Yiu-ting.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in Hong Kong, Li Xiaomeng, also attended the ceremony.

独家|哪些投资者有望拿回20%的保证金？高层定调原油宝责任分担原则_金融频道_财新网 Liu He chairs

linked products for individual investors are going to be much more heavily regulated

Bank of China Tells Investors It Will Absorb Some Oil Losses - Bloomberg China's fourth-largest bank by market capitalization said it will absorb some of the losses from its oil-linked products.

investors who received phone calls from the lender this week. The bank will also return 20% of the initial investment to investors who lost more than 20% of their investment.

Blackstone's Soho China Investment Discussions Stalled - Bloomberg The private equity firm's discussions are stalled over the company's valuation.

market introduced concerns about arranging financing for a deal, the people said.// **Did the Ren Zhiqiang case a**

China's Property Developers Go on a Shopping Spree - Caixin The country's top 100 land-buying developers spent 7.2% more on land in the first nine months of this year, according to a research organization. The figure rose 7.2% year-on-year.

Supermarket Major Posts Fat Profit as Consumers Cook at Home - Caixin Yonghui Superstores Co. Ltd., one of the largest supermarket chains in China, reported a record profit in the third quarter of this year, amid a COVID-19 outbreak.

China should raise US\$700 billion from special bonds to kick-start economy, top adviser says | South China Morning Post A top government adviser said.

The funds created by the debt sale – which would be in addition to already budgeted spending – were necessary to support the country's economic recovery, the adviser said.

India Pledges Easy Access to Land for Factories Leaving China - Bloomberg A total area of 461,589 hectares has been set aside for factories leaving China, such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, they said. Luxembourg is spread across 243,000 hectares.

China's Young Spenders Say #ditchyourstuff as Economy Sputters - Reuters Xu Chi, a Shanghai-based senior analyst at a research firm, said that young people's spending patterns follow the well-known theory, which means most people in China, having been cooped-up at home for a long time, are now more inclined to spend on experiences.

首都民营企业家热议总书记“回信” -

北京市工商联供稿 北京市光彩事业促进会副会长兼秘书长、锡华实业投资集团董事长张杰庭说，在“五·四”青年节到来之际，总书记回信，是党中央对民营企业家的关心和重视，也是人民领袖对人民情怀的真切体现。// **Beijing branch of the**

中央依法治国办领导成员有调整 changes to the office of the Central Commission for Overall Law-based Governance. Several members of the office, including those in charge of justice, have joined the office.

Rebranding Stability Maintenance and Rebirth of Zhou Yongkang's Comprehensive Governance Committee F

China's low acquittal rates: interesting statistics | The China Collection I've been looking through a recent mass media post will be about acquittal rates, because the statistics show something interesting and counterintuitive: that acquittal rates are low.

State Security Police Raid House Church Meeting in Chinese Port City of Xiamen - RFA An estimated nine people were arrested in a raid on a house church meeting in Xiamen, a coastal city. Law enforcers struggled to grab and take away church members, some of whom fought back hard not to be removed.

共产党人的政治灵魂——习近平这样论述马克思主义-中青在线 5月5日是马克思诞辰纪念日，人民网·中国共产党新闻网刊发了习近平在纪念马克思诞辰200周年大会上的讲话。

A Murderer at Large Turns Himself in to Police Due to Unable to Make a Living Without Health Code- PingWe

shopping, so he had to sleep on the street.

China spent years preparing for this economic crash. Coronavirus brings political dangers to the fore. - The W

UCLA. "The coronavirus has accelerated the timetable."...In 2010, China's top leaders commissioned a team led by a former World Bank official to study the risks of a global economic crisis. The team's recommendations published three years later.

Xi extends greetings to young Chinese ahead of Youth Day - Xinhua

Facing the sudden outbreak of the novel coronavirus, young people have charged ahead and dedicated themselves to serving the country, showing a high sense of responsibility and

Xi Focus-Quotable Quotes: Xi Jinping on young people - Xinhua

Chinese youth of the new era should carry on the tradition of the Chinese people with the nation, and to serve the people and contribute to the motherland.

Epidemic fight boosts national pride among young Chinese: survey - Xinhua

The average score of national pride among young people rose from 8.03 in 2019 to this year's 9.03. The survey, conducted from April 24 to 28, had a sample size of 8,212 people from 31 provinces, municipalities and the Xinjiang Uygur

China plans to send Uygur Muslims from Xinjiang re-education camps to work in other parts of country | Sou

western region of Xinjiang, sources said. The plan, which includes a quota for the numbers provinces must take, is aimed at helping them find jobs and integrate into society after they have "graduated" from re-education camps.

US family tells of travel nightmare: China bans their exit and father imprisoned without charge | AP

Hsu is a senior executive at a US company. Authorities from Anhui province in southeastern China placed exit bans on Hsu and his wife Jodie Chen, blocking them from leaving the country. Hsu's father, Xu Weiming, is in custody in China and faces charges that he embezzled 447,874 yuan (US\$63,000) from a local company.

US spy planes could be pulled from Britain as White House conducts major Huawei review-The Telegraph

Haas said the US military and intelligence asset the Americans have in Britain is being assessed to understand the knock-on implications of the review.

German telecom carrier: We need Huawei in 5G network construction - CGTN

Europe's largest telecom operator, Deutsche Telekom, said it needs Huawei to build out 5G networks. The company's managing director, Markus Daxner, made the remark in an interview with local newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung.

Vietnamese, Philippine Fishermen Protest China's Fishing Ban in SC5 - RFA

Fishermen's associations in Vietnam and the Philippines have protested China's ban on foreign fishing vessels in the South China Sea. The US Coast Guard.

着力提升因应外部对华舆论攻击能力-中国社会科学网

interesting article in a CASS publication advocating for China to improve its ability to respond to external attacks on its image.

China"//第二，建立应对重大公共事件对外传播协调机制。针对重大公共事件时期外媒涉华反华舆论异常，对诋毁、污蔑、攻击我方且引发负面国际影响的言论组织快速有力的回应和反击，并争取覆盖传导到

CCP to Monitor Postings on Foreign Self-Media – Chinascope Han Lianchao, a former employee of China's Mi impose large-scale censorship and monitoring of Twitter, YouTube and Facebook accounts overseas

1900 & 2020 — An Old Anxiety in a New Era – China Heritage Translation of Zi Zhongyun's Still Suckled on W (although ethnic-inflected or race politics has been a feature of Chinese history from even before the dynastic er

辽宁舰航母编队完成远海跨区机动训练_军事频道_央视网(cctv.com) After a month at sea, the Liaoning airc

中央军委政治工作部下发通知部署开展“牢记习主席寄语嘱托·青春建功强军伟业”主题团日活动 - 中国军

海军陆战队打造多维一体新型作战力量 - 解放军报 - 中国军网 Lead story in the May 5 PLA Daily discussing development of Marines in the last decade in preparation for contingencies dealing with Taiwan and the SCS.

军旗管理规定5月1日起施行，强化军旗意识是贯彻落实关键 - 中国军网 New trial regulations for PLA unit bullet holes, as its lead example. It also discusses Chairman Xi's personal interest and attention to the topic.

Bring back the “Bandung Spirit” in China-Africa relationship – Panda Paw Dragon Claw Chinese scholar Liu H

How does China wield influence in the World Health Organization—and other international organizations? | able to mobilize among other member states. Generally speaking, China which claims to represent the interests important policy decisions, including the selection of leadership, in international organizations are made in line v

China's Guangdong province unveils new anti-discrimination measures after widespread reports of racism ag business representatives...The local government said service providers in the province were not allowed to treat t

China's long-range Xian H-20 stealth bomber could make its debut this year | South China Morning Post Mili sufficiently under control. “The Zhuhai Airshow is expected to become a platform to promote China's image and

CITIC Acquires Majority Stake In Medea Group | Prague Business Journal 0 Rainbow Wisdom Investment a su influence Czech media who are dependent on the advertising revenue that is given to them by the Medea. Medea

Ji Chaozhu, Chinese diplomat who acted as bridge with US during historic thaw in relations, dies aged 91 | So

West Capella Standoff Leaves U.S. Allies Uncertain - Foreign Policy Competition in the South China Sea is an e

but such fleeting muscular demonstrations are largely ineffective at countering China's suffocation strategy directed at Hong Kong. Trying to be everywhere at once can mean going around in circles.

Southeast Asia rail projects stall as China focuses on recovery - Nikkei Asian Review Mainland media report that host countries continue to limit the entry of foreigners. This in turn could hurt Southeast Asia's growth and its appeal.

Chinese navy anti-piracy drill ends with detour through South China Sea islands for US attention | South China Morning Post China's navy anti-piracy operations in the Spratlys – called the Nansha Islands by China – passing through the Miyako Strait and F

China launches manned spacecraft prototype with new Long March 5B rocket | South China Morning Post China launched a manned spacecraft prototype detached from the Long March 5B rocket eight minutes after being launched from Hainan Island and it was sent to orbit.

Long March-5B rocket enables China to construct space station - Xinhua The Long March-5B was specially designed by China Aerospace Technology Corporation. The new rocket, a variant of China's largest carrier rocket, the Long March-5, will help China build its space station.

America Challenges China's National Talent Programs | Center for Strategic and International Studies This paper argues that the U.S. should protect collaborative research and publishing.

HKSAR chief executive announces relaxation of social distancing measures - Xinhua Chief Executive of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Carrie Lam, announced that she would relax social distancing measures in Hong Kong classes, as the COVID-19 epidemic is, what she claimed, subsiding in Hong Kong.

Taiwan rebuffs WHO, says China has no right to represent it - Reuters Only Taiwan's democratically-elected government has the right to represent all Chinese people, Taiwan's foreign ministry said.

'Too costly': Chinese military strategist warns now is not the time to take back Taiwan by force | South China Morning Post A Chinese military strategist has warned that taking back Taiwan by force is too costly and that the current situation is not the right time for such an action, like pro-independence forces in Taiwan and Washington's criticism over the pandemic.

“China's ultimate goal is not the reunification of Taiwan, but to achieve the dream of national rejuvenation – so we shouldn't make this the top priority. If Beijing wants to take Taiwan back by force, it will need to mobilise all its resources,” the strategist said.

手机中美印象-乔良：台湾问题攸关国运不可轻率急进

New report links state forces to death of 1980s activist Chen Wen-chen - Focus Taiwan Democracy activist Chen Wen-chen was killed in 1989, a report released Monday. The report by the Transitional Justice Commission (TJC) summarized the latest findings in its investigation.

U.S. Rep. Mike Gallagher: Announces donation of 100,000 surgical grade masks from Taiwan | WisBusiness U.S. Representative Mike Gallagher announced that he has received 100,000 surgical grade masks from Taiwan.

officials about working together to combat the Coronavirus pandemic. Taiwan has set a global standard for Cor

U.K. Chipmaker Said Chinese Investor Pushed for Board Nominees - Bloomberg Imagination Technologies Gro

AI chips gap may be larger than it appears - TechNode Is China pulling ahead of the US in AI? Not quite, argue
chinas-challenge-amid-technology-war ." His deep dive into the dynamics behind China's recent progress on AI
some Chinese firms, while putting others out to pasture. All the while, basic research is likely to suffer worldw

Chinese Live Streaming Apps are banning Channels with Foreign Streamers- PingWest China's Ministry of Cu
until recently. Xiaohongshu ruled that no foreign people will be allowed in front of a camera during live streams

China's Novel Health Tracker: Green on Public Health, Red on Data Surveillance | Center for Strategic and Int
February 9 their own systems in their respective headquarter cities, Hangzhou and Shenzhen. Competition betwe
Wechat at the end of February. So far it seems that Tencent is leading in this battle as its model emerged as the r
Wechat alone.

The subatomic age: Asia's quantum computing arms race - Nikkei Asian Review Speaking anonymously to avo
that it was "inevitable" that individual scientists, research groups and even universities would eventually be forc

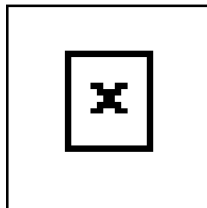
Liu Shouxiang, Champion of Watercolor in China, Dies at 61 - The New York Times Liu Shouxiang, a teacher a
61.

Police Raid Ukraine Center Suspected of Smuggling Surrogate Babies Into China - Caixin Police in Ukraine hav
privately operated Kiev center of recruiting Ukrainian surrogate mothers for Chinese clients and then forging ma

Central government allocates 2.5 bln yuan for rural water ecology - Xinhua The Ministry of Water Resources a
improve rural water conditions from 2020 to 2021 with support from the central government.



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Sender: "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)

Recipient: Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: "Stilwell, David R"
To: (b)(6) (Geneva) (b)(6)
(h)(6)
CC: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: State Department News Briefing (2-18-20)
Date: Tue, 18 Feb 2020 12:22:37 +0000

(b)(5)

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From: (b)(6) (Geneva) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 7:09:01 AM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: State Department News Briefing (2-18-20)

We understand that they are in Beijing and Guangzhou but are not being given access to Hubei. Garrett Grigsby (b)(6) from HHS is the lead for the Secretary, knows what CDC is doing and has been very responsive.

I've also attached an email that I sent to Tedros (WHO) over the weekend on access. And have asked HHS to help focus the list down to very specific asks/deliverables and timetables.

I am doing a secure call on a related topic today at 11:45 EST with some folks from NSC (invited Feith). But of course you would be more than welcome to join; should be short.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 12:55 PM
To: (h)(6) (Geneva)
(h)(6)
Cc: (h)(6)
Subject: FW: State Department News Briefing (2-18-20)

(h)(6)

EAP could use updates on the status of WHO/CDC access. Can you put me in contact with someone at CDC who's tracking? (b)(5)

Thanks

Dave

From: TechMIS - DOS Daily <dos@techmis.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 4:43 AM
To: noreply@techmis.com
Subject: State Department News Briefing (2-18-20)

STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING

Prepared for the U.S. Department of State
By TechMIS
www.TechMIS.com

Mobile User Copy

TO: State Department & Staff
DATE: Tuesday, February 18, 2020 5:00 AM ET

State Department News

Huawei Winning the Argument in Europe, U.S. Considering New Wave of China Tech Restrictions

The New York Times [2/17/2020 7:29 PM, David E. Sanger and David McCabe, 23673K, Neutral] reports that America's global campaign to prevent its closest allies from using Huawei, the Chinese telecom giant, in the next generation of wireless networks has largely failed, with foreign leaders publicly rebuffing the United States argument that the firm poses an unmanageable security threat. Britain has already called the Trump administration's bluff, betting that officials would back away from their threat to cut off intelligence sharing with any country that used Huawei equipment in its network. Germany now appears ready to follow a similar path, despite an endless stream of cajoling and threats by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper and other U.S. officials at a global security conference in Munich last weekend. Fear of Chinese retaliation has gripped Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and her government. While Germany's intelligence chiefs have largely joined the American assessment of Huawei's national security dangers, Ms. Merkel is focused on the effects on German exports to China, especially after Chinese officials have hinted that Volkswagen, BMW and Daimler, the maker of the Mercedes-Benz, would bear the brunt of retaliation. The Huawei fight is just one part of a bigger U.S.-China battle, as Washington tries to contain Beijing's influence and power and ensure that the world's second-largest economy does not come to dominate advanced industries that could give it an economic and military edge. The United States is also trying to limit China's access to American technology more broadly and is considering restricting sales of microchips, artificial intelligence, robotics and some types of advanced software, along with preventing tech companies from teaming up — or even sharing research — with Chinese firms. Bloomberg [2/17/2020 7:16 PM, Shawn Donnan, 6400K, Neutral] reports that the Trump administration is considering new restrictions on exports of cutting-edge technology to China in a push aimed at limiting Chinese progress in developing its own passenger jets and clamping down further on tech giant Huawei's access to vital semiconductors, according to four people familiar with the discussions. Senior officials are expected to decide by the end of this month whether to block exports of jet engines made by a General

Electric Co. joint venture with France's Safran to China for use in the Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China's C919 single-aisle passenger jet now undergoing flight tests, three of the people familiar with the discussions said. At the same time, the administration is also considering separate measures to broaden export controls related to the Trump administration's restrictions on Huawei Technologies Co. by blocking foreign chipmakers, such as Taiwan's TSMC and U.S. suppliers, from selling components made overseas to Huawei, according to some of the people. Both moves come as some within the Trump administration are pushing for more aggressive efforts to limit China's technological rise and to contain what they see as a potential national security threats or rivals to U.S. innovative power in the 21st century. That effort so far has been focused largely on Huawei but has led to broader fears of a new technological Cold War splintering the global tech industry. Reuters [2/17/2020 4:40 PM, Alexandra Alper and Karen Freifeld, Neutral] reports that the Trump administration is considering changing U.S. regulations to allow it to block shipments of chips to Huawei Technologies from companies such as Taiwan's TSMC (2330.TW), the world's largest contract chipmaker. New restrictions on commerce with China's Huawei are among several options to be considered at high-level U.S. meetings this week and next. The chip proposal has been drafted but its approval is far from certain, one of the sources said. The measure would be a blow to the world's no. 2 smartphone maker as well as to TSMC, a major producer of chips for Huawei's HiSilicon unit and mobile phone rivals Apple Inc (AAPL.O) and Qualcomm Inc (QCOM.O).

Coronavirus Updates: Disease roughly 20 times deadlier than seasonal flu; China reports new cases

The New York Times [2/18/2020 1:05 AM, Staff, 23673K, Neutral] reports that an analysis of 44,672 coronavirus patients in China whose diagnoses were confirmed by laboratory testing has found that 1,023 had died by Feb. 11. That's a fatality rate of 2.3 percent. Figures released on a daily basis suggest the rate has further increased in recent days. That is far higher than the mortality rate of the seasonal flu, with which the new coronavirus has sometimes been compared. The new analysis was posted online by researchers at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The fatality rate among patients in Hubei Province, the center of China's outbreak, was more than seven times higher than that of other provinces. AP [2/17/2020 9:53 PM, Yanan Wang, 2182K, Negative] reports that China reported 1,886 new virus cases and 98 more deaths in its update Tuesday on a disease outbreak that has caused milder illness in most people, an assessment that promoted guarded optimism from global health authorities. The update raised the number of deaths in mainland China to 1,868 and the total confirmed cases to 72,436. The death rate is lower than for SARS and MERS, diseases caused by coronaviruses related to the one that causes COVID-19. But the new virus ultimately could prove more deadly if it spreads to far more people than the others did. Ordinary flu has a fatality rate of 0.1% yet kills hundreds of thousands because it infects millions each year.

14 Evacuated Americans Test Positive for Coronavirus

(B) NBC Nightly News With Lester Holt [2/17/2020 6:32 PM, Miguel Almaguer] reports that under heavy guard, the largest cluster of Americans infected with the coronavirus arrived in the U.S. today, now headed for treatment. The 14 sick passengers isolated on their flight in bio containment pods kept clear of more than 300 others in two emergency charters. They will spend at least two weeks in quarantine after spending 14 days in isolation on the Diamond Princess cruise ship off the coast of Japan. The State Department is allowing the

14 unidentified sick passengers who showed no symptoms to return to the U.S., learning they were infected just before takeoff. An economic toll is rippling around the world. The New York Times [2/17/2020 8:43 PM, Motoko Rich and Edward Wong, 1670K, Neutral] reports that a day before 328 Americans were to be whisked away from a contaminated cruise ship in Japan, the U.S. Embassy in Tokyo told passengers that no one infected with the coronavirus would be allowed to board charter flights to the United States. But as the evacuees began filing onto two reconfigured cargo planes early Monday for departures to military bases in California or Texas, some noticed tented areas separated from the rest of the cabin. While the planes were aloft, the State Department and the Department of Health and Human Services said in a joint statement that the results for 14 passengers who had been tested two or three days earlier had come back positive — just as they were heading to the airport in buses. American officials, it turned out, had started bringing the passengers home without actually knowing their test results. But because the evacuation had already begun by the time Japanese officials relayed those results, officials decided to let the infected evacuees, who were not yet exhibiting symptoms, board the planes and sit in the back, separated from other passengers by plastic sheets about 10 feet tall. CNN [2/17/2020 11:52 PM, Daniel Allman, Hollie Silverman, and Konstantin Toropin, 5551K, Neutral] reports that more than a dozen Americans evacuated on US-chartered flights from a cruise ship docked in Japan were being tested for the novel coronavirus at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, health officials said Monday. The 13 patients, who were among 300 Americans quarantined aboard the Diamond Princess for nearly two weeks, had either tested positive for the virus or had a high likelihood of testing positive because of their symptoms. The patients arrived at the hospital early Monday and were awaiting test results. Twelve patients were transported to the hospital's National Quarantine Center. One patient with a chronic condition was taken to a bio-containment unit for further evaluation, health officials said. Bloomberg [2/17/2020 11:11 PM, Karen Leigh, 6400K, Neutral] reports that Canada said 32 of its citizens aboard the stricken Diamond Princess have tested positive for the coronavirus. Japan said earlier Tuesday that it expected to remove all passengers from the cruise liner by Friday, and South Korea said it would evacuate its citizens and fly them back to Seoul. The ship remains docked at the port of Yokohama. The U.K. government also said it was "working to organize" a flight home for British nationals aboard the ship.

[Libya] UN: Impact of long Libya war on civilians is 'incalculable'

AP [2/17/2020 8:40 PM, Edith M. Lederer, 2182K, Neutral] reports that the U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Libya said Monday the impact of the country's nine-year war on civilians "is incalculable," pointing to its intensity escalating "exponentially" since a rebel commander launched an offensive last April, casualties rising and almost 900,000 people now needing assistance. Yacoub El Hillo said a 55-point road map for ending the war in Libya which was agreed to by 12 key leaders at a conference in Berlin on Jan. 19, endorsed last week by the U.N. Security Council, and reaffirmed at a meeting in Munich on Sunday has seen "serious violations" in the last 10 days, with new strikes in and around the capital Tripoli. El Hillo, who is also the U.N. deputy representative for the oil-rich North African country, said in a briefing to journalists by video from Tripoli that the protracted conflict is "severely impacting civilians in all parts of the country on a scale never seen before." On a potentially positive note, a Joint Military Commission comprising representatives of the warring parties is scheduled to begin a second round of talks Tuesday in Geneva under U.N. auspices, with the aim of agreeing to a lasting cease-fire.

[Syria] Turkey-Russia Standoff in Syria Leaves Millions of Refugees Caught in Chaos
The Wall Street Journal [2/17/2020 4:50 PM, David Gauthier-Villars and Nazih Osseiran, Neutral] reports that Turkey dispatched a delegation to Moscow on Monday for another round of talks aimed at forging a cease-fire agreement in Syria, where relief agencies warn that a deadly vortex of proxy wars could cause the worst humanitarian disaster in the nine-year conflict. At stake is control of Idlib province, a patch of land the size of Delaware that is the last stronghold of Turkish-backed rebels resisting the regime of President Bashar al Assad, which is backed by Russia. The battle for Idlib represents a test for Turkey's geopolitical gambit to reposition itself away from the U.S. and other allies in the North Atlantic military alliance, and closer to Russia, notably with the purchase of sophisticated Russian-made air-defense missiles—a deal which has upset the Pentagon. Short of a solid truce and retreat of the Syrian army before the end of February, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has threatened to launch a full-blown attack on the Assad regime. If there is no pullback, Turkey will “handle it,” Mr. Erdogan said Saturday. The two countries had struck an agreement in Sochi in September 2018 to halt fighting in the northwestern province bordering Turkey, leading scores of civilians fleeing war elsewhere in Syria to seek refuge in Idlib. But backed by Russian aircraft, Assad troops resumed an offensive to reclaim Idlib territory two and half months ago, leaving 3.5 million people entrapped in what relief workers say has effectively become the world's largest refugee camp. Unrelenting shelling and air strikes sent some 900,000 people, most of them women and children, on the road in recent weeks, according to the United Nations. Last week alone, 13 people died of frostbite as displaced people flee in search of elusive shelters, according to Osama Alhoussin, who manages relief programs for the UOSSM aid group in Idlib.

[Turkey] Turkey to arrest 228 for links to cleric in probe of military, ministry: Anadolu Reuters [2/18/2020 12:12 AM, Daren Butler, 5304K, Negative] reports that Turkish prosecutors investigating the military and justice ministry on Tuesday ordered the arrest of 228 people over suspected links to the network that Ankara says was behind a 2016 coup attempt. There has been a sustained crackdown on alleged followers of U.S.-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen since the failed putsch in July 2016, in which some 250 people were killed. Police still routinely carry out raids targeting suspects. In the latest moves, prosecutors ordered the arrest of 157 people, including 101 serving officers, in an investigation of the Turkish Armed Forces. Separately, prosecutors in the capital Ankara ordered the detention of 71 people in an investigation targeting alleged Gulen supporters in the justice ministry, 33 of them currently working in the ministry. Since the attempted coup, around 80,000 people have been jailed pending trial and some 150,000 civil servants, military personnel and others sacked or suspended from their jobs.

[China] China to grant tariff exemptions on additional U.S. goods
Reuters [2/18/2020 12:25 AM, Stella Qiu and Se Young Lee, 5304K, Negative] reports that China said on Tuesday it would accept applications for new tariff exemptions for 696 products imported from the United States including key agricultural and energy products such as pork, beef, soybeans, liquefied natural gas and crude oil. The exemptions, the third and the most substantial set to be granted to date by China since the start of the trade dispute with the United States, come a month after the signing of a Phase 1 trade deal between Washington and Beijing. China has committed to boosting its purchases of goods and services from the United States by \$200 billion over two years. Other products subject

to exemption on additional tariffs imposed during the escalation of the bilateral trade dispute include denatured ethanol and some wheat, corn and sorghum. Some medical devices and metals including copper ore and concentrates, copper scrap and aluminum scrap are also subject to exemption, China's finance ministry said in a statement. The exemptions come amid a coronavirus epidemic that has seriously disrupted the world's second-largest economy. Some U.S. officials and analysts have raised questions about China's ability to meet the purchasing commitments specified in the Phase 1 trade deal due to the coronavirus.

[Japan] Japan approves bill to help firms to develop 5G, drone technologies (Reuters)

Reuters [2/17/2020 10:42 PM, Kaori Kaneko, 5304K, Positive] reports that Japan's cabinet on Tuesday approved a bill to support companies to develop secure 5G mobile networks and drone technologies amid growing alarm among Tokyo policymakers over the increasing influence of China's 5G technology. The bill will give companies which develop such technologies access to low-interest rate loans from government-affiliated financial institutions if their plans fulfill standards on cyber security. Companies that adopt 5G technologies can also get tax incentives if they meet standards set by the government, according to the bill. The government will submit the bill to the parliament and aims to bring it to effect around summer. Last December, Japan unveiled tax measures aimed at encouraging companies to spend their cash piles on start-ups and other investments and stimulating a slowing economy, while also helping firms to compete with China's advance in 5G technology.

[Afghanistan] As Afghan Soldier Kills 2 Americans, U.S. and Taliban Near Deal in Afghanistan

(B) Special Report With Bret Baier [2/17/2020 6:22 PM, Mike Tobin] reports that Taliban fighters continue to strike Afghan government targets despite an agreement for a reduction in violence. 19 government troops were killed in Helmut province. Commanders in three provinces said they heard about the agreement, but until they get direct orders from their superiors, they will hit targets. U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said a deal had been struck with Taliban representatives which calls for a period of seven days with no bombs or rocket attacks. After that a truce with the U.S. and the Taliban could be signed as soon as February 29th. Afghan President Ghani said to strike a deal, the Taliban would have to abandon totalitarian principles. Negotiations include the potential release of 3,000-5,000 Taliban prisoners. A Taliban spokesman said 5,000 Taliban prisoners would be released in exchange for 1,000 Afghan government detainees if a deal is signed. The Washington Times [2/17/2020 1:53 PM, Guy Taylor, 482K, Negative] reports that Taliban leaders confirmed for the first time Monday that a major peace deal with the Trump administration could be signed by the end of the month, although doubts swirled around the claim amid reports of ongoing attacks by the militant group in Afghanistan. Afghan government troops backed by U.S. and allied forces came under attack Sunday night and some Taliban commanders — despite the peace deal claims by the group's leaders — said Monday that they had yet not received orders stand down and would continue operations until ordered otherwise. The Taliban statement came after top U.S. officials had told various news outlets that the two sides were on the verge of securing a major peace deal and had reached a short-term "reduction of violence" pact that was supposed to include a freeze on attacks by both sides in the days before an agreement could be signed. But amid deep skepticism

about the cease-fire and a peace deal, the Trump administration's top envoy to talks said Monday that he remains "cautiously optimistic" that a breakthrough deal remains imminent after 18 months of backroom negotiations with Taliban representatives. U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad told reporters at an event in Pakistan that U.S. officials have obtained "commitments from the Talib[an] on security issues," according to Agence France-Presse, which declining to offer specifics. The crux of a deal is believed to center on Taliban willingness to work with the Kabul government to purge Islamic State, al Qaeda and other international terrorist groups that have found sanctuary in the country, in exchange for a withdrawal of U.S. and international combat troops. The Pentagon is reportedly pushing to keep at least a small special operations presence in the country to deal with the terrorist threat. Mr. Hanafi, a key Taliban player in direct talks with Mr. Khalilzad's team in Doha, claimed the two sides would sign an agreement in the Qatari capital that would involve the U.S. withdrawing from Afghanistan and releasing some 5,000 Taliban prisoners in exchange for about 1,000 Afghans imprisoned by the militant group. It was not immediately clear whether the Afghan government of President Ashraf Ghani has signed off on the deal. Analysts also question whether ground-level commanders in the Taliban support the agreement.

[India] India Offers Concessions on U.S. Farm Goods to Reach Trade Deal

Bloomberg [2/18/2020 12:05 AM, Shruti Srivastava, 6400K, Neutral] reports that India is open to greater market access for American farm and dairy products and lower duties on Harley-Davidson Inc. motorcycles as it seeks to conclude a trade deal with the U.S. in time for President Donald Trump's scheduled visit next week, according to people with knowledge of the matter. New Delhi is willing to allow market access for U.S.-produced cranberries, blueberries, pecan nuts and avocados at lower duties. Also on the cards is allowing some imports of dried distilled grains soluble, a by-product of ethanol production used in animal feed and alfalfa hay, a plant used for fodder, said the people, asking not to be identified citing rules. Even as talks are on between the two nations to have some sort of a deal on the table ahead of Trump's state visit on Feb. 24-25, there is no clarity yet on when a final agreement will be ready. Trade talks between Washington and New Delhi have been stalled since before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's U.S. visit in September.

[Pakistan] Pakistan no longer a militant safe haven: PM Imran Khan

Yahoo News/AFP [2/17/2020 10:40 AM, Staff, Neutral] reports that Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan insisted Monday that his country is no longer a militant safe haven, and said his administration fully supports the Afghan peace process. Khan's assertion was however challenged hours later, when a suicide bomber targeted a religious rally in the southwestern province of Balochistan. The premier's comments come as the US and the Taliban appear on the brink of a deal that would see US forces begin to pull out of Afghanistan. In return, the Taliban would enter talks with the Afghan government, stick to various security guarantees and work toward an eventual, comprehensive ceasefire. Pakistan, which has long been accused of supporting the Taliban and other extremist groups along its border with Afghanistan, is seen as key to helping secure and implement any deal. While Pakistan cannot "completely guarantee" that no Taliban are hiding among the estimated 2.7 million Afghans living in the country, Khan said his government had done all it can to prevent attacks in Afghanistan, including by building a border fence.

[Brazil] Protesters disrupt shipments in Brazil's largest port: union

Reuters [2/17/2020 3:39 PM, Roberto Samora and Rodrigo Viga Gaier, Neutral] reports that Brazilian truck drivers began protesting early on Monday at Latin America's largest port in Santos, affecting the unloading of shipments and arrival of trucks at the port. The protesters are demanding a reduction of value-added taxes on gasoline and diesel, the port's management said. A press representative for the port said it could not confirm the information provided by the union. But the port did say that the protest had affected some unloading activities.

[Mexico] Killing of 7-year-old stokes anger in Mexico over femicides

AP [2/17/2020 10:12 PM, Staff, 2182K, Negative] reports that the killing of a 7-year-old girl on the southern outskirts of Mexico City has stoked rising anger over the brutal slayings of women, including one found stabbed to death and skinned earlier this month. The city prosecutor's office said Monday that investigators identified a body found over the weekend as that of Fatima, a grade-school student who was taken by a stranger on Feb. 11. Her body was found wrapped in a bag and abandoned in a rural area on Saturday and was identified by genetic testing. The cause of death has not been released. Five people have been questioned in the case, and video footage of her abduction exists. Guillermo Anton Godínez, the girl's grandfather, said Monday that his daughter arrived at the school 15 or 20 minutes after the woman led the girl away. He added that his granddaughter had left the school wearing her uniform, but the woman had put a green shirt and pants on her. His daughter was initially told that authorities couldn't begin searching for 72 hours after her disappearance, he said. However, the prosecutors office said an Amber alert was issued about the girl's disappearance the same day that relatives reported her missing. Many relatives and commentators called for urgent changes to primary school safety protocols. At government schools in urban areas of Mexico, children simply walk out on the street after classes end. Although their parents are often waiting outside, it is not the school's responsibility to make sure someone is waiting to meet them. Reuters [2/17/2020 9:47 PM, Noe Torres and Anthony Esposito, 5304K, Negative] reports that relatives of a seven-year-old girl murdered in Mexico said on Monday the government had failed to protect her despite their pleas, while President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador appeared to blame the crime on neo-liberal economics. Fatima Cecilia Aldrighett went missing on Feb. 11. Her body was discovered over the weekend in a plastic garbage bag in Mexico City's Tlahuac neighborhood, days after another murder of a young woman triggered angry protests. Sonia Lopez, Aldrighett's aunt, said the girl could have been found alive if authorities had listened to the family. Lopez said precious hours were wasted after Aldrighett was reported missing. She also said social services had not heeded calls to help the girl's mother, who has health problems, support her daughter. An average of 10 women a day are killed in Mexico and the year 2019, the first of Lopez Obrador's government, set an overall homicide record, according to official data. Victims of femicide increased 10% in 2019 to over 1,000.

[Venezuela] Maduro says 'not afraid of military combat' in Venezuela

Yahoo News/AFP [2/17/2020 11:02 PM, Staff, 10942K, Neutral] reports that President Nicolas Maduro on Monday said he is "not afraid of military combat," accusing his US counterpart Donald Trump of plotting to invade Venezuela with the support of regional allies. "We don't want war; we don't want violence; we don't want terrorism, but we are not afraid of military combat and we are going to guarantee peace," said Maduro in a televised speech, surrounded by the armed forces high command. Military exercises were carried out

over the weekend, Maduro added, in response to alleged attack plans orchestrated by the US, Colombia and Brazil. According to official figures, some 2.4 million soldiers and members of the civilian militia were deployed throughout the country.

[Cameroon] Cameroon army blames accident for village 'massacre'

Yahoo News/AFP [2/17/2020 5:02 PM, Staff, Negative] reports that Cameroon's army on Monday denied opposition charges that it had massacred villagers in a troubled English-speaking region, blaming instead an "unfortunate accident" caused by an explosion of fuel during a firefight. Up to 22 civilians, 14 of them children, died in the incident on Friday, according to the United Nations -- deaths which opposition parties blamed on members of the armed forces. But army spokesman Colonel Cyrille Atonfack Guemo described the allegations as "duplicious." An army investigation, he said, found that the deaths happened after fuel was set ablaze during a gunfight with anglophone separatists. Five civilians -- a woman and four children -- died, and "seven terrorists" were "neutralised", Atonfack told AFP in Libreville by phone. The deaths occurred in the village of Ntumbo in Cameroon's Northwest Region -- one of two English-speaking regions that have been grappling with separatist violence since October 2017. More than 3,000 people have died and at least 700,000 have fled their homes.

Headlines

The Washington Post

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

14 with virus arrive in U.S.

Major Va. gun-control bill dies in committee

CIA's window into brutal S. American campaign

When Mom is a face on the phone

Money flowed in secret from McCarrick to accused cleric

The New York Times

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

As Afghan Soldier Kills 2 Americans, Peace Talks Forge Ahead

They Escaped an Infected Ship, but the Flight Home Was No Haven

Huawei Is Winning the Argument in Europe, as the U.S. Fumbles to Develop Alternatives

Apple Signals Coronavirus's Threat to Global Businesses

Payout From a National Opioids Settlement Won't Be as Big as Hoped

The Wall Street Journal

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

Apple to Fall Short of Projected Revenue Due to Coronavirus

Coronavirus Cruise Passengers Land in U.S., Including 14 Infected

France's Alstom to Buy Bombardier Train Unit

Can Solar Power Compete With Coal? In India, It's Gaining Ground

Pull-Ups, Sit-Ups Don't Hurt as Much as These High-Fashion Gym Get-Ups

ABC News

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

14 Americans evacuated from cruise ship in Japan test positive for coronavirus

Civil society figures back in court in Turkey protest trial

Mexico attorney general says case of ex-oil chief 'symbolic'

CBS News

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

Americans from coronavirus-stricken cruise ship in Japan arrive in U.S.

U.S. officials sound alarm on China at global security conference

Until today, China has reported thousands more coronavirus cases than the World Health Organization. Here's why

CNN

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

Here's how long coronaviruses may linger on contaminated surfaces, according to science

Syrians are in a desperate race to outrun a brutal regime offensive

Did Xi Jinping know about the coronavirus outbreak earlier than first suggested?

Fox News

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

Navy preps its new USS Ford carrier for massive ocean warfare

Denmark finds huge cocaine stash on cargo ship; 27 arrested

Database shows how China targets minority Uighur Muslims

NBC News

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

14 Americans test positive for coronavirus after evacuation from quarantined cruise ship

Apple says coronavirus will keep it from meeting revenue expectations

Jeff Bezos commits \$10 billion to combat climate change

Washington Schedule

President

The White House

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

9:00 AM In-House Pool Call Time

11:00 AM Out-of-Town Pool Call Time

12:30 PM The President departs the White House en route to Joint Base Andrews

12:55 PM The President arrives at Joint Base Andrews

1:05 PM The President departs Washington, D.C., en route to Los Angeles, CA

6:25 PM The President arrives at Los Angeles International Airport

6:35 PM The President departs Los Angeles, CA, en route to Santa Monica, CA

6:40 PM The President arrives at Santa Monica, CA

6:50 PM The President departs Santa Monica Airport Landing Zone en route to Montage Beverly Hills

7:05 PM The President arrives at Montage Beverly Hills

7:10 PM The President participates in a briefing with the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic

Committee and LA 2028 Organizers

8:45 PM The President participates in a roundtable with supporters

9:15 PM The President delivers remarks at a joint fundraising committee dinner

10:05 PM The President departs Beverly Hills, CA, en route to Santa Monica, CA

10:20 PM The President arrives at Santa Monica Airport Landing Zone

10:30 PM The President departs Santa Monica, CA, en route to Los Angeles, CA

10:35 PM The President arrives at Los Angeles International Airport

10:45 PM The President depart Los Angeles, CA, en route to Las Vegas, NV

11:50 PM The President arrives at McCarran International Airport

Vice President

The White House

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

See source link. Schedule not yet available.

Senate

Senate

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

There are no committee hearings scheduled.

House of Representatives

House of Representatives

(2/18/2020 6:00 AM)

There are no public events scheduled.

{End of Report}

Sender: "Stilwell, David R"

Recipient: (b)(6) (Geneva) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine
Date: Wed, 13 Jun 2018 02:20:32 -0400

Please do.

(b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 14:01
To: (b)(6) (Rick) (Beijing)
Subject: Fw: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Heading back to the emb after the health conference. Will send the cleared night note to econ unit this afternoon, unless I hear otherwise. Then will send notes to (b)(6) Thanks.
Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 8:53 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

This looks good. Sorry just seeing this now.
Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 7:03 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

OK with me.

Thank you for doing this.

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 12, 2018, at 2:43 AM, (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) wrote:

Here's a draft night note. (b)(6) if you can clear, we can send it on. (b)(6) please send any needed corrections. Thanks, craig

~~(SBU)~~ Chinese Team Seeks to Use New Ebola Vaccine in the D.R.C:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Official -~~SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:52 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

We know Dong Xiaoping well so can always follow up.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:47 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

In case it's useful for the night note, I talked with XU Zhen, chief of the Branch for Strategic Planning and Capacity Building at the CCDC's Public Health Emergency Center, at the public health conference this morning. She confirmed that a CCDC team took the Chinese vaccine to the DRC on Friday June 8 and stated that it would be used for Chinese living there, including workers at Chinese SOEs. When I asked her about the vaccine clinical trial process, she said that it had been tested on humans (as referenced in the story sent this morning) but didn't have details. She suggested talking with Dong Xiaoping, the head of the CCDC's Global Health Center.

Best, (b)(6)

Official -~~SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:15 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)

Cc: Oh, Sarah (Beijing)

Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Hi (b)(6)

Do you mind if we turn this into a night note? This is very useful information that we should share more broadly.

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: Chen, Ping (NIH/NIAID) [E] [mailto:chenpi@niaid.nih.gov]

Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 11:54 AM

To: Toder, Miles F (Beijing); Parrish Fuentes, Adrienne L (Beijing); Rader, Jessenia (Jesse) (Beijing); Chong, Patrick (CDC/CGH/DGHP); (U) Brown, Matthew (Beijing | NIH); (b)(6) (U) Sung, Nancy S (Beijing | NSF)

Cc: Ng'asi, Adrian (PPL/DC); Jones, Melissa (RDMA/OPH); Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (Beijing)

Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

(b)(6) NIAID China Office

#55 An Jia Lou Road, Beijing 100600

Office: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

US Mobile: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Date: Monday, June 11, 2018 at 7:34 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
(Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)"
(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (NIH/NCI) [E] (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)"
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Thanks (b)(6) An interesting but not entirely surprising development with possibly profound consequences. I wonder if closer cooperation is called for, or if measures aimed at countering Chinese activities abroad would be more effective?

(b)(6)

Agency for International Development
United States Embassy, Beijing, China

~~Official SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, June 11, 2018 11:55 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NIH) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

fyi.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
Date: June 11, 2018 at 11:43:49 AM EDT
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
Subject: FW: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

FYI

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]**Sent:** Friday, June 08, 2018 9:24 AM**Subject:** STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccineHealth

China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

By Helen Branswell (b)(6)

June 8, 2018

<image001.jpg>Health workers operate within an Ebola safety zone in the health center in Iyonda, near Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on June 1. *JUNIOR D. KANNAH/AFP/Getty Images*

China is making a bid to use its Ebola vaccine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It's a move that could further complicate efforts to test a crowded field of vaccines and therapies in the context of a waning outbreak.

The head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Gao Fu, is reported to have said that a team of experts will travel to the DRC on Friday, bringing with them an unspecified number of doses of vaccine.

"We will seek to use the Chinese developed vaccine there to help with control and prevention of the disease, but for the present the vaccines will likely only cover Chinese living in Congo," Gao is reported as saying in *China Daily*.

The DRC health ministry's daily Ebola update on Thursday noted that only one Ebola vaccine has been approved for use in the country at this time, and that is the vaccine being developed by Merck.

Related: Excitement over use of Ebola vaccine in outbreak tempered by real-world challenges

Jessica Ilunga, a spokesperson for Health Minister Dr. Oly Ilunga, said there has not been an official request by the Chinese to use the vaccine. Any decisions on approving additional vaccines would have to be made by two government advisory committees, she said. One committee studies the science behind the products while the other looks at the ethics of using them.

The World Health Organization's vaccines advisory committee has recommended that until there is a fully licensed Ebola vaccine, Merck's experimental vaccine should be used in outbreaks. That vaccine is given in one dose and it triggers a rapid immune response – characteristics that are needed against such a deadly disease.

But the WHO only advises. It is up to individual countries whether they want to follow its recommendations.

Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy, said the move by the Chinese is "a harbinger of things to come."

Related: Ebola outbreak opens way to chaotic jockeying to test experimental drugs

Osterholm said that global health aid and assistance is a form of diplomacy. If the current U.S. administration is looking to cut back on what it spends to help developing countries with their health problems, it should expect to see China step in to gain more influence.

"This is the beginning of what I think is a very consequential change in international public health response, with impact on overall global health security," Osterholm said. "By beginning to turn our back on global health security ... we have not understood that those that provide the emergency response

and those that provide the vaccines and those that provide the care and treatment are often those who also have access at the table of the highest levels of government for every other thing, including trade, resources and all aspects of regional security."

The news may also cause concern among American and European companies that have long been working on Ebola vaccines and drugs and have struggled to find opportunities to test them during sporadic outbreaks. Janssen, the vaccines division of Johnson & Johnson, has been developing an Ebola vaccine for years and has also been interested in trying to test the product in this outbreak.

Little is known about the Chinese vaccine, which was licensed without a Phase 3 trial — meaning there is no human efficacy data to prove that it is protective. Its approval was based on animal studies and small trials that showed it was safe and induced antibody production in healthy people who received it.

The Merck vaccine was shown to be effective during the West African outbreak, but has still not made its way through the licensure process.

"What makes it difficult is that if the Chinese license a product and bring it to a low- or middle-income country ... and we're still trying to evaluate those vaccines and drugs that we believe are important, it may actually create a real challenge," Osterholm said. "The country may well be motivated to use the licensed [Chinese] product, even without potentially the same rigor of evaluation that we're putting our vaccines through."

The Merck vaccine is being used in a ring vaccination approach, where contacts of cases, and contacts of the contacts, are offered vaccination in an effort to protect all those who may have been exposed.

Health care workers, too, have been vaccinated. As of Wednesday, 1,826 people have been vaccinated with the Merck vaccine in the current outbreak.

The outbreak, which was declared a month ago, has slowed markedly, although the DRC health ministry reported a new confirmed case on Thursday, the first in about 10 days. The patient, who is in Iboko, was in contact with someone who earlier died of Ebola.

Daily case counts — a combination of confirmed, probable, and suspect cases — have fluctuated up and down over the past week or two. That's because the government has been reporting suspect cases without waiting for confirmatory tests. It is not unusual to see seven suspect cases reported one day and discarded the next.

On Thursday, the government reported 62 cases, 10 of which are suspect cases.

The combination of confirmed and probable cases — people who died before testing began — provides a clearer picture of the trajectory of the outbreak. That number now stands at 52, with 27 deaths.

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

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

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine
Date: Tue, 12 Jun 2018 01:26:46 -0400

No problem but please share with us for review before you transmit to DC.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:14 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Hi (b)(6)

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(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] [mailto:(b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 11:54 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing);
(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6) (Beijing | NIH) (b)(6)
(b)(6) NSF
Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Ping

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

NIAID China Office

#55 An Jia Lou Road, Beijing 100600

Office: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

US Mobile: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Date: Monday, June 11, 2018 at 7:34 PM

To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)

(Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)"

(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (NIH/NCI) [E] (b)(5)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)"

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

Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

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(b)(6)

Agency for International Development
United States Embassy, Beijing, China

~~Official - SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

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

(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP)

(b)(6) (Beijing (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NSF (b)(6)

Subject: Fwd: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

fyi.

Sent from my iPhone

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From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)

Date: June 11, 2018 at 11:43:49 AM EDT

To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)

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Sent: Friday, June 08, 2018 9:24 AM

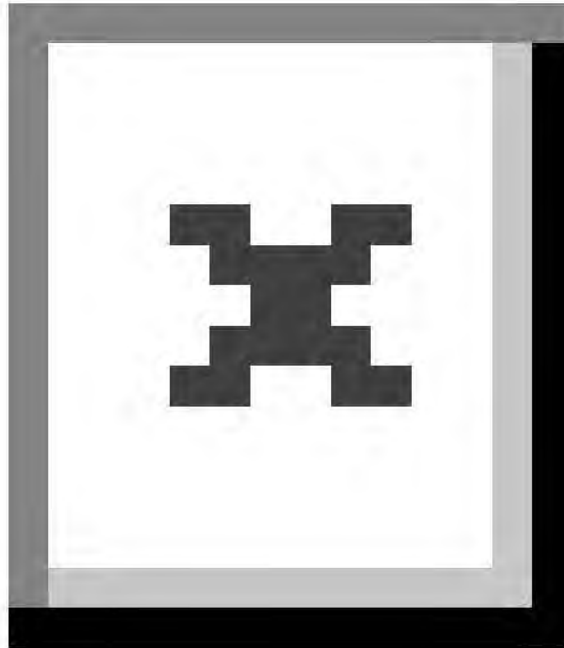
Subject: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Health

China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

By Helen Branswell (b)(6)

June 8, 2018



Health workers operate within an Ebola safety zone in the health center in Iyonda, near Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on June 1. *JUNIOR D. KANNAH/AFP/Getty Images*

China is making a bid to use its Ebola vaccine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It's a move that could further complicate efforts to test a crowded field of vaccines and therapies in the context of a waning outbreak.

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Related: Excitement over use of Ebola vaccine in outbreak tempered by real-world challenges

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Related: Ebola outbreak opens way to chaotic jockeying to test experimental drugs

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The combination of confirmed and probable cases — people who died before testing began — provides a clearer picture of the trajectory of the outbreak. That number now stands at 52, with 27 deaths.

Sender: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)>
Subject: RE: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020
Date: Wed, 22 Apr 2020 21:46:03 +0000

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State

From: Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:40 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

Thanks, this is great. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:36 PM
To: Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)>
Subject: RE: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of State

From: Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)>
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:29 PM
To: (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D <(b)(6)>
(b)(6); Feith, David <(b)(6)>
Cc: Stilwell, David R <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)>
Subject: FW: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

Wow, the Boss came out swinging today! (b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:20 PM

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

Cc: EAP-P-Office-DL <EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov>; EAP-PG-Taskings-DL <EAP-PG-Taskings-DL@state.gov>; EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL <EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>; EAP-Korea-Transcripts-DL <EAP-Korea-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>

Subject: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson**

For Immediate Release

April 22, 2020

**REMARKS TO THE PRESS
Secretary Michael R. Pompeo**

**April 22, 2020
Press Briefing Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, good morning, everyone. Happy Ramadan to those of you in time zones where it's Thursday already.

I want to lead off with three commemorations.

First, we remember those slain in terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. That was one year ago yesterday.

Second, this week the administration honors the annual Holocaust Days of Remembrance. This is the 75th anniversary year of the liberation of many Nazi concentration camps where so many innocent people were murdered, including 6 million Jews. We bear witness to their stories so that such repugnant acts of evil will never happen again.

Third, it's Earth Day, and especially in light of Secretary-General Guterres' message released this morning to turn our recovery into a real opportunity to do the right thing, I want to remind everyone that the right way to achieve a greener, cleaner, brighter future for the world is to unleash private innovation and free market competition. It's what we've done here in the United States but continue to be our model, and we are a world leader in reducing all types of emission.

One simple data point: From 2005 to 2018, the most recent year we have data, U.S. emissions decreased by more than 10 percent even as our economy grew by 25 percent. China, conversely, has been the largest annual emitter since 2006 and it expects that its emissions will continue to grow until around 2030, thus offsetting the progress of countries all around the world in reducing global emissions. I would urge Secretary Guterres to make sure we have the data right, the facts

right about who is actually delivering on the things that we all value. And on Earth Day, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, I think that's especially important.

Turning to the World Health Organization, I want to spend a few minutes telling the American people a little bit more about the problems that we're trying to work our way through.

The WHO has two primary functions. First, it's a regulator and an advisory role, and a health emergency and humanitarian aid operation on top of that.

After the first SARS outbreak in 2003, the United States led the reform of the WHO, the WHO rules that govern how countries report on public health threats. So a major reform effort at 2003.

Those rules – they're called the International Health Regulations – went into effect in 2007.

We set very clear expectations. We – the world – set very clear expectations for how every country must disclose data to protect global health.

For example, Article 6 of the IHR says that "each State Party shall notify the World Health Organization...within 24 hours...of all events which may constitute a public health emergency of international concern within its territory..."

Annex 2 of those same rules provides that countries must notify the World Health Organization of any unusual or unexpected public health events such as SARS, a close genetic cousin of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Those rules also said how countries should evaluate when to notify the WHO of diseases of unknown causes or sources.

We strongly believe that the Chinese Communist Party did not report the outbreak of the new coronavirus in a timely fashion to the World Health Organization.

Article 6 of the IHRs, which was a part of this reform, further mandates that a State Party – that would include China – "shall continue to communicate to WHO timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information..." That is, there's an ongoing obligation.

Even after the CCP did notify the WHO of the coronavirus outbreak, China didn't share all of the information it had.

Instead, it covered up how dangerous the disease is. It didn't report sustained human-to-human transmission for a month until it was in every province inside of China. It censored those who tried to warn the world, it ordered a halt to testing of new samples, and it destroyed existing samples.

The CCP still has not shared the virus sample from inside of China with the outside world, making it impossible to track the disease's evolution.

Not making a legal determination here today on China's adherence to the IHRs, but the World Health Organization's regulatory arm clearly failed during this pandemic.

I'd also note that when countries adopted these new rules in 2007, we also gave the director-general of the WHO encouragement and the ability to go public when a member-country wasn't following those rules, and that didn't happen in this case either.

It's why we continue to insist this is an ongoing requirement for transparency and openness according to the WHO rules, and the WHO has responsibility to continue to enforce them today. This transparency and getting it right is critical to saving lives today and in the future.

I'll talk for just a minute about humanitarian aid. The United States is the most generous nation on the planet, has been for the past three years, will continue to be this year.

Thanks to the American taxpayers, we've dedicated more than \$140 billion in global funding for global health purposes in the past two decades.

Today I can confirm the United States is making an additional commitment of about 270 million to assist the most at-risk countries in fighting the virus, bringing our total to more than \$775 million to date.

We do this in lots of ways. We do this through multilateral organizations. We help our partners by sharing expertise. Today the CDC has officers stationed in 59 countries and has helped train thousands of epidemiologists worldwide over the years whose knowledge is providing incredibly valuable.

You should know it helps those countries, it saves lives in those countries, but this is a global pandemic and that work protects us right here at home in America as well.

Weeks before the first reported COVID case arrived in Guatemala, USAID helped the Ministry of Health there equip a key hospital to start caring for its first patients.

And the United States is training more than 70,000 pharmacists across Indonesia today so they can provide good advice and referrals.

American generosity isn't limited to our assistance that comes directly from the United States Government. Our businesses, our NGOs, charities, all faith groups – this is an all-of-America approach to saving lives all across the world and protecting us right here at home as well.

We estimate that the American people, in sum, have given nearly \$3 billion in donations and assistance just to fight this particular virus.

America's global health commitments remain as steady as ever.

Move on to a couple final points. I want to highlight two ways in which the Chinese Communist Party is exploiting the world's focus on COVID-19 crisis by continuing its provocative behavior.

First, we commented on what's taking place in Hong Kong, where amidst increased efforts by Beijing to erode autonomy, law enforcement authorities have arrested pro-democracy activists, including 81-year-old Martin Lee. We've always said that China has an obligation to live up to

its promises, its obligation – as I was speaking about the virus earlier – to live up to the rules that it put in place and it signed off on. We'd ask them to continue to do that here.

You've also seen that the Chinese Communist Party is exerting military pressure on Taiwan and coercing its neighbors in the South China Sea, even going so far as to have – so far as to sink a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

The United States strongly opposes China's bullying; we hope other nations will hold them to account, too. Tonight I'll be on a phone call cochaired by myself and my Laotian counterpart with every ASEAN member.

I want to note, too, that we are now well along in developing the implementing policies required by the law in the NDAA of 2019 prohibiting use of Huawei and other untrusted vendors in U.S. facilities.

Data that come into U.S. facilities will have to follow a Clean Path and reside and transit only through trusted systems. And we'll provide full details on that before too long.

On Venezuela, as I've commented frequently from this podium, we're continuing to apply pressure on the Maduro regime, all the while seeking to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people.

As announced by the Department of Treasury yesterday, the general license which allowed certain companies to maintain operations – Venezuela, PDVSA – expires today.

The Treasury Department has announced a new, narrowly limited license for seven months which will allow companies that are operating there to begin their wind-down process.

And with that, I'm happy to take questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, great. Nick.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thanks, Mr. Secretary, for doing this. Let me try Iran and China, if you don't mind. The IRGC today said that it launched a military satellite into orbit for the first time. Could that technology be used for ICBMs? And we've seen from Iran expanded nuclear capacity, Iraqi militia rocket attacks, harassing of a Navy ship in recent days. After the Soleimani strike, there was talk of reestablishing deterrence. Do you fear the deterrence has slipped?

And on China, there are millions of PPE items stuck in China despite the fact they've been bought by U.S. companies. Do you believe the PPE is stuck because of red tape, China trying to make sure the quality is high, or because China is actually hoarding them and keeping them from the U.S.? Thanks.

SECRETARY POMPEO: As for your second question, I'll leave to the Vice President's task force to talk about those goods and their transit. The good news is we have seen China provide those resources. Sometimes they're from U.S. companies that are there in China, but we've had success. The Vice President and his team have talked about the air bridge that has delivered

products to the American people from China, and we appreciate that. We are counting on China to continue to live up to its contractual obligations and international obligations to provide that assistance to us and to sell us those goods – often these are commercial transactions – in a way consistent with all of the international trade rules.

As for Iran, you noted the launch last night. The Iranians have consistently said that these missile programs were disconnected from their military, that these were purely commercial enterprises. I think today's launch proves what we've been saying all along here in the United States: The IRGC, a designated terrorist organization, launched a missile today. And I'll leave to the Department of Defense to talk about the details about that. But when you talk about the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, I think every nation has an obligation to go to the United Nations and evaluate whether this missile launch was consistent with that Security Council resolution. I don't think it remotely is, and I need – I think Iran needs to be held accountable for what they've done. They've now had a military organization that the United States has designated terrorists attempt to launch a satellite.

You talked about the naval ships. You saw the President's statement this morning. The President's been very clear to the Department of Defense and frankly to the State Department team too to do everything we need to do to make sure that we protect and defend our officers, our military officers, our diplomats around the world, to continue to ensure that they are secure and safe. What he said this morning and what I know he's told all of us in leadership inside the government is take whatever action is necessary to make sure that you can defend and keep our people safe. I'm confident that the Department of Defense will do that in response to what the President said this morning as well.

And then finally, you talked more broadly about deterrence. Two thoughts. First: The Iranian regime has gone around the world spreading disinformation in response to this virus. One of the things they've said is that, boy, we need resources in order to take care of the virus at home. And all the while they are launching satellites, driving ships around the Arabian Gulf, coming and harassing U.S. naval vessels. They continue to underwrite Shia militias, they're working to support Hizballah. Yesterday my Iranian counterpart – or the day before – was in Syria talking to the butcher in Damascus.

I hope that the Iranian regime will respond to the Iranian people's demands to prioritize resources, resources that the Iranian regime clearly has, to the health and security and safety of the Iranian people, rather than continuing their global terror campaign. You can see they're still hard at it. You can see they still have resources. You should note, we, the – at the very first news that the COVID virus had hit Iran, offered humanitarian assistance to the people of Iran. That offer was rejected. That offer still stands. We've assisted other countries in delivering humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people. I only wish that the Iranian regime cared about its people as much as the rest of the world has demonstrated that it does.

MS ORTAGUS: Barbara.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, we're hearing that there is panic buying in North Korea at the moment. I was wondering if you have any reading about what's going on there.

And given the reports that Kim Jong-un is in very poor health, has the U.S. tried to reach out to Pyongyang for any information, and what was the response?

And then a broader question on China, if I may. How would you say that the Chinese behavior – this disinformation that you are talking about – what effect do you think that has on a long-term relationship with the U.S.? Do you think it will damage it significantly?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Barbara, thanks. I don't have anything to add on North Korea. As the President said last evening I think it was, we're watching closely what's taking place there. But I don't have anything to add.

As for China, nations that desire to be part of the global landscape have obligations for truthful information – they have obligations to share and be transparent and open. That's our expectation for every country. What I think – I think you were referring to was you called it disinformation. Seeking to transfer responsibility or to deny access to the world so that the world can figure out what's going on – you have to remember, these labs are still open inside of China, these labs that contain complex pathogens that were being studied. It's not just the Wuhan Institute of Virology. There are multiple labs inside of China that are handling these things. It's important that those materials are being handled in a safe and secure way such that there isn't accidental release.

We have an elaborate regime inside the United States to do that. Many countries do it as well. We have lots of regimes where – I'll give you an example in the nuclear context, where the world inspects sites so that we can ensure that there's proper handling. The United States spends a lot of money training others to help them handle nuclear materials in an appropriate way. We have to make sure that the Chinese Government is handling those materials in an appropriate way not only in the Wuhan Institute of Virology but elsewhere. So this is an ongoing obligation that the Chinese Government has as well as an ongoing obligation of the World Health Organization that has responsibility for compliance with the rules.

I hope I didn't bore you with them, but they're important to understand that there are a set of global regulations that the Chinese Communist Party signed up for. These aren't American rules we apply, these are rules that the Chinese Government signed up for, and the World Health Organization has a continuing obligation – not just one from back in December but a continuing obligation to make sure that those rules are being complied with today in a way that protects us not only from the ongoing pandemic but a future one as well.

MS ORTAGUS: Michel.

QUESTION: Thank you so much. Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: -- first, have you delivered the President's warning to Iran directly? And second, do you – are you concerned that the oil price will have an effect on the security and stability of the Gulf states and your partners in the region?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I never comment on communications, internal communications between myself and private – between myself and my counterparts. So I don't have any comment on your first question.

On your second one, the President has been incredibly focused on trying to create a more stable energy market in light of the enormous decrease in demand, right. You've seen crude oil demand fall somewhere between 20 and 35 percent over the past several weeks, and you've seen the price impacts that have resulted from that, right. You had the front futures contract trading for negative \$37 for a few hours a couple days back now. What the President did a couple of weekends ago and the work that he's engaged in today are twofold: one, to do everything we can to ensure that we preserve America's capacity to deliver on its energy resources here; and second, to work to try and create stability in the energy markets so that you get price signals that are consistent with real demand, and that also means getting the global economy cranked back up again. A key element that will have the most significant impact on those price issues, on those supply chain issues in the energy industry is getting the world back going and getting demand back to the levels we had back in October, November, and December of 2019.

Here in the United States we had one of the most robust economies that the United States has ever had. When we get back to those levels and the world gets back to those levels, those governments that depend for a significant amount of their revenue – for their national GDP on oil will be in a better place than they are today. There's real risk. With low prices and low volumes of demand, those countries are really going to face financial challenges, and we've been in conversation with many of them about how we can bridge that gap collectively.

MS ORTAGUS: Rich.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Rich, how are you?

QUESTION: Good, how are you?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm good.

QUESTION: Given its failure to notify the WHO in a timely manner, do you think that the Chinese Government owes countries or individuals compensation? And also, just as you'd spoken about the multiple labs within China, what's your assessment of China's handling of these dangerous materials? Do you think that they do a sufficient enough job of it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I'm going to leave the accountability piece of this for another day in terms of what we do to assign accountability and how we hold other nations accountable, other than to say is that the rules set – the WHO rules set itself contemplates nations complying with their obligations, and it gives the director general of the WHO enormous authority with respect to nations that do not comply, and we expect every country who signs up for the International Health Regulations and the leadership of the WHO to then enforce them. And so we're counting on that. We're now counting on that not only retrospectively, but that that continue today.

What's the second question, Rich?

QUESTION: You mentioned multiple labs within China.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. I'm not going to comment on that. What I will say is it's always easier to know the answer to your question about whether these labs are in compliance not only with the regulations but if they're handling this material in a way that is adequate, safe, and secure, if the world can have access to those places, if they will share that information openly and transparently and in spite – the President said this – we tried to get in to take a look at what was going on early on in this, to come in alongside the World Health Organization early on; it would have been back in January if I remember correctly. We still do not have a sample of the virus nor has the world had access to the facilities or other locations where this virus may have originated inside of Wuhan.

MS ORTAGUS: Said.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Sir, a new Israeli Government was formed, a unity government between Mr. Netanyahu and General Gantz, and they vowed to begin annexing parts of the West Bank on the 1st of July. I wonder if you would have a comment on that.

Also on the aid you released recently, you released \$5 million to the Palestinian Authority to fight COVID-19. Are they – they need a lot more. So will there be any more aid in the pipeline? Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Two good questions. On the first one – on the second one, we are happy to provide that \$5 million of assistance^[1], and we hope that it'll get to the right place. Our concern with having provided assistance, the reason we stopped providing assistance previously was that this – these resources weren't getting to the place they needed to, to the Palestinian people. We hope that this money, this \$5 million will get where it needs to go to provide real assistance to the Palestinian people who, to your point and I agree with, are going to need a lot of help as they move through this. We'll evaluate whether this \$5 million both worked, delivered, and second, if there's more resources that are both either appropriate or can be delivered in a way that actually gets to the Palestinian people.

Your first question was about the election.

QUESTION: The government.

SECRETARY POMPEO: We're happy with the – a new government's formed. A fourth election, we think, wouldn't have been in Israel's best interest, but we'll leave that to them. We think it's not in the world's best interest. We're glad that there is a now fully formed government in Israel.

As for the annexation in the West Bank, the Israelis will ultimately make those decisions. Those are – that's an Israeli decision, and we will work closely with them to share with them our views of this in a private setting.

MS ORTAGUS: I need to get the Secretary to his next meeting, but we still have two special guests to continue this briefing so --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Great. Thank you all. Thanks for being with me. Everybody have a good morning.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. So we're going to have John Barsa first, and then Jim Richardson, and then we'll go right to Q&A again. So, John.

MR BARS: Good morning. Thank you for having us here today. For those of you who I have not yet met, my name is John Barsa. I am the new acting administrator at USAID, and I'm deeply honored to have been chosen for this position. I would like to thank President Trump for the support and confidence he's placed in me with this charge. I look forward to working with him, Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, and other leaders throughout the interagency as we lead one of the finest workforces in the U.S. Government today.

We are here to discuss how the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership and help countries around the world fight the COVID-19 pandemic. With the \$2.7 billion in emergency supplemental funding Congress has provided, USAID is working with the State Department and the CDC to provide assistance that strengthens health systems, meets emergency humanitarian needs, and mitigates the economic impact of the virus's spread.

With the Secretary's announcement today, we have contributed a total of more than \$775 million across more than 100 countries facing the threat of this global pandemic. Here's a little bit more detail for you on the specific pots of money that this announcement encompasses. It includes nearly \$103 million from the Economic Support Fund account, which nongovernmental organizations will use to implement a variety of interventions to support communities and countries. We'll also be committing \$100 million in humanitarian assistance from USAID's International Disaster Assistance Account to help meet urgent, lifesaving needs in crisis-affected areas, and \$667[2] million in migration and refugee assistance to support displaced populations, which remain the most vulnerable populations to this pandemic.

In every corner of the globe, the United States is lending a helping hand to countries that need it the most. Many of these countries are places where we regularly provide assistance. Our expanded presence in other countries demonstrate the extraordinary nature of this crisis.

For example, on April 11th the United States, through USAID, committed critically needed assistance to Italy to mitigate the overwhelming disruption the pandemic has had on the delivery of health care in communities and to help stabilize the country's economic situation. This assistance will help improve Italian citizens' access to essential health care during the current pandemic and support Italy's recovery.

In this latest round of funding, State and USAID will provide COVID-19 assistance to some countries for the first time since the outbreak began. These countries include Algeria, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, the Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Lesotho, Liberia, Panama, Namibia, Niger, Romania, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, the West Bank, and Yemen.

MS ORTAGUS: Well done.

MR BARSÁ: It was a quick list. Now, did you all memorize it? (Laughter.) As you know, we work through international organizations and NGOs in many of these countries to reach people in need, and as you can see from the list of countries I mentioned, the kind of places where we are responding is, of course, varied. To make sure our assistance is as impactful as possible, the support we provide is tailored to each country's capacity and needs. Our toolkit of support includes investments that improve case management, disease surveillance, and public health screening. It strengthens infection prevention and control of medical facilities, bolsters laboratory capacity, scale of communications campaigns to raise awareness, expand access to water and sanitation, and more.

America remains the leader in global health and humanitarian assistance. Through unmatched generosity, the American people have saved countless lives, protected those people who are most vulnerable to disease, built health infrastructure, and promoted the stability of communities and nations. America has always led the world through times of strife, turmoil, and uncertainty, and this pandemic is no different.

Lastly, I want to highlight President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Pompeo for their extraordinary leadership on the world stage throughout this crisis. This all-star team and the rest of the Trump administration is working around the clock to stem the spread of virus at home and abroad, and they deserve our recognition. So thank you very much.

MS ORTAGUS: Jim.

MR RICHARDSON: Thank you, Morgan. I'm Jim Richardson, and I'm the director of foreign assistance here at the Department of State. First of all, I want to acknowledge the leadership, as John just did, of the President and the Vice President and of the Secretary, and really our talented teams both at State and USAID around the world, as we work together to defeat COVID-19. To put it simply, pandemics like COVID-19 do not respect national borders, and so that our response, our USG response, can't either.

Through decades of U.S. global leadership in health and humanitarian assistance, we know that the smart and strategic investments are critical to our primary mission of maintaining the health and safety of the American people. We can and must actually fight the pandemic both here and overseas. It's not a zero-sum game; it actually builds on each other.

Through the American people's generosity, the State Department of the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership in the face of this pandemic. In fact – this fact is underscored by what the Secretary just announced of an additional \$270 million for humanitarian and economic security assistance, bringing our total to 775 million spread over 100 countries worldwide, nearly all of them John just mentioned. So we'll implement this funding around – through a strategic, all-of-America approach to ensure that this world is safe from infectious diseases, both today and also in the future.

When it comes to our investments thus far, let me address a couple hot-button topics that I'm sure you will ask me about. First of all, let's talk about Italy. We've provided \$50 million in economic support to Italy, one of our closest allies and friends who has been at the forefront of

the fight against COVID. These funds will help support the recovery of the Italian economy, they - and support international organizations and NGOs, including many faith-based organizations, many of which are already on the ground saving lives.

Second, the United States is also providing \$5 million to the Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza to battle the pandemic. The United States welcomes the ongoing cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to address the COVID-19 crisis and Israel's facilitation of goods and equipment to the West Bank and Gaza in support of this effort.

Third, I want to talk about the Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. We're providing \$7 million to help address this outbreak. This comes on top of what the President and the Secretary have announced of \$258 million in targeted foreign assistance for these three – for these three countries. These funds will benefit both the United States and our important allies. By targeting economic assistance to regions with high outflow migration, we can help keep people at their – at home while supporting and deterring illegal immigration to the United States.

As you're aware, well aware, the United States – or last week the President announced that we are pausing for the next 60 to 90 days funding for the World Health Organization while we examine the failures to the response. First and foremost, this pause will not impact our commitment to fight COVID around the world. We are focused on outcomes, and as such we are working with other partners around the world, including community and faith-based organizations, to get the job done.

To put it in perspective, as the Secretary, I believe, mentioned, the WHO only receives about 4 percent of U.S. global assistance – global health assistance every year. There are plenty of amazing and highly qualified organizations implementing these programs around the world, and to be honest, no organization – or country for that matter – is owed a single nickel from the American people. We provide assistance out of generosity and U.S. national interest. At the very least, the American people should demand that every organization we fund – every NGO, every contractor, and every multilateral – is transparent, accountable, and results-oriented, and that's what this President's review will do.

To the – at the end of the day this should be about saving lives, not about saving a bureaucracy. For more than half a century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security. We have built the foundations upon which the global health system is based, contributing over \$140 billion in this century alone. In the face of COVID-19, our global leadership will continue and is once again underscored by what the Secretary has announced. And with that, we'll be available for questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. Let's – you haven't asked one yet, right? Okay, go ahead. And CBS, if you have one, I think you, too, haven't gone yet, right? Okay.

QUESTION: Okay, so I don't know who this goes to, but I'll throw the question out and you guys can decide. So with regard to the pause on the World Health Organization funding, what will determine if they get that funding or not, and who is actually leading the review of that funding right now?

MR RICHARDSON: Go ahead, John.

MR BARSA: In terms of what the President said – so it's a 60- to 90-day pause. I think there are multiple elements within government who will be looking at the review. I'm not going to – we have nothing to announce today in terms of the internal review processes, how it's going to work out. Know that others who interact with World Health Organization are contributing to the review process.

QUESTION: Okay, but what is the review looking for? What does the World Health Organization have to do in order to secure its funding?

MR BARSA: As the President stated, and the Secretary stated this morning, there's numerous questions in terms of the management of the World Health Organization, how they have been operating and holding member states accountable in their actions. So the review is going to be all-encompassing, getting to all manners of management and operation questions.

QUESTION: And one thing that the Secretary said was that the World Health Organization has not highlighted the fact that the CCP didn't reveal what it knew about the coronavirus pandemic when it knew it. If the WHO does that, is that something that you guys are looking for?

MR BARSA: I'm not going to comment on any interim findings or discussions. I just – I'll have to say we'll have to wait till the final review is done.

MS ORTAGUS: You want to add anything?

MR RICHARDSON: Nope, sounds good.

MS ORTAGUS: No? Okay. CBS.

QUESTION: I had a question about the cooperation with vaccine development.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR RICHARDSON: It's probably --

MR BARSA: Vaccine development. Go on.

MS ORTAGUS: Go ahead, ask your question.

QUESTION: Considering that several countries are working on a vaccination, and given that the funding has been halted to WHO, does that mean this will affect at all cooperation between WHO countries on sharing information about a vaccine, depending on who comes up with one first? Or will the U.S. step in to help facilitate cooperation on a vaccination?

MR BARSA: Okay. Couple things to think about. First, let's talk a little bit about scale. As the Secretary and Jim mentioned, over the last two decades the United States has contributed over \$140 billion dollars in health work. In 2018, the last year that I actually have actual figures,

it needs to be noted that only 4 percent of U.S. funds went to the World Health Organization. Ninety-six percent of our funds went to other organizations. So during this pause, what USAID and other entities are doing – we're looking for alternate partners to carry out the important work. So be it vaccines, polio, or any number of health issues, by no means are we pausing our efforts to eradicate polio or come up with vaccines. We're going with existing programs outside of the World Health Organization, and we're looking for different partners.

MS ORTAGUS: Robin.

QUESTION: Just some clarification on that. So first of all, you are – I was wondering if there might be a carveout for certain WHO programs like polio, but you're saying no, there isn't, you're going to find somebody else to do the polio – or to do those programs that you're committed to?

And then I just have a few other questions as well, if – do you want to answer that one first?

MR BARSA: Okay, so I'll start with that one. So even before the onset of this pandemic, USAID was working, piloting a new partnership initiative to look for other regional community-based partners outside of the normal menu of people we work with. I look forward to next week expanding the new partnership initiative in a more formal manner, but what we're doing right now is we're looking for different partners right now in terms of – working polio or any number of health issues, are there other entities, local community-based entities, faith-based organizations, are there other groups that can continue on this work. So part of the assessment that is taking place during this 60-to-90-day pause is to evaluate the availability of new partners to carry out this work.

So know that the questions you ask in terms of are there other partners for whatever program of interest, that's part of the assessment. So we're evaluating that now. I have people in our missions and our Global Health Bureau. We're looking for new partners right now. It's good government.

QUESTION: And just to --

MS ORTAGUS: I want to get to everybody, (inaudible).

QUESTION: Just a quick – one quick follow-up.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, one more (inaudible).

QUESTION: There's a fair bit of U.S. expertise at the WHO, so you've had health experts there – you still have health experts there. Is that cooperation going to be cut off as well? Are you sort of cutting off the WHO not just in terms of funds, but also in coordination and cooperation?

MR BARSA: So part of your question is getting at to the end point of an assessment. We cannot tell you what decision is going to be made at the end of the assessment. During this assessment that the President announced, 60 to 90 days, we're going to look at all aspects of

operations in World Health Organizations. So some of the questions you pose are the questions we ourselves are going to be asking in terms of capabilities during this pause period.

MS ORTAGUS: (Inaudible.)

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just – so the way I would say it is that the pause is about new decisions to provide assistance through the WHO. There is a lot of existing contracts that we've already essentially sent the check to pay for individuals, and we're not asking for refunds at this point. In terms of exemptions or those types of things, the President said we're pausing all assistance for 60 to 90 days. If the President has a subsequent announcement, we'll leave that to him to make that about target assistance.

MS ORTAGUS: Nick, go ahead.

QUESTION: So on the partners, just to be clear, as you examine the partners, are you taking the money that would have been going to the WHO over the next two to three months and plan to transfer them, transfer that funds to partners? Or are you withholding the money so that you possibly could still give it to the WHO depending on reforms? And if I could zoom in on IHRs, let me ask – let me have you answer that first and then we --

MR BARSA: Okay. So as the Secretary stated, in the aggregate, we have committed over \$775 million just on the pandemic alone. So when we're looking for new partners, we're looking for partners who can execute the funds in these countries for their specific needs. So it can't be a cookie cutter approach. So a solution for a challenge in one country is not the same as a solution in another country. So we're looking at ways to address the challenges individually with the funds that are being announced.

QUESTION: Right, but does that mean that the money that would have gone to the WHO will instead go to partners? Or is the money for the WHO being held back and possibly could still go to the WHO in the future?

MR BARSA: It – again, it's a pause in new funding. As Director Richardson announced, money that has been given to WHO already is not being taken back, so some of those contracts and existing work is continuing.

QUESTION: Okay. And then on the international --

MS ORTAGUS: Do you have anything to – (inaudible).

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just – yeah, so at the end of the day, this pandemic can't wait for the review. So our assistance to countries around the world is going to move forward. We will absolutely use the best – every time that we make a decision to provide assistance to any country around the world, we have to make a choice: Do we use a multilateral organization? Do we use an NGO? Do we use a faith-based organization? Do we use a contractor? And that's really what the expertise of USAID does, to – looks at the whole what – how are we going to get the best results in this circumstance.

And so for every contract or every dollar flowing today, we're just taking WHO off the table and we're going to provide that assistance to these other organizations in order to get the job done. Our system simply can't wait. That said, we're going to have a lot of global health resources in response to this pandemic over the coming years. Congress has already provided an additional \$2 billion, and so we'll look forward to continuing to make more announcements about funding over the next several months.

QUESTION: And then quickly on the IHRs, on the International Health Regulations, as I understand them, there is no real enforcement mechanism. I know the Secretary talked specifically about the leadership being able to enforce them, but is one of the reforms that you're asking for to increase the enforcement mechanism, or do you believe that enforcement mechanism is already there, and therefore this is a true failure not of regulation, but of the leadership?

MR BARSA: Well, again, we'll have to get back to you with the details on that. Again, so we're – I'm not going to prejudge the outcome of any assessment.

MS ORTAGUS: Said, go ahead.

QUESTION: A quick question.

MS ORTAGUS: Sure.

QUESTION: Is the money dispensed to the West Bank and to the hospitals – does it go directly there? Because I think USAID is not operating in the West Bank anymore.

MR RICHARDSON: No, so we mostly – we use implementing partners around the world. As I said, we use contractors, NGOs, multilateral organizations to actually be our hands and feet in most places around the world. So we'll be announcing the actual implementing partner here in the next couple days.

MS ORTAGUS: Anybody else? Rich?

QUESTION: Just following up on what the Secretary had to say about the – and a bit what Nick was talking about – the director general of WHO has an enormous power available to him to enforce those who violate regulations. What is available to him?

MR BARSA: Well, as the Secretary stated, there are certain mechanisms which oblige member-states to comply with agreements beforehand. So part of our review is to see what authorities did WHO leadership have. Did they execute the authorities and keep compliance? So the question you're asking gets exactly to the heart of what our review – is the management of the World Health Organization running it the way it should be run?

MS ORTAGUS: And just to follow up on both of your and Nick questions, I think the best thing for us to do is to get a briefing probably with Ambassador Bremberg or someone from IO, so we'll get that – I know you were wanting that, Nick, so we'll go ahead and get that scheduled, and I think we could through a little bit more detail through Andrew or through IO. Okay?

QUESTION: Can I ask John one more question?

MS ORTAGUS: Sure. Then we've got to – I just blew off my next meeting, so go ahead.

QUESTION: So – thank you. So you talk about a lot more work that USAID is going to have to do to identify new partners. So how – do you have the capacity to do that? Has USAID had to hire new people? What does your team look like?

MR BARS: No, again, so before the onset of the pandemic, we already knew good government was to diversify the base of implementing partners that we're working with. So under the leadership of Mark Green, who was administrator at the time, we started a pilot program called the New Partnership Initiative. So we started out in 14 missions. So we already knew the good government solution was to not depend on just a few implementers and partners, so what we are doing is that we've been already working with our workforce. We've gotten to pilot – the pilot program has been very successful, so next week I'll be signing an order expanding that pilot to all of our missions worldwide. This is something that was going to occur regardless of the pandemic.

So with the pandemic coming on here, we're already starting to work with new partners. That does not necessitate new contracting staff either in DC or the missions, but what we've been doing is providing guidance to our contracting staff to look and consider other partners. Are there other NGOs, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations which are localized in the country that have more permanence? So this was going to go on regardless of the implementing – regardless of the onset of the pandemic, so we're just fortunate that we've already been thinking along these lines and are able to execute now without any additional investment in staff or personnel.

MS ORTAGUS: Thanks so much, guys. Don't forget about the 1:00 p.m. with Brownlee, the repatriation briefing.

#

[1] USAID is providing \$5 million from International Disaster Assistance funds to an implementer for COVID-19 response in the West Bank. These funds are not being provided to the Palestinian Authority.

[2] USAID is providing \$67 million in migration and refugee assistance to support displaced populations.

Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient: Keshap, Atul <(b)(6)>

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)
Date: Thu, 26 Jan 2017 02:26:17 +0000

(b)(6)

Thanks- I just got an invite and draft agenda for Feb. 7 (attached) from (b)(6) office, via the Eco-Health Alliance (Peter Daszak) which NSF already supports. I will respond to them directly to accept the invite.

From the embassy, if possible, I think (b)(6) (runs CDC's Field Epidemiology Training here) should also attend.

I think this could become a great example of interagency engagement here-thanks for your catalysis!

Best,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

主任，北京办公室

U.S. National Science Foundation 美国国家科学基金会

(NOTE NEW ADDRESS STARTING JUNE 2016)

No. 55 Anjialou Rd.

Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600

CHINA

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2017 10:15 AM

To: (b)(6)

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

Subject: RE: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

(b)(6) is passing on names to the organizers from the US Mission who plan to participate in the meeting on the afternoon of Feb 7th.

Official

UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)]

Sent: Friday, January 20, 2017 9:11 AM

To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Thanks for sending. No response yet from (b)(6) regarding a meeting or phone call next week.

I get back in town on 2/6 in the afternoon, so could go on 2/7. Do you know how I would register?

Thanks-

(b)(6)

(b)(6) 主任, 北京办公室
U.S. National Science Foundation 美国国家科学基金会

(NOTE NEW ADDRESS STARTING JUNE 2016)
No. 55 Anjialou Rd.
Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600
CHINA

From: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2017 8:32 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: FW: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Location of the GVP meeting and some clarification on the hosts below.

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 20, 2017 1:35 AM
To: (b)(6) (GH/PRH/RTU:AAAS)
Cc: (b)(6) (GH/SDI); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)
Subject: Re: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

Thanks, (b)(6)

Dear (b)(6)

The GVP Working Group Meeting will take place at the China National Convention Center Grand Hotel (国家会议中心大酒店：北京朝阳区北辰西路8号院1号楼).

And the meeting on Feb. 7 in the afternoon will be held at the Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy Science (中国科学院微生物所：北京朝阳区北辰西路1号院3号E301会议室),

(b)(6) is hosting the meeting on behalf of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China CDC, he will definitely extend an invitation to you all soon to provide more information.

(b)(6) assistant and I are still working on the agenda and will share it to all participants when it's available.

Hope this helps, let me know if any further information I can provide.

Best Regards,

(b)(6)

On Jan 19, 2017, at 8:39 AM, (b)(6) wrote:

Hi (b)(6)

To follow up on the additional questions regarding contact and location, (b)(6) (cc'ed from EcoHealth Alliance) should be able to help answer some of those questions as she has been directly liaising with our Chinese colleagues to plan the event.

(b)(6) - Some of our colleagues from the Embassy in Beijing may attend the meeting and/or the event, could you provide them with the information requested below?

Best,

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division
Office of Infectious Disease
Bureau for Global Health
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Desk: (b)(6)

Cell:

E-mail: (b)(6)

On Thu, Jan 19, 2017 at 8:34 AM, (b)(6) wrote:
Hello All,

Attached is the current version of the Agenda, however we have quite a number of edits and changes to make, including to the portion with the Chinese CDC, etc. Over the next several days, we will be working to add in times and other updated details. Then, we will be meeting on the 26th to finalize with the core group in person. After that, we will have a final (or close to it) version for distribution to attendees.

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Telephone: (b)(6) Cell: (b)(6) (b)(6)

On Wed, Jan 18, 2017 at 9:14 PM, (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) wrote:
Hi, (b)(6)

If the agenda is not available yet, do you have information of meeting venue? Or could you let us know the contacts of China CDC (working level people lower than (b)(6)) so that we can reach out to them for detailed information?

Many thanks,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)]

Sent: Saturday, January 14, 2017 5:15 AM

To: (b)(6) Beijing)

Cc: (b)(6) GH/HIDN); (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing);
(b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) GH/PRH/RTU:AAAS); (b)(6)

Subject: Re: Fw: PREDICT International Travel Request (Group ITA request for GVP Beijing meeting)

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

Can you please circulate the agenda for the GVP Beijing meeting. Please see request below.

Best,

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Telephone: (b)(6) Cell: (b)(6) (b)(6)
<mailto:(b)(6)>

On Thu, Jan 12, 2017 at 11:47 AM, (b)(6)

(b)(6) @usaid.gov<mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:

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

Can you please circulate the agenda for the GVP Beijing meeting. Please see request below.

Best,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Emerging Threats Division
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Telephone: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)> Cell: (b)(6) <tel:(b)(6)>
(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)>

On Tue, Jan 10, 2017 at 7:56 PM, (b)(6) (Beijing)
(b)(6) <mailto:(b)(6)> wrote:
Hi, (b)(6)

Embassy colleagues are interested in attending the workshop, and is it possible to attend some of the sessions of the GVP meeting as well? Could you please share with us the agenda of the GVP Beijing meeting including the workshop on the afternoon of 7th, if it's available?

Many thanks,

(b)(6)

USAID Beijing

(b)(6)

EcoHealth Alliance

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

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

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

Sender: (b)(6)

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

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

(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)

China National Virome Project (CNVP) Initiative Meeting

7 February 2017 2:00 PM

E301 Institute of Microbiology, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Meeting Language: English

Tentative Agenda

1:30-2:00 p.m.	Registration	
2:20-2:20 p.m.	Welcome & Opening Address	(b)(6) & TBD
2:20-2:50 p.m.	Introduction of Global Virome Project (GVP)	(b)(6)
2:50-3:10 p.m.	Q & A	
3:10-3:25 p.m.	Presentation	Lanjuan Li
3:25-3:40 p.m.	Presentation	Yongzhen Zhang
3:40-3:55 p.m.	Presentation	Wuchun Cao
3:55-4:10 p.m.	Presentation	Yingfei Ma
4:10-4:25 p.m.	Collaborative Viral Discovery Research in China	Peter Daszak
4:25-4:35 p.m.	Brief Summary	(b)(6)
4:35-5:00 p.m.	Discussion-How to initiate the CNVP & Closure	Moderated by (b)(6) & Peter
5:00-7:00 p.m.	Participants free meetings and discussion	

Organization Attending (Tentative)

Ministry of Science and Technology 国家科技部
Veterinary Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture 国家农业部兽医局
National Health and Family Planning Commission 国家卫生与计划生育委员会
Chinese CDC 中国国家疾病预防控制中心
National Natural Science Foundation of China 国家自然科学基金委员会
Beijing Genomics Institute, BGI 华大基因
Harbin Veterinary Research Institute of Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences 中国农科院兽医研究所
Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences 中国科学院武汉病毒所
National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention, China CDC 中国疾控中心病毒病预防控制所
CAS Key Laboratory of Pathogenic Microbiology and Immunology 中科院病原微生物与免疫学重点实验室
Medical School of Zhejiang University, State Key Laboratory of Infectious Diseases Diagnosis and Treatment 浙江大学医学部, 浙江大学附属第一医院、传染病诊治国家重点实验室
National Institute for Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, Chinese CDC 中国疾病预防控制中心传染病预防控制所

National Research Center for Exotic Animal Diseases, Chinese Animal Health and Epidemiology Center 中国动物卫生与流行病学中心，国家外来动物疫病研究中心
Institute of Microbiology and epidemiology, Academy of Military Medical Sciences 军事医学科学院微生物流行病学研究所
National Institute of Infectious Disease Control and Prevention of Chinese CDC, Zoonosis Office 中国疾控中心传染病预防控制所，人兽共患病室
National Research Center of Wildlife Borne Diseases, Institute of Zoology of Chinese Academy Science 中国科学院动物研究所野生动物疫病研究中心
Institute of Veterinary Science, Academy of Military Medical Sciences 人畜共患病研究教育部重点实验室，军事医学科学院军事兽医研究所
China Animal Disease Control Center 中国动物疫病防控中心
Institute of Ecology, Beijing Normal University 北京师范大学
MOH Key Laboratory of Systems Biology of Pathogens, Institute of Pathogen Biology, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences & Peking Union Medical College 中国医学科学院 / 北京协和医学院，病原生物学研究所
Shenzhen Institute of Advanced Technology, Chinese Academy of Sciences 中国科学院深圳先进技术研究所
CAS Center for Influenza Research and Early-Warning (CASCIRE), Chinese Academy of Sciences 中国科学院流感研究与预警中心
East China Normal University 华东师范大学
Shanghai Institutes for Biological Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences 中科院上海生物科学研究所
Department of Epidemic Diseases Monitoring of Wild Animal, State Forestry Administration 国家林业局保护司野生动物疫源疫病防控处
China Animal Health and Epidemiology Center 中国动物卫生与流行病学中心
Nanjing Institute of Environmental Sciences (NIES), Ministry of Environmental Protection of China 环境保护部南京环境科学研究
Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, China Office 国际粮农组织
China-US Collaborative Program on Emerging and Re-emerging Infectious Diseases, US Embassy NIAID Office in China
National Science Foundation (NSF) Beijing Office
WHO China Office
World Bank China Office
USAID Beijing

From: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>
(b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6)
CC: (b)(6)
(h)(6) (Guangzhou) (b)(6)
(h)(6) masonism (h)(6)
Subject: Re: Press Guidance Request: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases
Date: Wed, 1 Apr 2020 12:49:13 +0000

(b)(6)

You are correct. We will (b)(5) I was preparing if asked guidance (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit

[SharePoint](#) | [state.gov](#) | [InfoCentral](#)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 8:00 AM

To: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6) EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>

Cc: (h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)

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

Subject: RE: Press Guidance Request: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

(b)(6) I'd suggest (b)(5)

(b)(5) Our understanding was (b)(5)

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 7:50 AM

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

Cc: (h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6)

(h)(6) (Guangzhou) (b)(6) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: Press Guidance Request: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

Hello China Desk,

Since DCM Rob Forden will be speaking with a journalist today at 12:45. Could you help provide a point on asymptomatic case reporting? I've drafted this response to help get this flash clearance started. Thank you for the FEMA points on China PPE yesterday.

If Asked:

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, PRC health authorities first publicly dismissed the human to human transmission then dismissed the risks of transmission from asymptomatic cases. They downplayed fears that "silent carriers" could spread COVID-19. As some of the areas hardest hit by the epidemic reopen, top PRC officials appeared to finally acknowledge this risk. The [American] CDC estimates that 25% of cases could be asymptomatic. This is another instance of the lack of transparency of CCP has costs lives across the globe.

(b)(6)

Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit

SharePoint | state.gov | InfoCentral

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 6:30 AM

To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>; SES-O <SES-O@state.gov>; Fritz, Jonathan D (h)(6)

(b)(6) Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit
<CoronavirusGlobalResponseCoordinationUnit@state.gov>; CGRCU Internal Site

<S CGRCU@groups.state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Beijing)

(h)(6); Mission China ESTH Americans - DL <MissionChinaESTHAmericans-DL@state.gov>; (h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (U) Millman,

Alexander (Beijing) (b)(6) BEIJING 2020 Coronavirus <BEIJING2020Coronavirus@state.gov>;

(h)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

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

(h)(6) (U) Kreindel, Silvia (Beijing USDA) (b)(6)

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

(h)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (U) Simonds, R J (Beijing | CDC) (b)(6) (Beijing)

(b)(6) (U) Simonds, R J (Beijing | CDC) (b)(6) (U) Kreindel, Silvia (Beijing USDA)

(b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (Beijing)

(h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) Talboy, Phillip

(CDC/DDID/NCHHSTP/DTE) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Beijing)

(h)(6) (Guangzhou) (b)(6) (h)(6)

(Guangzhou) (b)(6) (Shenyang) (b)(6) (b)(6)

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

(Guangzhou) (b)(6) (Chengdu) (b)(5)

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

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

(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Hong Kong)

(b)(6) (U) Daves, Sharon
 (Bangkok) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Hanoi)
 (b)(6) (Beijing)
 (b)(6) (Wuhan)
 (b)(6) Jackson, John D (b)(6) China MCCA Office
 <ChinaMCCA@state.gov> (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
 (Beijing) (b)(6) (U) Griffin, Cynthia (Beijing FCS) (b)(6)
 (b)(6)
 (b)(6) Beijing ECON clearances
 <BeijingECONclearances@state.gov>; BEIJING 2020 Coronavirus <BEIJING2020Coronavirus@state.gov>;
 SES-O <SES-O@state.gov>; EAP Bilateral Support <EAPBilateralSupport@state.gov>; Snyder, Nicholas
 (b)(6) Beijing HHS Unit Chiefs (b)(6)
Subject: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

Colleagues,

Joint Embassy Beijing ESTH-POL cable sent. Regards, (b)(6)

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~



Action Office: POL, MGT, RSO, CONS, ECON, PAS, MED, IMO, SCIENCE, TSA, CLO, CDC

Info Office: DAO_INFO, MGT_INFO, SCIENCE_INFO, IMO_INFO, POL_INFO, EXEC_INFO, RSO_INFO, CONS_INFO, ECON_INFO

MRN: 20 BEIJING 614

Date/DTG: Apr 01, 2020 / 011021Z APR 20

From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING

Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE

E.O.: 13526

TAGS: SHLH, CDC, HHS, NIH, PGOV, PREL, CN, SENV, AMED, KPAO, KMDR, KHIV, KFLU, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, KTBT, CASC, AMGT, ASEC, AID, KFLO, KFPC

Captions: SENSITIVE

Reference: A) 20 BEIJING 294

B) 20 BEIJING 510

C) 20 BEIJING 560

D) 20 BEIJING 592

Subject: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The PRC National Health Commission (NHC) announced

March 31 that it will begin reporting identified asymptomatic COVID-19 cases starting April 1. While the new reporting requirement is a positive step, the omission of retrospective asymptomatic case information limits understanding of the pandemic's scope for global and U.S. health risk assessment. Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, PRC health authorities have publicly dismissed the risks of transmission from asymptomatic cases and downplayed fears that "silent carriers" could spread COVID-19. As some of the areas hardest hit by the epidemic reopen, top PRC officials appeared to finally acknowledge this risk. Statements by Premier Li Keqiang and China's COVID-19 leading group indicate increasing concern by PRC leadership that infections by asymptomatic cases could lead to another outbreak. Publicly reported data are lacking on the number of asymptomatic cases in China confirmed through contact tracing and laboratory testing, as the PRC's official guidelines required that reported cases of COVID-19 have signs and symptoms of clinical illness. At the same time, China's NHC has rebuffed repeated requests by HHS and the U.S. CDC for information on testing, asymptomatic cases, and other epidemiological data that could assist with addressing knowledge gaps in COVID-19 epidemiology. While the WHO technical team that visited China in February concluded that the risk of transmission from asymptomatic individuals was "relatively rare," a growing body of newly available scientific studies, epidemiological data from other affected countries, and news media reports indicate that asymptomatic cases were likely significantly undercounted during the initial phase of the outbreak and pose a greater risk than originally thought. The forthcoming serological studies announced by the NHC March 31 will potentially help provide more accurate risk assessments of asymptomatic cases. **End Summary and Comment.**

PRC Reports Number of Asymptomatic Cases for the First Time

2. (U) China's NHC on April 1 officially reported the number of current and new asymptomatic cases in Mainland China for the first time ([link](#)). According to the NHC, public health authorities reported 130 new asymptomatic infections on March 31 as of midnight, with a total of 1,367 asymptomatic patients currently in quarantine under medical observation. These asymptomatic cases include individuals who do not show any signs of illness but who have a positive laboratory test result for SARS-CoV-2. The NHC report on April 1 did not provide any retrospective information about the total number of asymptomatic infections to date, or the total number of people who have been tested.

3. (U) NHC officials stressed the need for local public health authorities to strengthen the reporting of asymptomatic infections. Consistent with the rules and guidelines for reporting diagnosed cases of symptomatic COVID-19 patients, Director Chang Jile of NHC's Disease Control Bureau said on March 31 that local authorities would be required to upload reports of positive asymptomatic cases to the national online reporting system within two hours, and that county-level CDCs would be expected to confirm cases in order to identify close contacts and the possible source of transmission within 24 hours. Asymptomatic cases and any close contacts are required to undergo 14 days of medical quarantine at a government-designated facility. Chang also announced on March 31 that the NHC would conduct a representative serological survey of populations in major outbreak-affected areas to identify the larger population of affected individuals, including symptomatic and asymptomatic persons ([link](#)). [Note: The results of the serological survey will be especially critical for helping us understand

the burden of disease, including the true estimated burden of asymptomatic cases. As of now, it seems as if asymptomatic cases are being identified through testing of contacts of confirmed cases, which means that these numbers would not represent the true burden of asymptomatic individuals. **End Note.**]

PRC Leadership Increasingly Uneasy

4. ~~(SBU)~~ Commentary by senior CCP leaders indicated the party is increasingly concerned about a second wave of infections, particularly the risks posed by asymptomatic cases of COVID-19. Premier Li Keqiang called on cadres to actively and accurately report cases of COVID-19 during a March 23 leading small group meeting, one of the first times a senior leader has publicly exhorted cadres to accurately report data during the epidemic. Li also called for transparent reporting at a March 26 meeting, emphasizing the importance of testing and reporting on cases of asymptomatic persons, which posed a particular risk as China began to reopen. Li reiterated these points on March 30, when he again underscored to cadres that China must strengthen its focus on preventing COVID-19 transmission, particularly by asymptomatic patients.

Shifting Diagnosis Procedures Left Out Asymptomatic Cases

5. (U) Since January, China's National Health Commission (NHC) has revised its diagnosis and reporting guidelines for COVID-19 several times but, until now, had not included lab-confirmed but asymptomatic persons as reportable cases. Until April 1, NHC reported only confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases. Under NHC guidelines, patients reported as "suspected" and "confirmed" cases of COVID-19 must show some sign of illness, such as fever, cough, or radiographic pneumonia, usually in combination with evidence of possible exposure, whether through contact with an infected person or travel to an affected area. Per the current guidelines, in addition to the epidemiological and clinical criteria for suspected cases, confirmed cases must also be diagnosed through a respiratory or blood specimen test. [Note: On February 12, NHC had re-defined "confirmed" cases to also include "clinically diagnosed" patients in Hubei Province who exhibited pneumonia-like symptoms on chest scans in the absence of a positive lab test. NHC reversed this decision a week later. **End note.**] Patients who later develop symptoms are shifted to the category of "confirmed" cases. PRC officials have maintained that the rationale for excluding asymptomatic cases from the case definitions was to ensure resources were directed to patients showing illness. [Note: Directing tests towards ill patients is a sensible approach for case finding especially when laboratory resources are limited. A serosurvey, which is often conducted later in an outbreak, is the best approach for identifying the true burden of asymptomatic cases. **End Note**] In practice, however, the exclusion of asymptomatic cases from the official reports for COVID-19 in China has resulted in a lack of public information on the presence of such cases, as provincial health authorities had not been required to include such cases in their daily reports until now.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ PRC public health experts partially attributed the omission of asymptomatic cases during the initial phase of the COVID-19 outbreak to limited Chinese testing capabilities, as opposed to a national effort to suppress case numbers. Chinese hospitals were initially unfamiliar with reporting procedures and the healthcare system was overwhelmed with the

thousands of cases, explained NHC Director-General of Healthcare Reform Liang Wannian. Other PRC public health officials have said Chinese healthcare workers were grossly under-resourced and lacked proper testing kits, forcing them to concentrate solely on symptomatic cases for testing and official reporting. An executive at a government-approved testing kit company told ESTHOff that initial PRC reporting on COVID-19 case numbers was initially questionable, but that the mass mobilization of medical supplies, testing kits, and hospital personnel had since equipped Chinese medical facilities with the resources to detect both symptomatic and asymptomatic cases.

Underestimating the Risk

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Assessments by PRC health authorities and the WHO during the height of the COVID-19 epidemic in China in February reinforced the view that asymptomatic cases did not constitute a significant risk. The first large-scale epidemiological study by China's CDC of COVID-19 cases in China, published February 17 in *China CDC Weekly* and the *Chinese Journal of Epidemiology*, reported that asymptomatic cases represented only 1.2 percent of the 72,314 COVID-19 cases documented between December 31 and February 11 ([link](#)). The study sample included 44,672 lab-confirmed cases, 10,567 clinically diagnosed cases, 889 asymptomatic cases, and 16,186 suspected cases. [Note: The asymptomatic cases included in the studies were reportedly diagnosed based on nucleic acid tests. End note.] Shortly thereafter, the WHO noted in the summary report of the technical mission to China published February 28 that, "The proportion of truly asymptomatic infections is unclear but appears to be relatively rare and does not appear to be a major driver of transmission" ([link](#)). The WHO report lacked a critical assessment of the data provided to the WHO team by the PRC, including on asymptomatic cases. The WHO report also did not include a presentation or evaluation of laboratory testing data, despite WHO guidelines and requests for information about the total number of lab tests conducted and the number of laboratory tests positive for COVID-19 (Ref A).

8. ~~(SBU)~~ As the domestic epidemic situation in China improved, PRC public health officials continued to downplay the risk of transmission from asymptomatic cases and focused their attention on reducing foreign imported cases. During a March 24 press conference, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) Chief Epidemiologist Wu Zunyou flatly rejected a possible resurgence of COVID-19, elaborating that PRC contact tracing already identified all asymptomatic patients. [Note: Contact tracing is the process of identifying people that may have entered close contact with an infected individual and isolating them in quarantine for testing regardless of whether they manifest symptoms. End Note]. In a March 28 press briefing, NHC spokesperson Mi Feng declared the number of confirmed cases still being treated dropped to less than 3,000, and that China successfully prevented further spread of COVID-19 domestically. Mi warned, however, that China would remain cautious toward foreign imported cases. [Note: While the exclusion of asymptomatic cases hindered our ability to conduct risk assessment on the publicly available data, the official PRC case counts showing an overall declining trend of COVID-19 cases during late February and March is consistent with other indicators, including reduced hospital burden and relaxation of closed management measures. Post has assessed the overall improvement in the epidemic situation in China in its recent reporting (Refs B-D). End note.]

9. ~~(SBU)~~ Recent studies and case data from other countries have revealed that asymptomatic infections may represent a much higher percentage of total infections than originally thought. PRC officials did not include asymptomatic cases in publicly available reports as they did not meet the case definition designated for confirmed cases. Citing unpublished official documents, however, *South China Morning Post* reported on March 23 that the PRC had identified more than 40,000 asymptomatic cases in China. Researchers at Huazhong University of Science and Technology estimated that asymptomatic cases could represent 30-60 percent of all COVID-19 infections in China.

Risks of a Resurgence

10. ~~(SBU)~~ The lack of public information on asymptomatic cases has exacerbated the difficulty of detecting and preventing the transmission of COVID-19, especially when contact tracing failed. On March 28, NHC reported a new case in Henan province where an asymptomatic case of COVID-19 transmitted the virus to a friend who unknowingly transmitted the disease to two people. Public health authorities eventually tracked the asymptomatic cases down, but the three individuals already had close contact with 68 other individuals before undergoing quarantine for symptom monitoring. Public health experts have worried that these types of cases would become more frequent as restrictions in Hubei province and the rest of the country eased, creating higher risks for a resurgence of COVID-19 to a susceptible population.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6)
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Released By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)

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

XMT: CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

Action Post: NONE

Dissemination Rule: POL, MGT_ACTION, RSO, CONS_ACTION, ECON, DAO_INFO,

POL_INFO, SCIENCE_INFO, IMO_INFO, PAS, MED, IMO, SCIENCE,
RSO_INFO, TSA, CONS_INFO, CLO, CDC

UNCLASSIFIED~~SBU~~

Sender: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)
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EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>;

Recipient: (h)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
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(b)(6) (Guangzhou) (h)(6)
(b)(6) (h)(6)

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(h)(6) (b)(6)
CC: (h)(6) (OAG) (h)(6) (b)(6)
(h)(6) (b)(6)
Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: Re: More COVID coverup reporting
Date: Mon, 6 Jul 2020 00:48:32 +0000

+ (b)(6) who I think has already asked for some podium language on this.

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(b)(6)
Senior Advisor
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On July 5, 2020 at 8:46:39 PM EDT, Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6) wrote:

(b)(5)
Get Outlook for iOS
From: (h)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Sunday, July 5, 2020 8:25:50 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (OAG) (h)(6) (b)(6) (h)(6) (b)(6)
Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6) Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: Re: More COVID coverup reporting

Amen. And our colleagues in Geneva who work the WHO are providing details (h)(5)

(b)(5)

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(b)(6)
Senior Advisor
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

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

(b)(6)

On July 5, 2020 at 8:20:25 PM EDT, (b)(6) wrote:

Hopefully (b)(5)

(b)(6) (E/STAS)

The Science and Technology Adviser to the Secretary of State

U.S. Department of State

From: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, July 2, 2020 11:35:17 PM

To: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; DL NSC Asia

(b)(6) (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>;

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: More COVID coverup reporting

Amazing:

WHO admits China never reported the existence of coronavirus outbreak

The Washington Examiner [7/2/2020 4:31 PM, Jerry Dunleavy, Neutral] reports that the World Health Organization backtracked on its assertion that the Chinese government alerted the United Nations agency about the coronavirus outbreak. The WHO quietly updated its "Timeline of WHO's response to COVID-19" on Tuesday following the House Foreign Affairs Committee Republicans' mid-June Interim Report on Origins of COVID-19 Pandemic (led by ranking member and China task force Chairman Rep. Michael McCaul of Texas), which concluded that "despite public reporting to the contrary ... China never notified the WHO about the outbreak in Wuhan." "I'm glad to see the WHO and the Chinese Communist Party have both read my interim report on the origins of the pandemic and are finally admitting to the world the truth – the CCP never reported the virus outbreak to the WHO in violation of WHO regulations," McCaul said in a statement to the Washington Examiner. "The question now is whether the CCP will continue their false propaganda campaign that continues to claim they warned the world or whether they will come clean and begin to work with the world health community to get to the bottom of this deadly pandemic."

The Washington Free Beacon [7/2/2020 12:38 PM, Adam Kredo, Neutral] reports that the quiet admission from the international health organization flies in the face of claims from some of its top officials, including WHO director general Tedros Adhanom, who maintained for months that China had informed his organization about the emerging

sickness. China and its allies at the WHO insisted in multiple interviews and press conferences that China came to the health organization with information about the virus. This is now known to be false. The WHO's backtracking lends credibility to a recent congressional investigation that determined China concealed information about the virus and did not initially inform the WHO, as it was required to do. The WHO's updated timeline, posted online this week, now states that officials first learned about the virus on Dec. 31, 2019, through information posted on a U.S. website by doctors working in Wuhan, where the virus first emerged. This contradicts the agency's initial timeline, which said that China first presented this information at that date. That initial timeline stated that the "Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, China, reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei Province" on Dec. 31. Chinese officials and state-controlled media also claimed for months that the communist regime informed the WHO on or around Dec. 31. In recent days, however, Chinese officials have dropped that talking point.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 10:35 PM

To: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>; DL NSC Asia

(b)(6) Matthew Pottinger (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(Geneva) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)

Subject: More COVID coverup reporting

Lest we forget. Highlights of particularly notable bits, including on the Jan. 3 order to destroy samples, Professor Zhang Yongzhen releasing the genome sequence before the government, early Wall Street Journal reporting that angered officials, the coverup complicating the first foreign case in Bangkok, etc.

<https://apnews.com/3c061794970661042b18d5aeaaed9fae?>

China delayed releasing coronavirus info, frustrating WHO

By The Associated Press

June 2, 2020

Throughout January, the World Health Organization publicly praised China for what it called a speedy response to the new coronavirus. It repeatedly thanked the Chinese government for sharing the genetic map of the virus "immediately," and said its work and commitment to

transparency were “very impressive, and beyond words.”

But behind the scenes, it was a much different story, one of significant delays by China and considerable frustration among WHO officials over not getting the information they needed to fight the spread of the deadly virus, The Associated Press has found.

Despite the plaudits, China in fact sat on releasing the genetic map, or genome, of the virus for more than a week after three different government labs had fully decoded the information. Tight controls on information and competition within the Chinese public health system were to blame, according to dozens of interviews and internal documents.

Chinese government labs only released the genome after another lab published it ahead of authorities on a virologist website on Jan. 11. Even then, China stalled for at least two weeks more on providing WHO with detailed data on patients and cases, according to recordings of internal meetings held by the U.N. health agency through January — all at a time when the outbreak arguably might have been dramatically slowed.

WHO officials were lauding China in public because they wanted to coax more information out of the government, the recordings obtained by the AP suggest. Privately, they complained in meetings the week of Jan. 6 that China was not sharing enough data to assess how effectively the virus spread between people or what risk it posed to the rest of the world, costing valuable time.

“We’re going on very minimal information,” said American epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove, now WHO’s technical lead for COVID-19, in one internal meeting. “It’s clearly not enough for you to do proper planning.”

“We’re currently at the stage where yes, they’re giving it to us 15 minutes before it appears on CCTV,” said WHO’s top official in China, Dr. Gauden Galea, referring to the state-owned China Central Television, in another meeting.

The story behind the early response to the virus comes at a time when the U.N. health agency is under siege, and has agreed to an independent probe of how the pandemic was handled globally. After repeatedly praising the Chinese response early on, U.S. President Donald Trump has blasted WHO in recent weeks for allegedly colluding with China to hide the extent of the coronavirus crisis. He cut ties with the organization on Friday, jeopardizing the approximately \$450 million the U.S. gives every year as WHO’s biggest single donor.

In the meantime, Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to pitch in \$2 billion over the next two years to fight the coronavirus, saying China has always provided information to WHO and the world “in a most timely fashion.”

The new information does not support the narrative of either the U.S. or China, but instead portrays an agency now stuck in the middle that was urgently trying to solicit more data despite limits to its own authority. Although international law obliges countries to report information to WHO that could have an impact on public health, the U.N. agency has no enforcement powers and cannot independently investigate epidemics within countries. Instead, it must rely on the

cooperation of member states.

The recordings suggest that rather than colluding with China, as Trump declared, WHO was kept in the dark as China gave it the minimal information required by law. However, the agency did try to portray China in the best light, likely as a means to secure more information. And WHO experts genuinely thought Chinese scientists had done “a very good job” in detecting and decoding the virus, despite the lack of transparency from Chinese officials.

WHO staffers debated how to press China for gene sequences and detailed patient data without angering authorities, worried about losing access and getting Chinese scientists into trouble. Under international law, WHO is required to quickly share information and alerts with member countries about an evolving crisis. Galea noted WHO could not indulge China’s wish to sign off on information before telling other countries because “that is not respectful of our responsibilities.”

In the second week of January, WHO’s chief of emergencies, Dr. Michael Ryan, told colleagues it was time to “shift gears” and apply more pressure on China, fearing a repeat of the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome that started in China in 2002 and killed nearly 800 people worldwide.

“This is exactly the same scenario, endlessly trying to get updates from China about what was going on,” he said. “WHO barely got out of that one with its neck intact given the issues that arose around transparency in southern China.”

Ryan said the best way to “protect China” was for WHO to do its own independent analysis with data from the Chinese government, because otherwise the spread of the virus between people would be in question and “other countries will take action accordingly.” Ryan also noted that China was not cooperating in the same way some other countries had in the past.

“This would not happen in Congo and did not happen in Congo and other places,” he said, probably referring to the Ebola outbreak that began there in 2018. “We need to see the data.....It’s absolutely important at this point.”

The delay in the release of the genome stalled the recognition of its spread to other countries, along with the global development of tests, drugs and vaccines. The lack of detailed patient data also made it harder to determine how quickly the virus was spreading — a critical question in stopping it.

Between the day the full genome was first decoded by a government lab on Jan. 2 and the day WHO declared a global emergency on Jan. 30, the outbreak spread by a factor of 100 to 200 times, according to retrospective infection data from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus has now infected over 6 million people worldwide and killed more than 375,000.

“It’s obvious that we could have saved more lives and avoided many, many deaths if China and the WHO had acted faster,” said Ali Mokdad, a professor at the Institute for Health Metrics and

Evaluation at the University of Washington.

However, Mokdad and other experts also noted that if WHO had been more confrontational with China, it could have triggered a far worse situation of not getting any information at all.

If WHO had pushed too hard, it could even have been kicked out of China, said Adam Kamradt-Scott, a global health professor at the University of Sydney. But he added that a delay of just a few days in releasing genetic sequences can be critical in an outbreak. And he noted that as Beijing's lack of transparency becomes even clearer, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus's continued defense of China is problematic.

"It's definitely damaged WHO's credibility," said Kamradt-Scott. "Did he go too far? I think the evidence on that is clear....it has led to so many questions about the relationship between China and WHO. It is perhaps a cautionary tale."

WHO and its officials named in this story declined to answer questions asked by The Associated Press without audio or written transcripts of the recorded meetings, which the AP was unable to supply to protect its sources.

"Our leadership and staff have worked night and day in compliance with the organization's rules and regulations to support and share information with all Member States equally, and engage in frank and forthright conversations with governments at all levels," a WHO statement said.

China's National Health Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no comment. But in the past few months, China has repeatedly defended its actions, and many other countries — including the U.S. — have responded to the virus with even longer delays of weeks and even months.

"Since the beginning of the outbreak, we have been continuously sharing information on the epidemic with the WHO and the international community in an open, transparent and responsible manner," said Liu Mingzhu, an official with the National Health Commission's International Department, at a press conference on May 15.

The race to find the genetic map of the virus started in late December, according to the story that unfolds in interviews, documents and the WHO recordings. That's when doctors in Wuhan noticed mysterious clusters of patients with fevers and breathing problems who weren't improving with standard flu treatment. Seeking answers, they sent test samples from patients to commercial labs.

By Dec. 27, one lab, Vision Medicals, had pieced together most of the genome of a new coronavirus with striking similarities to SARS. Vision Medicals shared its data with Wuhan officials and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, as reported first by Chinese finance publication Caixin and independently confirmed by the AP.

On Dec. 30, Wuhan health officials issued internal notices warning of the unusual pneumonia, which leaked on social media. That evening, Shi Zhengli, a coronavirus expert at the Wuhan

Institute of Virology who is famous for having traced the SARS virus to a bat cave, was alerted to the new disease, according to an interview with Scientific American. Shi took the first train from a conference in Shanghai back to Wuhan.

The next day, Chinese CDC director Gao Fu dispatched a team of experts to Wuhan. Also on Dec. 31, WHO first learned about the cases from an open-source platform that scouts for intelligence on outbreaks, emergencies chief Ryan has said.

WHO officially requested more information on Jan. 1. Under international law, members have 24 to 48 hours to respond, and China reported two days later that there were 44 cases and no deaths.

By Jan. 2, Shi had decoded the entire genome of the virus, according to a notice later posted on her institute's website.

Scientists agree that Chinese scientists detected and sequenced the then-unknown pathogen with astonishing speed, in a testimony to China's vastly improved technical capabilities since SARS, during which a WHO-led group of scientists took months to identify the virus. This time, Chinese virologists proved within days that it was a never-before-seen coronavirus. Tedros would later say Beijing set "a new standard for outbreak response."

But when it came to sharing the information with the world, things began to go awry.

On Jan. 3, the National Health Commission issued a confidential notice ordering labs with the virus to either destroy their samples or send them to designated institutes for safekeeping. The notice, first reported by Caixin and seen by the AP, forbade labs from publishing about the virus without government authorization. The order barred Shi's lab from publishing the genetic sequence or warning of the potential danger.

Chinese law states that research institutes cannot conduct experiments on potentially dangerous new viruses without approval from top health authorities. Although the law is intended to keep experiments safe, it gives top health officials wide-ranging powers over what lower-level labs can or cannot do.

"If the virologist community had operated with more autonomy...the public would have been informed of the lethal risk of the new virus much earlier," said Edward Gu, a professor at Zhejiang University, and Li Lantian, a PhD student at Northwestern University, in a paper published in March analyzing the outbreak.

Commission officials later repeated that they were trying to ensure lab safety, and had tasked four separate government labs with identifying the genome at the same time to get accurate, consistent results.

By Jan. 3, the Chinese CDC had independently sequenced the virus, according to internal data seen by the Associated Press. And by just after midnight on Jan. 5, a third designated government lab, the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, had decoded the sequence and

submitted a report — pulling all-nighters to get results in record time, according to a state media interview. Yet even with full sequences decoded by three state labs independently, Chinese health officials remained silent. The WHO reported on Twitter that investigations were under way into an unusual cluster of pneumonia cases with no deaths in Wuhan, and said it would share “more details as we have them.”

Meanwhile, at the Chinese CDC, gaps in coronavirus expertise proved a problem.

For nearly two weeks, Wuhan reported no new infections, as officials censored doctors who warned of suspicious cases. Meanwhile, researchers found the new coronavirus used a distinct spike protein to bind itself to human cells. The unusual protein and the lack of new cases lulled some Chinese CDC researchers into thinking the virus didn’t easily spread between humans — like the coronavirus that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS, according to an employee who declined to be identified out of fear of retribution.

Li, the coronavirus expert, said he immediately suspected the pathogen was infectious when he spotted a leaked copy of a sequencing report in a group chat on a SARS-like coronavirus. But the Chinese CDC team that sequenced the virus lacked specialists in the molecular structure of coronaviruses and failed to consult with outside scientists, Li said. Chinese health authorities rebuffed offers of assistance from foreign experts, including Hong Kong scientists barred from a fact-finding mission to Wuhan and an American professor at a university in China.

On Jan. 5, the Shanghai Public Clinical Health Center, led by famed virologist Zhang Yongzhen, was the latest to sequence the virus. He submitted it to the GenBank database, where it sat awaiting review, and notified the National Health Commission. He warned them that the new virus was similar to SARS and likely infectious.

“It should be contagious through respiratory passages,” the center said in an internal notice seen by the AP. “We recommend taking preventative measures in public areas.”

On the same day, WHO said that based on preliminary information from China, there was no evidence of significant transmission between humans, and did not recommend any specific measures for travelers.

The next day, the Chinese CDC raised its emergency level to the second highest. Staffers proceeded to isolate the virus, draft lab testing guidelines, and design test kits. But the agency did not have the authority to issue public warnings, and the heightened emergency level was kept secret even from many of its own staff.

By Jan. 7, another team at Wuhan University had sequenced the pathogen and found it matched Shi’s, making Shi certain they had identified a novel coronavirus. But Chinese CDC experts said they didn’t trust Shi’s findings and needed to verify her data before she could publish, according to three people familiar with the matter. Both the National Health Commission and the Ministry of Science and Technology, which oversees Shi’s lab, declined to make Shi available for an interview.

A major factor behind the gag order, some say, was that Chinese CDC researchers wanted to publish their papers first. "They wanted to take all the credit," said Li Yize, a coronavirus researcher at the University of Pennsylvania.

Internally, the leadership of the Chinese CDC is plagued with fierce competition, six people familiar with the system explained. They said the agency has long promoted staff based on how many papers they can publish in prestigious journals, making scientists reluctant to share data.

As the days went by, even some of the Chinese CDC's own staff began to wonder why it was taking so long for authorities to identify the pathogen.

"We were getting suspicious, since within one or two days you would get a sequencing result," a lab technician said, declining to be identified for fear of retribution.

On Jan. 8, the Wall Street Journal reported that scientists had identified a new coronavirus in samples from pneumonia patients in Wuhan, pre-empting and embarrassing Chinese officials. The lab technician told the AP they first learned about the discovery of the virus from the Journal.

The article also embarrassed WHO officials. Dr. Tom Grein, chief of WHO's acute events management team, said the agency looked "doubly, incredibly stupid." Van Kerkhove, the American expert, acknowledged WHO was "already late" in announcing the new virus and told colleagues that it was critical to push China.

Ryan, WHO's chief of emergencies, was also upset at the dearth of information.

"The fact is, we're two to three weeks into an event, we don't have a laboratory diagnosis, we don't have an age, sex or geographic distribution, we don't have an epi curve," he complained, referring to the standard graphic of outbreaks scientists use to show how an epidemic is progressing.

After the article, state media officially announced the discovery of the new coronavirus. But even then, Chinese health authorities did not release the genome, diagnostic tests, or detailed patient data that could hint at how infectious the disease was.

By that time, suspicious cases were already appearing across the region.

On Jan. 8, Thai airport officers pulled aside a woman from Wuhan with a runny nose, sore throat, and high temperature. Chulalongkorn University professor Supaporn Wacharapluesadee's team found the woman was infected with a new coronavirus, much like what Chinese officials had described. Supaporn partially figured out the genetic sequence by Jan. 9, reported it to the Thai government and spent the next day searching for matching sequences.

But because Chinese authorities hadn't published any sequences, she found nothing. She could not prove the Thai virus was the same pathogen sickening people in Wuhan.

"It was kind of wait and see, when China will release the data, then we can compare," said Supaporn.

On Jan. 9, a 61-year-old man with the virus passed away in Wuhan — the first known death. The death wasn't made public until Jan. 11.

WHO officials complained in internal meetings that they were making repeated requests for more data, especially to find out if the virus could spread efficiently between humans, but to no avail.

"We have informally and formally been requesting more epidemiological information," WHO's China representative Galea said. "But when asked for specifics, we could get nothing."

Emergencies chief Ryan grumbled that since China was providing the minimal information required by international law, there was little WHO could do. But he also noted that last September, WHO had issued an unusual public rebuke of Tanzania for not providing enough details about a worrisome Ebola outbreak.

"We have to be consistent," Ryan said. "The danger now is that despite our good intent...especially if something does happen, there will be a lot of finger-pointing at WHO."

Ryan noted that China could make a "huge contribution" to the world by sharing the genetic material immediately, because otherwise "other countries will have to reinvent the wheel over the coming days."

On Jan. 11, a team led by Zhang, from the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, finally published a sequence on virological.org, used by researchers to swap tips on pathogens. The move angered Chinese CDC officials, three people familiar with the matter said, and the next day, his laboratory was temporarily shuttered by health authorities.

Zhang referred a request for comment to the Chinese CDC. The National Health Commission, which oversees the Chinese CDC, declined multiple times to make its officials available for interviews and did not answer questions about Zhang.

Supaporn compared her sequence with Zhang's and found it was a 100% match, confirming that the Thai patient was ill with the same virus detected in Wuhan. Another Thai lab got the same results. That day, Thailand informed the WHO, said Tanarak Plipat, deputy director-general of the Department of Disease Control at Thailand's Ministry of Public Health.

After Zhang released the genome, the Chinese CDC, the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences raced to publish their sequences, working overnight to review them, gather patient data, and send them to the National Health Commission for approval, according to documentation obtained by the AP. On Jan. 12, the three labs together finally published the sequences on GISAID, a platform for scientists to share genomic data.

By then, more than two weeks had passed since Vision Medicals decoded a partial sequence, and

more than a week since the three government labs had all obtained full sequences. Around 600 people were infected in that week, a roughly three-fold increase.

Some scientists say the wait was not unreasonable considering the difficulties in sequencing unknown pathogens, given accuracy is as important as speed. They point to the SARS outbreak in 2003 when some Chinese scientists initially — and wrongly — believed the source of the epidemic was chlamydia.

“The pressure is intense in an outbreak to make sure you’re right,” said Peter Daszak, president of the EcoHealthAlliance in New York. “It’s actually worse to go out to go to the public with a story that’s wrong because the public completely lose confidence in the public health response.”

Still, others quietly question what happened behind the scenes.

Infectious diseases expert John Mackenzie, who served on a WHO emergency committee during the outbreak, praised the speed of Chinese researchers in sequencing the virus. But he said once central authorities got involved, detailed data trickled to a crawl.

“There certainly was a kind of blank period,” Mackenzie said. “There had to be human to human transmission. You know, it’s staring at you in the face... I would have thought they would have been much more open at that stage.”

On Jan. 13, WHO announced that Thailand had a confirmed case of the virus, jolting Chinese officials.

The next day, in a confidential teleconference, China’s top health official ordered the country to prepare for a pandemic, calling the outbreak the “most severe challenge since SARS in 2003”, as the AP previously reported. Chinese CDC staff across the country began screening, isolating, and testing for cases, turning up hundreds across the country.

Yet even as the Chinese CDC internally declared a level one emergency, the highest level possible, Chinese officials still said the chance of sustained transmission between humans was low.

WHO went back and forth. Van Kerkhove said in a press briefing that “it is certainly possible there is limited human-to-human transmission.” But hours later, WHO seemed to backtrack, and tweeted that “preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission” — a statement that later became fodder for critics.

A high-ranking official in WHO’s Asia office, Dr. Liu Yunguo, who attended medical school in Wuhan, flew to Beijing to make direct, informal contacts with Chinese officials, recordings show. Liu’s former classmate, a Wuhan doctor, had alerted him that pneumonia patients were flooding the city’s hospitals, and Liu pushed for more experts to visit Wuhan, according to a public health expert familiar with the matter.

On Jan. 20, the leader of an expert team returning from Wuhan, renowned government infectious diseases doctor Zhong Nanshan, declared publicly for the first time that the new virus was spreading between people. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the “timely publication of epidemic information and deepening of international cooperation.”

Despite that directive, WHO staff still struggled to obtain enough detailed patient data from China about the rapidly evolving outbreak. That same day, the U.N. health agency dispatched a small team to Wuhan for two days, including Galea, the WHO representative in China.

They were told about a worrying cluster of cases among more than a dozen doctors and nurses. But they did not have “transmission trees” detailing how the cases were connected, nor a full understanding of how widely the virus was spreading and who was at risk.

In an internal meeting, Galea said their Chinese counterparts were “talking openly and consistently” about human-to-human transmission, and that there was a debate about whether or not this was sustained. Galea reported to colleagues in Geneva and Manila that China’s key request to WHO was for help “in communicating this to the public, without causing panic.”

On Jan. 22, WHO convened an independent committee to determine whether to declare a global health emergency. After two inconclusive meetings where experts were split, they decided against it — even as Chinese officials ordered Wuhan sealed in the biggest quarantine in history. The next day, WHO chief Tedros publicly described the spread of the new coronavirus in China as “limited.”

For days, China didn’t release much detailed data, even as its case count exploded. Beijing city officials were alarmed enough to consider locking down the capital, according to a medical expert with direct knowledge of the matter.

On Jan. 28, Tedros and top experts, including Ryan, made an extraordinary trip to Beijing to meet President Xi and other senior Chinese officials. It is highly unusual for WHO’s director-general to directly intervene in the practicalities of outbreak investigations. Tedros’ staffers had prepared a list of requests for information.

“It could all happen and the floodgates open, or there’s no communication,” Grein said in an internal meeting while his boss was in Beijing. “We’ll see.”

At the end of Tedros’ trip, WHO announced China had agreed to accept an international team of experts. In a press briefing on Jan. 29, Tedros heaped praise on China, calling its level of commitment “incredible.”

The next day, WHO finally declared an international health emergency. Once again, Tedros thanked China, saying nothing about the earlier lack of cooperation.

“We should have actually expressed our respect and gratitude to China for what it’s doing,” Tedros said. “It has already done incredible things to limit the transmission of the virus to other countries.”

--

(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Sender:

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Ortagus, Morgan D

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Recipient:

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(S)

(b)(6)

Stilwell, David R

(b)(6)

(OAG)(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown
Date: Thu, 30 Apr 2020 16:48:23 +0000

Hi (b)(6) – yes I will come up at 1:30.

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 12:48 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Hi (b)(6)

A/S Stilwell is available at 1:30pm this afternoon. Will that work for you?

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 11:38 AM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Whatever works best for your schedule is fine with me.

(b)(6) – can you let me know the best times?

(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 11:37 AM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Today is clobbered but (b)(6) can make time today if you'd prefer. Tomorrow works too.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 11:33 AM

To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) >
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Of course. What time would you like me to come in? I am in the office now by the way.

(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 11:20 AM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

Any chance you can come in tomorrow for a 20 minute discussion? Related to this.

Thanks

Dave

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 10:01 AM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) >
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Hi (b)(6)

I wanted to flag this journal article I ran across the other day, which shows that internal WIV concerns about bio-safety were still being raised right up to the point of the outbreak.

This paper was submitted by Yuan Zhiming, the Wuhan Institute of Virology's Communist Party chief and Vice Director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and was published in the Journal of Biosafety and Biosecurity journal on September 11, 2019

Current status and future challenges of high-level biosafety laboratories in China



Current status and future challenges of high-level biosafety

laboratorie...

High-level biosafety laboratories are safe and secure platforms which integrate reliable containment, well-train...

Relevant Points:**3.2. Inadequate biosafety management systems**

Since the promulgation and implementation of "Regulations on Biosafety Management of Pathogenic Microorganism Laboratories," issued by State Council in 2004, a series of other regulations have been formulated by different ministries and local governments. These have considered the examination and approval of laboratory construction and accreditation, authorization of research activities, as well as pathogen, waste, and laboratory animal management regulations. Although these regulations wholesomely cover all aspects of construction, management, and eventual operation of BSLs, their enforcement still needs to be strengthened. Furthermore, due to different investment sources, affiliations, and management systems, the implementation of these laboratories faces difficulties converging objectives and cooperation workflows. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3.3. Insufficient resources for efficient laboratory operation

Depending on the size and location, building a modern BSL costs millions of US dollars, and in China the funds for construction are typically raised by the state, local governments, upstream authorities, and institutions. Additionally, 5–10% of construction costs are needed for annual operation. However, (b)(5)

(b)(5)

3.4. Deficiency of professional capacity

In the process of BSL construction, operation, and management, highly skilled professional teams from diverse disciplines such as architectural science, materials science, aerodynamics, automatic controlling, environmental science, microbiology, botany, biosafety, and systems engineering are required. In addition, biosafety measures and practices are vital in daily laboratory operations hence a highly qualified, motivated, and skilled biosafety supervisor is needed not only for overseeing solid containment but also in laboratory risk management. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:50 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(5)

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From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:47:14 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Thanks, (b)(6) This is very helpful.

The former deputy director of the PRC CDC is the wife of a prominent Chinese dissident. Both are living in NYC. She knows all about (b)(5)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:37 PM

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Actually there is a CDC press release from 2004:

<https://www.cdc.gov/sars/media/2004-05-19.html>

NOTICE

This website is archived for historical purposes and is no longer being maintained or updated.

During April 22-29, the Chinese Ministry of Health (MOH) reported a total of nine cases of SARS in China ; seven of the patients were from Beijing , and two were from Anhui Province , located in east-central China . One of the patients died.

Two of the nine patients were graduate students who worked at the China 's National Institute of Virology Laboratory (NIVL) in Beijing , which is known to conduct research on SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) . The laboratory was closed on April 23, potentially exposed personnel are being monitored for signs of illness, and possible sources of infection for the two laboratory workers are being investigated.

Of the seven other SARS cases, two were directly linked to close personal contact with one of the graduate students who worked at NIVL; these two cases were in the graduate student's mother (who died) and in a nurse who provided care to the graduate student. The remaining five cases were linked to close contact with the nurse.

No further cases of SARS in China or anywhere else in the world have been reported since April 29. Chinese authorities have carried out active surveillance activities to identify other possible cases of SARS, including enhanced surveillance for any flu-like illness and pneumonia of unknown etiology. They also initiated measures to prevent the spread of SARS among travelers, including health screening of travelers at ports of exit/entry.

On May 18, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported on its websiteExternal that the outbreak in China appears to have been contained, but that biosafety concerns remain and further investigation is under way. WHO and Chinese health officials are still in the process of determining precisely what caused the outbreak.

CDC is in close communication with WHO and is working with its public health partners to reinforce the need for strict adherence to applicable biosafety precautions to reduce the risk of laboratory-related exposures to SARS-

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From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:30:12 PM
To: (b)(6); Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Happy to keep sending what I know. One thing I missed from this morning is that there was a 2004 leak of SARS from a BSL3 lab in China. (b)(5)

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From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:17:58 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Thanks, Stilly, for sharing (b)(6)'s brilliant contributions to this project.

(b)(6) truly appreciate your input. Please do not hesitate to keep sending it. (b)(5)

(b)(5) Good stuff.

(b)(6)

From: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 5:10 PM
To: (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

(b)(6) wrote/resurrected the 2018 cables. (b)(6) foresaw this disaster long ago. . . To me this is the key point (b)(5)

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

Cheers

Stilly

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:59 AM

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

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Attached is the Nature article I referenced below.

Relevant Summary: The laboratory in Wuhan is on the cusp of being cleared to work with the world's most dangerous pathogens. The move is part of a plan to build between five and seven biosafety level-4 (BSL-4) labs across the Chinese mainland by 2025, and has generated much excitement, as well as some concerns. ***Some scientists outside China worry about pathogens escaping***, and the addition of a biological dimension to geopolitical tensions between China and other nations. But Chinese microbiologists are celebrating their entrance to the elite cadre empowered to wrestle with the world's greatest biological threats.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 11:46 AM

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

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

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

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

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

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

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

Per our call I will get you my initial thoughts this morning (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,

(b)(6)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Stilwell, David R <(b)(6)>

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

To: (b)(6)

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

Subject: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

you.

Figured I'd start with

Some questions like:

1. Current CCP virology/pathogen/bio labs (civilian and military); where they are, when they opened; what they do; do we have any confidence in them?
2. Last time they were inspected by outside world;
3. How many did Americans help create?
4. Previous known lab shortcomings and failures.

Feel free to call. I understand you probably don't have all the data (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks

Dave

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

Sender: (b)(6)

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: "Keshap, Atul" (b)(6)

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

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

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

To: (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>;

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

CC: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

Date: Sat, 9 May 2020 01:05:31 +0000

Many thanks for the quick turn-around on these. +EAP/FO Principals

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

Sent: Friday, May 8, 2020 8:42 PM

To: (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6)@state.gov>; Keshap, Atul (b)(6)@state.gov>;

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

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

(b)(6)@state.gov>; EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Canberra)

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Fwd: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

Text of a series of reports today in the Australian press.

- Chris Griffith in *The Australian*: "Coronavirus: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area".
- Miranda Devine in *The Daily Telegraph*: "Mystery of the missing data — substantial changes made to Wuhan lab's bat virus files".
- Clive Hamilton in *The Sydney Morning Herald*: "It would be unwise to dismiss Donald Trump's Wuhan lab leak theory".

Coronavirus: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

EXCLUSIVE

CHRIS GRIFFITH

TECHNOLOGY REPORTER

12:00AM MAY 9, 2020

COVID-19 case data allegedly hacked from China's Wuhan lab suggests the number of cases has been under-reported.

Data includes areas where cases were not reported, according to an analysis.

The dataset, seen by The Weekend Australian, contains empty records for the period February 2-18, indicating records were not kept for that period or that data was deleted. The Australian reported on April 23 that data from the Wuhan Institute of Virology had been hacked.

Robert Potter, CEO and founder of online security firm Internet 2.0, then told The Australian: "I've had credible sources tell me that people have used the credentials that were leaked on Twitter and Facebook to access the lab."

The original story reported Mr Potter citing the existence of nearly 25,000 email addresses and passwords dumped online belonging to the Wuhan labs, the WHO, the US National Institute of Health, Gates Foundation and other bodies.

Mr Potter's sources have now revealed a database purportedly from the Wuhan Institute of Virology containing a daily record of coronavirus cases in apartment blocks in cities across China.

READ MORE:US Intel investigates virus links to lab accident|PM's right to hold the line on lab 'conspiracy'|Trump's 'seen' Wuhan lab evidence|Much evidence for Wuhan lab theory: Pompeo|All evidence points to Wuhan labs

Each record includes an ID, collection time, number of deaths and recoveries, the latitude and longitude of the building and locality. The dataset contains a series of records for each day from February 2 to April 22.

A sample of coronavirus records totalled by buildings in China that are claimed to be from the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

Mr Potter on Friday told The Weekend Australian his source had sent him photos of an authenticated login and visualisations of the data that gave him "high confidence" the records were legitimate. "It was highly unlikely that the data had been fabricated," he said. "They appear to showcase tracking from what I think is probably a research project within the Wuhan lab working on coronavirus data."

"It's not data of individual cases, it's tracking buildings where there are confirmed or suspected (cases) or recoveries or people have died from coronavirus in those buildings. The metadata tab translated to English shows areas (that) correspond to apartment blocks a lot of the time.

"But I would also say that the data doesn't appear to cover every case in China, but it covers different cases to what have been publicly reported."

He said the records included cities that hadn't appeared among publicly revealed cases. He found more cases from the northern city of Harbin than reported. There were cases in Inner Mongolia and Shanxi Province not found in public data. He had done comparisons with recently released information in China.

He said there were two possibilities for the blank records in early February, one being that data was uploaded in late February or data had been deleted because there "appears to be logs for those days ... but they have no entries".

"So it appears that there could be data from before that period that may have been deleted.

There seems to be a high sensitivity around data from that period."

Records from the WHO indicate a WHO-China joint mission travelled to Wuhan around that time. The mission included experts from Canada, Germany, Japan, Nigeria, Republic of Korea, Russia, Singapore and the US. They went to Beijing, Wuhan and two other cities in that period from 16-24 February, says the WHO.

The resulting report recommended that uninfected countries prepare to immediately activate the highest level of emergency response mechanisms essential for an early containment of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Associate Professor Chris Balding, of Fulbright University, Vietnam, who also examined the data, said Mr Potter's assessment was "absolutely accurate" in his assessment of the data.

"It seems to diverge significantly from official Chinese data," he said. "It shows a higher dispersion of cases and a higher number of deaths than official data."

TECHNOLOGY REPORTER**SYDNEY**

Chris is one of Australia's most experienced technology reporters, with an involvement in the computer industry spanning almost 50 years. He learned to program in the late 1960s, studied computer science in the early 70s, worked on mainframes, taught programming, and ran a business networking PCs in the 80s. In journalism, he has worked in print, radio and television, been a columnist and commentator, and is an award winning feature writer. Apart from being The Australian's senior technology reporter, he discusses technology trends weekly on Sky Business channel's TECH.biz program.

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/opinion/mystery-of-the-missing-data-substantial-changes-made-to-wuhan-labs-bat-virus-files/news-story/46d5a4f7e05ed96e354b5bd5dc2b611c>

OPINION

Mystery of the missing data — substantial changes made to Wuhan lab's bat virus files

Days before the Wuhan wet market was bleached, whistleblowers punished and virus samples destroyed, someone at the high-security Wuhan Institute of Virology censored its virus database in an apparent attempt to disassociate the laboratory from a novel coronavirus outbreak that would become a global pandemic, writes Miranda Devine.

Miranda Devine, The Daily Telegraph

May 7, 2020 2:02pm

Days before the Wuhan wet market was bleached, whistleblowers punished and virus samples destroyed, someone at the high-security Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) censored its virus database in an apparent attempt to

disassociate the laboratory from a novel coronavirus outbreak that would become a global pandemic.

This is what open source intelligence uncovered in the UK reveals.

Substantial alterations to the WIV database on the evening of December 30, the day before the World Health Organisation was alerted to the outbreak of a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, are just another indication that the Chinese Communist Party is hiding something when it comes to the origins of COVID-19.

The question of whether the virus came from the Wuhan wet market, as China insists, or leaked from the nearby WIV laboratory, where high-risk research into animal-to-human transmission of bat coronaviruses was being conducted, is at the centre of allegations of a cover-up and a worldwide clamour for an independent investigation into the source of the disease.

Shi Zhengli, the virologist known as China's "Bat Woman" for her work with bat coronaviruses, directs the WIV's Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases and is listed as the primary database contact.

On December 30, she was in Shanghai for a conference when she was summoned back to Wuhan with the news that a novel coronavirus had been detected in two pneumonia patients.

On the overnight train from Shanghai, according to a March article in Scientific American, she was stricken with worry about the coronaviruses.

"Could they have come from our lab?" she wondered.

After all, the closest known relative of this new coronavirus, a bat virus named RaTG13, was in her lab.

Weeks later, she would post a message on WeChat saying, "I swear with my life, [the virus] has nothing to do with the lab."

But, at some point that night, while she was on the train to Wuhan, alterations were made to her database, which contained records of bat viruses transmitted to other wild animals.

Most of the changes were to delete the keywords "wildlife" or "wild animals". This is significant because global health researchers say the virus jumped from

bats to humans via another wild animal — the crucial “missing link in the COVID-19 transmission chain.

Shi’s used to boast her bat virus database was unique because it included data on virus variants in other wild animals.

Was her database censored to keep prying eyes away from references to cross-species transmission of viruses in wild animals?

For instance, the title of the database was changed that night from “Wildlife-borne Viral Pathogen Database” to “Bat and rodent-borne viral pathogen database”.

“Wild animal” was replaced with “bat and rodent” or “bat and rat” at least 10 times in the database. A reference to “arthropod vectors” also was removed.

Keywords which might facilitate searches potentially connecting the database with the outbreak also were deleted. “Wild animal samples”, “viral pathogen data”, “emerging infectious diseases” and “cross-species infection” were keywords associated with the original version.

On December 30 they were replaced with “bat”, “rodent” and “virus”.

“It looks like a rushed, inconsistent effort to disassociate the project from the outbreak by rebranding it,” says the British open source intelligence analyst who found the alterations.

“It’s a strange thing to do within hours of being informed of a novel coronavirus outbreak”.

He surmises that: “If the WIV had found the missing link between bat virus RaTG13 and SARS-CoV-2 [the virus that causes COVID-19] from an animal vector, it would have been in Shi’s database”.

There’s no conclusive evidence that any of the changes were made for sinister reasons.

But China’s lies and furtive actions since the outbreak leads us to believe the worst.

“This is an enormous crisis created by the fact that the Chinese Communist Party reverted to form, reverted to the kinds of disinformation, the kinds of

concealment, that authoritarian regimes do,” Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo said in an interview Sunday with ABC.

“There is enormous evidence that [the Wuhan lab] is where this began ...

“These are not the first times that we’ve had a world exposed to viruses as a result of failures in a Chinese lab.”

On Wednesday, Pompeo walked back his comments slightly at a press conference: “We don’t have certainty,” he said. “We’re all trying to get to clarity.”

China’s refusal to allow an investigation of the origins of the Wuhan virus, or even to share original virus samples, impedes the search for treatments and a vaccine. As if that weren’t bad enough, now it is threatening economic boycotts against countries like Australia which want an investigation.

“The CCP organisational and governmental culture is to cover up and ruthlessly control,” says a retired senior Australian intelligence officer who served in China.

“The arrest of frontline health professionals in January was standard practice.”

We don’t know why the changes were made to the WIV database.

What we do know is they were made the same day a young ophthalmologist, Dr Li Wenliang, warned colleagues in an online chat group about a “SARS-like coronavirus” among patients in the emergency department of a Wuhan Hospital.

Li was arrested two days later, along with seven other doctors, for “spreading rumours” and forced to recant. He died a month later, of coronavirus, aged 34.

<https://www.smh.com.au/national/it-would-be-unwise-to-dismiss-donald-trump-s-wuhan-lab-leak-theory-20200507-p54qyg.html>

It would be unwise to dismiss Donald Trump's Wuhan lab leak theory

Clive Hamilton

Professor at Charles Sturt University in Canberra

May 9, 2020 — 12.00am

Donald Trump says he believes the coronavirus was accidentally leaked from a Wuhan laboratory but has provided no proof. Intelligence agencies in the United States and Australia say they have no hard evidence. The Australian government says it's most likely that the virus was transferred from an animal to humans at Wuhan's wet market. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo seems to be walking back from his previous strong statements.

Some are treating Trump's claim as without basis and we wait to see if he can back it up. In the meantime, it's unwise to dismiss the accidental lab leak hypothesis. Here's why.

Note first that it's not a conspiracy theory; it's an accident hypothesis. And we should not mix up the claim of an accidental leak of a naturally occurring virus with the claim that the virus was constructed or manipulated in a laboratory to become more potent. Genetic analysis has disproved the latter.

The main evidence pointing to a lab leak, all of it circumstantial, comes from research published by Chinese scientists before Beijing shut them down. On January 29, an article written by Chinese researchers was published in the New England Journal of Medicine. It concluded from an analysis of 425 coronavirus patients that 55 per cent of cases diagnosed before January 1 were linked to the South China Seafood Market, leaving 45 per cent who had no apparent contact with the market.

On February 6, a short paper by two scientists from Wuhan universities and titled "The possible origins of the 2019-nCoV coronavirus" appeared. Botao Xiao and Lei Xiao noted that the habitat of the bats carrying the suspected virus is 900 kilometres from the seafood market, that the bats are not eaten by Wuhan residents, and that "no bat was traded in the market".

Nor is there any evidence of an intermediate host (speculation has centred on pangolins). They point out that there are two research centres that experiment on bat viruses in Wuhan, one less than 300 metres from the seafood market and the other, the Wuhan Institute of Virology, around

12 kilometres. They concluded that "the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan". The article was quickly removed. Botao Xiao later told the Wall Street Journal he had withdrawn the paper because it lacked "direct proofs".

A more thorough study by 27 Chinese scientists published in The Lancet on February 15 found that 27 patients from a sample of 41 admitted to hospital in the early stages of the outbreak had been exposed to the market, leaving 14 who weren't. The first person diagnosed with COVID-19 (on December 1) had no contact with the market and lived a long way from it.

Richard Lucey, an infectious diseases expert at Georgetown University who had studied the early data, told Science magazine that the virus must have been circulating silently in Wuhan well before the cluster of infections broke out at the markets. The authorities, he said, "must have realised the epidemic did not originate in that Wuhan Huanan seafood market" even as they were putting this story around.

On February 14, President Xi Jinping gave a speech to party leaders declaring China must "close the loopholes exposed by the epidemic". He announced the fast-tracking of a new law for "biosecurity at laboratories" specifically targeting the use of biological agents that "may harm national security". The law had been in the pipeline for some months and some experts say tightening security measures at laboratories is to be expected after an outbreak like this one.

The next day, the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology published a new directive "strengthening biosecurity management in microbiology labs that handle advanced viruses like the novel coronavirus". Again, overseas experts who have worked at the Wuhan Institute of Virology said this is normal after an outbreak.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology is the "only facility in China permitted to handle the most dangerous known pathogens, including the Ebola and Lassa viruses". It has been studying new SARS-related coronaviruses in bats for several years. The work has included manipulating coronaviruses to make them more potent. Researchers have to take stringent measures to prevent themselves from catching viruses. Around the world, leaks from labs have been known to occur.

In November, the Wuhan Institute of Virology posted a notice inviting applications for post-doctoral fellows to join a team led by Dr Peng Zhou using bats to research Ebola and SARS-associated coronaviruses. Peng Zhou has been studying how bats can carry highly pathogenic viruses without becoming sick.

In mid-January, Major General Chen Wei, the Chinese military's top epidemiologist and virologist, arrived in Wuhan with a team of military scientists. They based themselves at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. At this time, messages had been circulating on social media platforms WeChat and Weibo claiming that "patient zero", the first to be infected, was a researcher at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It was suggested she was a graduate of the Institute, worked on coronaviruses and never visited the South China Seafood Market. The Institute released a statement saying that the person in question left Wuhan in 2015 and was quite healthy.

In early February, as the epidemic spread to other countries, Beijing became deeply worried about the damage to China's international reputation and began a campaign to deny the fact that the virus had its origins in Wuhan and spread disinformation such as the outlandish claim that the US military took the virus to Wuhan.

Beijing also moved quickly to shut down scientific research. Last month China's State Council ordered universities and research institutions to implement strict management of all scientific papers concerning the coronavirus, especially those dealing with its origin. Political vetting is now required before publication is permitted. The director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology emailed staff on April 9 instructing them not to disclose any information about the disease, not even to China's official media or partner institutions.

Beijing does not want the truth to be known, going so far as to delete from a European Union opinion piece words noting that the outbreak originated in China. But the truth matters because prevention of a similar catastrophe depends on it. If the pandemic was due to a lab accident, then the answer is tighter lab controls. (And those in charge will have a lot of explaining to do.) If the virus arose from animal transfer in the wet market, then the answer is to shut down the trade in live animals. Or the truth may lie elsewhere.

So, will the world know the truth about the origin of the new coronavirus? Chinese scientists are some of the world's leaders in virology, genetics and epidemiology and they have much to teach us. However, Beijing, paranoid about being blamed for the pandemic, has seen fit to silence them.

If the virus did escape from a lab it now seems the world will only know if some brave souls leak documents or otherwise blow the whistle.

Clive Hamilton is a professor at Charles Sturt University in Canberra and co-author with Mareike Ohlberg of *Hidden Hand: Exposing how the Chinese Communist Party is reshaping the world*, due out June 16.

May 9, 2020 – 12.00am

Donald Trump says he believes the coronavirus was accidentally leaked from a Wuhan laboratory but has provided no proof. Intelligence agencies in the United States and Australia say they have no hard evidence. The Australian government says it's most likely that the virus was transferred from an animal to humans at Wuhan's wet market. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo seems to be walking back from his previous strong statements.

Some are treating Trump's claim as without basis and we wait to see if he can back it up. In the meantime, it's unwise to dismiss the accidental lab leak hypothesis. Here's why.

Note first that it's not a conspiracy theory; it's an accident hypothesis. And we should not mix up the claim of an accidental leak of a naturally occurring virus with the claim that the virus was constructed or manipulated in a laboratory to become more potent. Genetic analysis has disproved the latter.

The main evidence pointing to a lab leak, all of it circumstantial, comes from research published by Chinese scientists before Beijing shut them down. On January 29, an article written by Chinese researchers was published in the New England Journal of Medicine. It concluded from an analysis of 425 coronavirus patients that 55 per cent of cases diagnosed before January 1 were linked to the South China Seafood Market, leaving 45 per cent who had no apparent contact with the market.

On February 6, a short paper by two scientists from Wuhan universities and titled "The possible origins of the 2019-nCoV coronavirus" appeared. Botao Xiao and Lei Xiao noted that the habitat of the bats carrying the suspected virus is 900 kilometres from the seafood market, that the bats are not eaten by Wuhan residents, and that "no bat was traded in the market".

Nor is there any evidence of an intermediate host (speculation has centred on pangolins). They point out that there are two research centres that experiment on bat viruses in Wuhan, one less than 300 metres from the seafood market and the other, the Wuhan Institute of Virology, around 12 kilometres. They concluded that "the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan". The article was quickly removed. Botao Xiao later told the Wall Street Journal he had withdrawn the paper because it lacked "direct proofs".

A more thorough study by 27 Chinese scientists published in The Lancet on February 15 found that 27 patients from a sample of 41 admitted to hospital in the early stages of the outbreak had been exposed to the market, leaving 14 who weren't. The first person diagnosed with COVID-19 (on December 1) had no contact with the market and lived a long way from it.

Richard Lucey, an infectious diseases expert at Georgetown University who had studied the early data, told Science magazine that the virus must have been circulating silently in Wuhan well before the cluster of infections broke out at the markets. The authorities, he said, "must have realised the epidemic did not originate in that Wuhan Huanan seafood market" even as they were putting this story around.

On February 14, President Xi Jinping gave a speech to party leaders declaring China must "close the loopholes exposed by the epidemic". He announced the fast-tracking of a new law for "biosecurity at laboratories" specifically targeting the use of biological agents that "may harm national security". The law had been in the pipeline for some months and some experts say tightening security measures at laboratories is to be expected after an outbreak like this one.

The next day, the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology published a new directive "strengthening biosecurity management in microbiology labs that handle advanced viruses like the novel coronavirus". Again, overseas experts who have worked at the Wuhan Institute of Virology said this is normal after an outbreak.

The Wuhan Institute of Virology is the "only facility in China permitted to handle the most dangerous known pathogens, including the Ebola and Lassa viruses". It has been studying new SARS-related coronaviruses in bats for several years. The work has included manipulating coronaviruses to make them more potent. Researchers have to take stringent measures to prevent themselves from catching viruses. Around the world, leaks from labs have been known to occur.

In November, the Wuhan Institute of Virology posted a notice inviting applications for post-doctoral fellows to join a team led by Dr Peng Zhou using bats to research Ebola and SARS-associated coronaviruses. Peng Zhou has been studying how bats can carry highly pathogenic viruses without becoming sick.

In mid-January, Major General Chen Wei, the Chinese military's top epidemiologist and virologist, arrived in Wuhan with a team of military scientists. They based themselves at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. At this time, messages had been circulating on social media platforms WeChat and Weibo claiming that "patient zero", the first to be infected, was a researcher at the Wuhan Institute of Virology. It was suggested she was a graduate of the Institute, worked on coronaviruses and never visited the South China Seafood Market. The Institute released a statement saying that the person in question left Wuhan in 2015 and was quite healthy.

In early February, as the epidemic spread to other countries, Beijing became deeply worried about the damage to China's international reputation and began a campaign to deny the fact that the virus had its origins in Wuhan and spread disinformation such as the outlandish claim that the US military took the virus to Wuhan.

Beijing also moved quickly to shut down scientific research. Last month China's State Council ordered universities and research institutions to implement strict management of all scientific papers concerning the coronavirus, especially those dealing with its origin. Political vetting is now required before publication is permitted. The director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology emailed staff on April 9 instructing them not to disclose any information about the disease, not even to China's official media or partner institutions.

Beijing does not want the truth to be known, going so far as to delete from a European Union opinion piece words noting that the outbreak originated in China. But the truth matters because prevention of a similar catastrophe depends on it. If the pandemic was due to a lab accident, then the answer is tighter lab controls. (And those in charge will have a lot of explaining to do.) If the virus arose from animal transfer in the wet market, then the answer is to shut down the trade in live animals. Or the truth may lie elsewhere.

So, will the world know the truth about the origin of the new coronavirus? Chinese scientists are some of the world's leaders in virology, genetics and epidemiology and they have much to teach us. However, Beijing, paranoid about being blamed for the pandemic, has seen fit to silence them.

If the virus did escape from a lab it now seems the world will only know if some brave souls leak documents or otherwise blow the whistle.

Clive Hamilton is a professor at Charles Sturt University in Canberra and co-author with Mareike Ohlberg of *Hidden Hand: Exposing how the Chinese Communist Party is reshaping the world*, due out June 16.

From: (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, May 9, 2020 10:20 AM
To: (b)(6) @state.gov (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6) @state.gov
Cc: EAP-P-Office-DL <EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Sydney) (b)(6) @state.gov
Subject: Re: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

On it!

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From: (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, May 9, 2020 9:53:29 AM
To: (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6) @state.gov (b)(6) (Canberra) (b)(6) @state.gov
Cc: EAP-P-Office-DL <EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

Hi, (b)(6) My apologies for asking for something over the weekend, but would it be possible to get the full article from The Australian in the link below? PDAS Keshap is asking for it, and unfortunately we don't have access to it.

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/coronavirus-wuhan-lab-records-show-unreported-cases-in-wider-area/news-story/e033a72402e65cfb9e95472fddaff98e>

Thank you!

(b)(6)

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Date: May 8, 2020 at 7:47:48 PM EDT

Subject: Hacked Wuhan lab records show unreported cases in wider area

To: EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>, EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov> (b)(6)

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

Cc: (b)(6) (Canberra) (h)(6) (h)(6) (Canberra)

(h)(6)

Mindy, can we please get this article in full from behind the paywall? Thanks

<https://www.theaustralian.com.au/nation/coronavirus-wuhan-lab-records-show-unreported-cases-in-wider-area/news-story/e033a72402e65cfb9e95472fddaff98e>

Sender: "Keshap, Atul" (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Canberra) (h)(6)

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(b)(6) (Canberra) (h)(6)

Recipient: (h)(6) (Canberra) (h)(6)

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

EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>;

(h)(6) (Canberra) (h)(6)

EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
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To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
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(b)(6) (b)(6)
CC: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FW: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020
Date: Wed, 22 Apr 2020 22:14:22 +0000

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 6:12 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FW: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

They still haven't given us early virus samples (isolates, I think they're technically called). So we have virus samples aplenty from all the people who've gotten sick in the US and elsewhere, but no virus samples from December in Wuhan. (b)(5)

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(b)(6)

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

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(b)(6)

On April 22, 2020 at 5:29:14 PM EDT, (b)(6) (b)(6) wrote:
Wow, the Boss came out swinging today! What does he mean by, "We still do not have a sample of the virus..."?

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 5:20 PM

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

Cc: EAP-P-Office-DL <EAP-P-Office-DL@state.gov>; EAP-PG-Taskings-DL <EAP-PG-Taskings-DL@state.gov>; EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL <EAP-ChinaMongolia-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>; EAP-Korea-Transcripts-DL <EAP-Korea-Transcripts-DL@state.gov>

Subject: REMARKS TO THE PRESS: Secretary Michael R. Pompeo-April 22, 2020

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson**

For Immediate Release

April 22, 2020

**Remarks to the Press
Secretary Michael R. Pompeo
April 22, 2020
Press Briefing Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, good morning, everyone. Happy Ramadan to those of you in time zones where it's Thursday already.

I want to lead off with three commemorations.

First, we remember those slain in terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. That was one year ago yesterday.

Second, this week the administration honors the annual Holocaust Days of Remembrance. This is the 75th anniversary year of the liberation of many Nazi concentration camps where so many innocent people were murdered, including 6 million Jews. We bear witness to their stories so that such repugnant acts of evil will never happen again.

Third, it's Earth Day, and especially in light of Secretary-General Guterres' message released this morning to turn our recovery into a real opportunity to do the right thing, I want to remind everyone that the right way to achieve a greener, cleaner, brighter future for the world is to unleash private innovation and free market competition. It's what we've done here in the United States but continue to be our model, and we are a world leader in reducing all types of emission.

One simple data point: From 2005 to 2018, the most recent year we have data, U.S. emissions decreased by more than 10 percent even as our economy grew by 25 percent. China, conversely, has been the largest annual emitter since 2006 and it expects that its emissions will continue to grow until around 2030, thus offsetting the progress of countries all around the world in reducing global emissions. I would urge Secretary Guterres to make sure we have the data right, the facts right about who is actually delivering on the things that we all value. And on Earth Day, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, I think that's especially important.

Turning to the World Health Organization, I want to spend a few minutes telling the American people a little bit more about the problems that we're trying to work our way through.

The WHO has two primary functions. First, it's a regulator and an advisory role, and a health emergency and humanitarian aid operation on top of that.

After the first SARS outbreak in 2003, the United States led the reform of the WHO, the WHO rules that govern how countries report on public health threats. So a major reform effort at 2003.

Those rules – they're called the International Health Regulations – went into effect in 2007.

We set very clear expectations. We – the world – set very clear expectations for how every country must disclose data to protect global health.

For example, Article 6 of the IHR says that “each State Party shall notify the World Health Organization...within 24 hours...of all events which may constitute a public health emergency of international concern within its territory...”

Annex 2 of those same rules provides that countries must notify the World Health Organization of any unusual or unexpected public health events such as SARS, a close genetic cousin of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Those rules also said how countries should evaluate when to notify the WHO of diseases of unknown causes or sources.

We strongly believe that the Chinese Communist Party did not report the outbreak of the new coronavirus in a timely fashion to the World Health Organization.

Article 6 of the IHRs, which was a part of this reform, further mandates that a State Party – that would include China – “shall continue to communicate to WHO timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information...” That is, there’s an ongoing obligation.

Even after the CCP did notify the WHO of the coronavirus outbreak, China didn’t share all of the information it had.

Instead, it covered up how dangerous the disease is. It didn’t report sustained human-to-human transmission for a month until it was in every province inside of China. It censored those who tried to warn the world, it ordered a halt to testing of new samples, and it destroyed existing samples.

The CCP still has not shared the virus sample from inside of China with the outside world, making it impossible to track the disease’s evolution.

Not making a legal determination here today on China’s adherence to the IHRs, but the World Health Organization’s regulatory arm clearly failed during this pandemic.

I’d also note that when countries adopted these new rules in 2007, we also gave the director-general of the WHO encouragement and the ability to go public when a member-country wasn’t following those rules, and that didn’t happen in this case either.

It’s why we continue to insist this is an ongoing requirement for transparency and openness according to the WHO rules, and the WHO has responsibility to continue to enforce them today. This transparency and getting it right is critical to saving lives today and in the future.

I’ll talk for just a minute about humanitarian aid. The United States is the most generous nation on the planet, has been for the past three years, will continue to be this year.

Thanks to the American taxpayers, we’ve dedicated more than \$140 billion in global funding for global health purposes in the past two decades.

Today I can confirm the United States is making an additional commitment of about 270 million to assist the most at-risk countries in fighting the virus, bringing our total to more than \$775 million to date.

We do this in lots of ways. We do this through multilateral organizations. We help our partners by sharing expertise. Today the CDC has officers stationed in 59 countries and has helped train thousands of epidemiologists worldwide over the years whose knowledge is providing incredibly valuable.

You should know it helps those countries, it saves lives in those countries, but this is a global pandemic and that work protects us right here at home in America as well.

Weeks before the first reported COVID case arrived in Guatemala, USAID helped the Ministry of Health there equip a key hospital to start caring for its first patients.

And the United States is training more than 70,000 pharmacists across Indonesia today so they can provide good advice and referrals.

American generosity isn’t limited to our assistance that comes directly from the United States Government. Our businesses, our NGOs, charities, all faith groups – this is an all-of-America approach to saving lives all across the world and protecting us right here at home as well.

We estimate that the American people, in sum, have given nearly \$3 billion in donations and assistance just to fight this particular virus.

America's global health commitments remain as steady as ever.

Move on to a couple final points. I want to highlight two ways in which the Chinese Communist Party is exploiting the world's focus on COVID-19 crisis by continuing its provocative behavior.

First, we commented on what's taking place in Hong Kong, where amidst increased efforts by Beijing to erode autonomy, law enforcement authorities have arrested pro-democracy activists, including 81-year-old Martin Lee. We've always said that China has an obligation to live up to its promises, its obligation – as I was speaking about the virus earlier – to live up to the rules that it put in place and it signed off on. We'd ask them to continue to do that here.

You've also seen that the Chinese Communist Party is exerting military pressure on Taiwan and coercing its neighbors in the South China Sea, even going so far as to have – so far as to sink a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

The United States strongly opposes China's bullying; we hope other nations will hold them to account, too. Tonight I'll be on a phone call cochaired by myself and my Laotian counterpart with every ASEAN member.

I want to note, too, that we are now well along in developing the implementing policies required by the law in the NDAA of 2019 prohibiting use of Huawei and other untrusted vendors in U.S. facilities.

Data that come into U.S. facilities will have to follow a Clean Path and reside and transit only through trusted systems. And we'll provide full details on that before too long.

On Venezuela, as I've commented frequently from this podium, we're continuing to apply pressure on the Maduro regime, all the while seeking to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people.

As announced by the Department of Treasury yesterday, the general license which allowed certain companies to maintain operations – Venezuela, PDVSA – expires today.

The Treasury Department has announced a new, narrowly limited license for seven months which will allow companies that are operating there to begin their wind-down process.

And with that, I'm happy to take questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, great. Nick.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thanks, Mr. Secretary, for doing this. Let me try Iran and China, if you don't mind. The IRGC today said that it launched a military satellite into orbit for the first time. Could that technology be used for ICBMs? And we've seen from Iran expanded nuclear capacity, Iraqi militia rocket attacks, harassing of a Navy ship in recent days. After the Soleimani strike, there was talk of reestablishing deterrence. Do you fear the deterrence has slipped?

And on China, there are millions of PPE items stuck in China despite the fact they've been bought by U.S. companies. Do you believe the PPE is stuck because of red tape, China trying to make sure the quality is high, or because China is actually hoarding them and keeping them from the U.S.? Thanks.

SECRETARY POMPEO: As for your second question, I'll leave to the Vice President's task force to talk about those goods and their transit. The good news is we have seen China provide those resources. Sometimes they're from U.S. companies that are there in China, but we've had success. The Vice President and his team have talked about the air bridge that has delivered products to the American people from China, and we appreciate that. We are counting on China to continue to live up to its contractual obligations and international obligations to provide that assistance to us and to sell us those goods – often these are commercial transactions – in a way consistent with all of the international trade rules.

As for Iran, you noted the launch last night. The Iranians have consistently said that these missile programs were disconnected from their military, that these were purely commercial enterprises. I think today's launch proves what we've been saying all along here in the United States: The IRGC, a designated terrorist organization, launched a missile today. And I'll leave to the Department of Defense to talk about the details about that. But when you talk about the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, I

think every nation has an obligation to go to the United Nations and evaluate whether this missile launch was consistent with that Security Council resolution. I don't think it remotely is, and I need – I think Iran needs to be held accountable for what they've done. They've now had a military organization that the United States has designated terrorists attempt to launch a satellite.

You talked about the naval ships. You saw the President's statement this morning. The President's been very clear to the Department of Defense and frankly to the State Department team too to do everything we need to do to make sure that we protect and defend our officers, our military officers, our diplomats around the world, to continue to ensure that they are secure and safe. What he said this morning and what I know he's told all of us in leadership inside the government is take whatever action is necessary to make sure that you can defend and keep our people safe. I'm confident that the Department of Defense will do that in response to what the President said this morning as well.

And then finally, you talked more broadly about deterrence. Two thoughts. First: The Iranian regime has gone around the world spreading disinformation in response to this virus. One of the things they've said is that, boy, we need resources in order to take care of the virus at home. And all the while they are launching satellites, driving ships around the Arabian Gulf, coming and harassing U.S. naval vessels.

They continue to underwrite Shia militias, they're working to support Hizballah. Yesterday my Iranian counterpart – or the day before – was in Syria talking to the butcher in Damascus.

I hope that the Iranian regime will respond to the Iranian people's demands to prioritize resources, resources that the Iranian regime clearly has, to the health and security and safety of the Iranian people, rather than continuing their global terror campaign. You can see they're still hard at it. You can see they still have resources. You should note, we, the – at the very first news that the COVID virus had hit Iran, offered humanitarian assistance to the people of Iran. That offer was rejected. That offer still stands. We've assisted other countries in delivering humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people. I only wish that the Iranian regime cared about its people as much as the rest of the world has demonstrated that it does.

MS ORTAGUS: Barbara.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, we're hearing that there is panic buying in North Korea at the moment. I was wondering if you have any reading about what's going on there. And given the reports that Kim Jong-un is in very poor health, has the U.S. tried to reach out to Pyongyang for any information, and what was the response?

And then a broader question on China, if I may. How would you say that the Chinese behavior – this disinformation that you are talking about – what effect do you think that has on a long-term relationship with the U.S.? Do you think it will damage it significantly?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Barbara, thanks. I don't have anything to add on North Korea. As the President said last evening I think it was, we're watching closely what's taking place there. But I don't have anything to add.

As for China, nations that desire to be part of the global landscape have obligations for truthful information – they have obligations to share and be transparent and open. That's our expectation for every country. What I think – I think you were referring to was you called it disinformation. Seeking to transfer responsibility or to deny access to the world so that the world can figure out what's going on – you have to remember, these labs are still open inside of China, these labs that contain complex pathogens that were being studied. It's not just the Wuhan Institute of Virology. There are multiple labs inside of China that are handling these things. It's important that those materials are being handled in a safe and secure way such that there isn't accidental release.

We have an elaborate regime inside the United States to do that. Many countries do it as well. We have lots of regimes where – I'll give you an example in the nuclear context, where the world inspects sites so that we can ensure that there's proper handling. The United States spends a lot of money training others to help them handle nuclear materials in an appropriate way. We have to make sure

that the Chinese Government is handling those materials in an appropriate way not only in the Wuhan Institute of Virology but elsewhere. So this is an ongoing obligation that the Chinese Government has as well as an ongoing obligation of the World Health Organization that has responsibility for compliance with the rules.

I hope I didn't bore you with them, but they're important to understand that there are a set of global regulations that the Chinese Communist Party signed up for. These aren't American rules we apply, these are rules that the Chinese Government signed up for, and the World Health Organization has a continuing obligation – not just one from back in December but a continuing obligation to make sure that those rules are being complied with today in a way that protects us not only from the ongoing pandemic but a future one as well.

MS ORTAGUS: Michel.

QUESTION: Thank you so much. Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: -- first, have you delivered the President's warning to Iran directly? And second, do you -- are you concerned that the oil price will have an effect on the security and stability of the Gulf states and your partners in the region?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I never comment on communications, internal communications between myself and private -- between myself and my counterparts. So I don't have any comment on your first question.

On your second one, the President has been incredibly focused on trying to create a more stable energy market in light of the enormous decrease in demand, right. You've seen crude oil demand fall somewhere between 20 and 35 percent over the past several weeks, and you've seen the price impacts that have resulted from that, right. You had the front futures contract trading for negative \$37 for a few hours a couple days back now. What the President did a couple of weekends ago and the work that he's engaged in today are twofold: one, to do everything we can to ensure that we preserve America's capacity to deliver on its energy resources here; and second, to work to try and create stability in the energy markets so that you get price signals that are consistent with real demand, and that also means getting the global economy cranked back up again. A key element that will have the most significant impact on those price issues, on those supply chain issues in the energy industry is getting the world back going and getting demand back to the levels we had back in October, November, and December of 2019.

Here in the United States we had one of the most robust economies that the United States has ever had. When we get back to those levels and the world gets back to those levels, those governments that depend for a significant amount of their revenue -- for their national GDP on oil will be in a better place than they are today. There's real risk. With low prices and low volumes of demand, those countries are really going to face financial challenges, and we've been in conversation with many of them about how we can bridge that gap collectively.

MS ORTAGUS: Rich.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Rich, how are you?

QUESTION: Good, how are you?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm good.

QUESTION: Given its failure to notify the WHO in a timely manner, do you think that the Chinese Government owes countries or individuals compensation? And also, just as you'd spoken about the multiple labs within China, what's your assessment of China's handling of these dangerous materials? Do you think that they do a sufficient enough job of it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I'm going to leave the accountability piece of this for another day in terms of what we do to assign accountability and how we hold other nations accountable, other than to say is

that the rules set – the WHO rules set itself contemplates nations complying with their obligations, and it gives the director general of the WHO enormous authority with respect to nations that do not comply, and we expect every country who signs up for the International Health Regulations and the leadership of the WHO to then enforce them. And so we're counting on that. We're now counting on that not only retrospectively, but that that continue today.

What's the second question, Rich?

QUESTION: You mentioned multiple labs within China.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. I'm not going to comment on that. What I will say is it's always easier to know the answer to your question about whether these labs are in compliance not only with the regulations but if they're handling this material in a way that is adequate, safe, and secure, if the world can have access to those places, if they will share that information openly and transparently and in spite – the President said this – we tried to get in to take a look at what was going on early on in this, to come in alongside the World Health Organization early on; it would have been back in January if I remember correctly. We still do not have a sample of the virus nor has the world had access to the facilities or other locations where this virus may have originated inside of Wuhan.

MS ORTAGUS: Said.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Sir, a new Israeli Government was formed, a unity government between Mr. Netanyahu and General Gantz, and they vowed to begin annexing parts of the West Bank on the 1st of July. I wonder if you would have a comment on that.

Also on the aid you released recently, you released \$5 million to the Palestinian Authority to fight COVID-19. Are they – they need a lot more. So will there be any more aid in the pipeline? Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Two good questions. On the first one – on the second one, we are happy to provide that \$5 million of assistance¹, and we hope that it'll get to the right place. Our concern with having provided assistance, the reason we stopped providing assistance previously was that this – these resources weren't getting to the place they needed to, to the Palestinian people. We hope that this money, this \$5 million will get where it needs to go to provide real assistance to the Palestinian people who, to your point and I agree with, are going to need a lot of help as they move through this. We'll evaluate whether this \$5 million both worked, delivered, and second, if there's more resources that are both either appropriate or can be delivered in a way that actually gets to the Palestinian people. Your first question was about the election.

QUESTION: The government.

SECRETARY POMPEO: We're happy with the – a new government's formed. A fourth election, we think, wouldn't have been in Israel's best interest, but we'll leave that to them. We think it's not in the world's best interest. We're glad that there is a now fully formed government in Israel.

As for the annexation in the West Bank, the Israelis will ultimately make those decisions. Those are – that's an Israeli decision, and we will work closely with them to share with them our views of this in a private setting.

MS ORTAGUS: I need to get the Secretary to his next meeting, but we still have two special guests to continue this briefing so --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Great. Thank you all. Thanks for being with me. Everybody have a good morning.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. So we're going to have John Barsa first, and then Jim Richardson, and then we'll go right to Q&A again. So, John.

MR BARS: Good morning. Thank you for having us here today. For those of you who I have not yet met, my name is John Barsa. I am the new acting administrator at USAID, and I'm deeply honored to

have been chosen for this position. I would like to thank President Trump for the support and confidence he's placed in me with this charge. I look forward to working with him, Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, and other leaders throughout the interagency as we lead one of the finest workforces in the U.S. Government today.

We are here to discuss how the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership and help countries around the world fight the COVID-19 pandemic. With the \$2.7 billion in emergency supplemental funding Congress has provided, USAID is working with the State Department and the CDC to provide assistance that strengthens health systems, meets emergency humanitarian needs, and mitigates the economic impact of the virus's spread.

With the Secretary's announcement today, we have contributed a total of more than \$775 million across more than 100 countries facing the threat of this global pandemic. Here's a little bit more detail for you on the specific pots of money that this announcement encompasses. It includes nearly \$103 million from the Economic Support Fund account, which nongovernmental organizations will use to implement a variety of interventions to support communities and countries. We'll also be committing \$100 million in humanitarian assistance from USAID's International Disaster Assistance Account to help meet urgent, lifesaving needs in crisis-affected areas, and \$667² million in migration and refugee assistance to support displaced populations, which remain the most vulnerable populations to this pandemic.

In every corner of the globe, the United States is lending a helping hand to countries that need it the most. Many of these countries are places where we regularly provide assistance. Our expanded presence in other countries demonstrate the extraordinary nature of this crisis.

For example, on April 11th the United States, through USAID, committed critically needed assistance to Italy to mitigate the overwhelming disruption the pandemic has had on the delivery of health care in communities and to help stabilize the country's economic situation. This assistance will help improve Italian citizens' access to essential health care during the current pandemic and support Italy's recovery. In this latest round of funding, State and USAID will provide COVID-19 assistance to some countries for the first time since the outbreak began. These countries include Algeria, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, the Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Lesotho, Liberia, Panama, Namibia, Niger, Romania, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, the West Bank, and Yemen.

MS ORTAGUS: Well done.

MR BARS: It was a quick list. Now, did you all memorize it? (Laughter.) As you know, we work through international organizations and NGOs in many of these countries to reach people in need, and as you can see from the list of countries I mentioned, the kind of places where we are responding is, of course, varied. To make sure our assistance is as impactful as possible, the support we provide is tailored to each country's capacity and needs. Our toolkit of support includes investments that improve case management, disease surveillance, and public health screening. It strengthens infection prevention and control of medical facilities, bolsters laboratory capacity, scale of communications campaigns to raise awareness, expand access to water and sanitation, and more.

America remains the leader in global health and humanitarian assistance. Through unmatched generosity, the American people have saved countless lives, protected those people who are most vulnerable to disease, built health infrastructure, and promoted the stability of communities and nations. America has always led the world through times of strife, turmoil, and uncertainty, and this pandemic is no different.

Lastly, I want to highlight President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Pompeo for their extraordinary leadership on the world stage throughout this crisis. This all-star team and the rest of the

Trump administration is working around the clock to stem the spread of virus at home and abroad, and they deserve our recognition. So thank you very much.

MS ORTAGUS: Jim.

MR RICHARDSON: Thank you, Morgan. I'm Jim Richardson, and I'm the director of foreign assistance here at the Department of State. First of all, I want to acknowledge the leadership, as John just did, of the President and the Vice President and of the Secretary, and really our talented teams both at State and USAID around the world, as we work together to defeat COVID-19. To put it simply, pandemics like COVID-19 do not respect national borders, and so that our response, our USG response, can't either. Through decades of U.S. global leadership in health and humanitarian assistance, we know that the smart and strategic investments are critical to our primary mission of maintaining the health and safety of the American people. We can and must actually fight the pandemic both here and overseas. It's not a zero-sum game; it actually builds on each other.

Through the American people's generosity, the State Department of the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership in the face of this pandemic. In fact – this fact is underscored by what the Secretary just announced of an additional \$270 million for humanitarian and economic security assistance, bringing our total to 775 million spread over 100 countries worldwide, nearly all of them John just mentioned. So we'll implement this funding around – through a strategic, all-of-America approach to ensure that this world is safe from infectious diseases, both today and also in the future. When it comes to our investments thus far, let me address a couple hot-button topics that I'm sure you will ask me about. First of all, let's talk about Italy. We've provided \$50 million in economic support to Italy, one of our closest allies and friends who has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID. These funds will help support the recovery of the Italian economy, they – and support international organizations and NGOs, including many faith-based organizations, many of which are already on the ground saving lives.

Second, the United States is also providing \$5 million to the Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza to battle the pandemic. The United States welcomes the ongoing cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to address the COVID-19 crisis and Israel's facilitation of goods and equipment to the West Bank and Gaza in support of this effort.

Third, I want to talk about the Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. We're providing \$7 million to help address this outbreak. This comes on top of what the President and the Secretary have announced of \$258 million in targeted foreign assistance for these three – for these three countries. These funds will benefit both the United States and our important allies. By targeting economic assistance to regions with high outflow migration, we can help keep people at their – at home while supporting and deterring illegal immigration to the United States.

As you're aware, well aware, the United States – or last week the President announced that we are pausing for the next 60 to 90 days funding for the World Health Organization while we examine the failures to the response. First and foremost, this pause will not impact our commitment to fight COVID around the world. We are focused on outcomes, and as such we are working with other partners around the world, including community and faith-based organizations, to get the job done.

To put it in perspective, as the Secretary, I believe, mentioned, the WHO only receives about 4 percent of U.S. global assistance – global health assistance every year. There are plenty of amazing and highly qualified organizations implementing these programs around the world, and to be honest, no organization – or country for that matter – is owed a single nickel from the American people. We provide assistance out of generosity and U.S. national interest. At the very least, the American people should demand that every organization we fund – every NGO, every contractor, and every multilateral – is transparent, accountable, and results-oriented, and that's what this President's review will do.

To the – at the end of the day this should be about saving lives, not about saving a bureaucracy. For more than half a century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security.

We have built the foundations upon which the global health system is based, contributing over \$140 billion in this century alone. In the face of COVID-19, our global leadership will continue and is once again underscored by what the Secretary has announced. And with that, we'll be available for questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. Let's – you haven't asked one yet, right? Okay, go ahead. And CBS, if you have one, I think you, too, haven't gone yet, right? Okay.

QUESTION: Okay, so I don't know who this goes to, but I'll throw the question out and you guys can decide. So with regard to the pause on the World Health Organization funding, what will determine if they get that funding or not, and who is actually leading the review of that funding right now?

MR RICHARDSON: Go ahead, John.

MR BARSA: In terms of what the President said – so it's a 60- to 90-day pause. I think there are multiple elements within government who will be looking at the review. I'm not going to – we have nothing to announce today in terms of the internal review processes, how it's going to work out. Know that others who interact with World Health Organization are contributing to the review process.

QUESTION: Okay, but what is the review looking for? What does the World Health Organization have to do in order to secure its funding?

MR BARSA: As the President stated, and the Secretary stated this morning, there's numerous questions in terms of the management of the World Health Organization, how they have been operating and holding member states accountable in their actions. So the review is going to be all-encompassing, getting to all manners of management and operation questions.

QUESTION: And one thing that the Secretary said was that the World Health Organization has not highlighted the fact that the CCP didn't reveal what it knew about the coronavirus pandemic when it knew it. If the WHO does that, is that something that you guys are looking for?

MR BARSA: I'm not going to comment on any interim findings or discussions. I just – I'll have to say we'll have to wait till the final review is done.

MS ORTAGUS: You want to add anything?

MR RICHARDSON: Nope, sounds good.

MS ORTAGUS: No? Okay. CBS.

QUESTION: I had a question about the cooperation with vaccine development.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR RICHARDSON: It's probably --

MR BARSA: Vaccine development. Go on.

MS ORTAGUS: Go ahead, ask your question.

QUESTION: Considering that several countries are working on a vaccination, and given that the funding has been halted to WHO, does that mean this will affect at all cooperation between WHO countries on sharing information about a vaccine, depending on who comes up with one first? Or will the U.S. step in to help facilitate cooperation on a vaccination?

MR BARSA: Okay. Couple things to think about. First, let's talk a little bit about scale. As the Secretary and Jim mentioned, over the last two decades the United States has contributed over \$140 billion dollars in health work. In 2018, the last year that I actually have actual figures, it needs to be noted that only 4 percent of U.S. funds went to the World Health Organization. Ninety-six percent of our funds went to other organizations. So during this pause, what USAID and other entities are doing – we're looking for alternate partners to carry out the important work. So be it vaccines, polio, or any number of health issues, by no means are we pausing our efforts to eradicate polio or come up with vaccines. We're going with existing programs outside of the World Health Organization, and we're looking for different partners.

MS ORTAGUS: Robin.

QUESTION: Just some clarification on that. So first of all, you are – I was wondering if there might be a carveout for certain WHO programs like polio, but you're saying no, there isn't, you're going to find somebody else to do the polio – or to do those programs that you're committed to?

And then I just have a few other questions as well, if – do you want to answer that one first?

MR BARSÁ: Okay, so I'll start with that one. So even before the onset of this pandemic, USAID was working, piloting a new partnership initiative to look for other regional community-based partners outside of the normal menu of people we work with. I look forward to next week expanding the new partnership initiative in a more formal manner, but what we're doing right now is we're looking for different partners right now in terms of – working polio or any number of health issues, are there other entities, local community-based entities, faith-based organizations, are there other groups that can continue on this work. So part of the assessment that is taking place during this 60-to-90-day pause is to evaluate the availability of new partners to carry out this work.

So know that the questions you ask in terms of are there other partners for whatever program of interest, that's part of the assessment. So we're evaluating that now. I have people in our missions and our Global Health Bureau. We're looking for new partners right now. It's good government.

QUESTION: And just to --

MS ORTAGUS: I want to get to everybody, (inaudible).

QUESTION: Just a quick – one quick follow-up.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, one more (inaudible).

QUESTION: There's a fair bit of U.S. expertise at the WHO, so you've had health experts there – you still have health experts there. Is that cooperation going to be cut off as well? Are you sort of cutting off the WHO not just in terms of funds, but also in coordination and cooperation?

MR BARSÁ: So part of your question is getting at to the end point of an assessment. We cannot tell you what decision is going to be made at the end of the assessment. During this assessment that the President announced, 60 to 90 days, we're going to look at all aspects of operations in World Health Organizations. So some of the questions you pose are the questions we ourselves are going to be asking in terms of capabilities during this pause period.

MS ORTAGUS: (Inaudible.)

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just – so the way I would say it is that the pause is about new decisions to provide assistance through the WHO. There is a lot of existing contracts that we've already essentially sent the check to pay for individuals, and we're not asking for refunds at this point. In terms of exemptions or those types of things, the President said we're pausing all assistance for 60 to 90 days. If the President has a subsequent announcement, we'll leave that to him to make that about target assistance.

MS ORTAGUS: Nick, go ahead.

QUESTION: So on the partners, just to be clear, as you examine the partners, are you taking the money that would have been going to the WHO over the next two to three months and plan to transfer them, transfer that funds to partners? Or are you withholding the money so that you possibly could still give it to the WHO depending on reforms? And if I could zoom in on IHRs, let me ask – let me have you answer that first and then we --

MR BARSÁ: Okay. So as the Secretary stated, in the aggregate, we have committed over \$775 million just on the pandemic alone. So when we're looking for new partners, we're looking for partners who can execute the funds in these countries for their specific needs. So it can't be a cookie cutter approach. So a solution for a challenge in one country is not the same as a solution in another country. So we're looking at ways to address the challenges individually with the funds that are being announced.

QUESTION: Right, but does that mean that the money that would have gone to the WHO will instead go to partners? Or is the money for the WHO being held back and possibly could still go to the WHO in the future?

MR BARSA: It – again, it's a pause in new funding. As Director Richardson announced, money that has been given to WHO already is not being taken back, so some of those contracts and existing work is continuing.

QUESTION: Okay. And then on the international --

MS ORTAGUS: Do you have anything to -- (inaudible).

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just -- yeah, so at the end of the day, this pandemic can't wait for the review. So our assistance to countries around the world is going to move forward. We will absolutely use the best -- every time that we make a decision to provide assistance to any country around the world, we have to make a choice: Do we use a multilateral organization? Do we use an NGO? Do we use a faith-based organization? Do we use a contractor? And that's really what the expertise of USAID does, to -- looks at the whole what -- how are we going to get the best results in this circumstance. And so for every contract or every dollar flowing today, we're just taking WHO off the table and we're going to provide that assistance to these other organizations in order to get the job done. Our system simply can't wait. That said, we're going to have a lot of global health resources in response to this pandemic over the coming years. Congress has already provided an additional \$2 billion, and so we'll look forward to continuing to make more announcements about funding over the next several months.

QUESTION: And then quickly on the IHRs, on the International Health Regulations, as I understand them, there is no real enforcement mechanism. I know the Secretary talked specifically about the leadership being able to enforce them, but is one of the reforms that you're asking for to increase the enforcement mechanism, or do you believe that enforcement mechanism is already there, and therefore this is a true failure not of regulation, but of the leadership?

MR BARSA: Well, again, we'll have to get back to you with the details on that. Again, so we're -- I'm not going to prejudge the outcome of any assessment.

MS ORTAGUS: Said, go ahead.

QUESTION: A quick question.

MS ORTAGUS: Sure.

QUESTION: Is the money dispensed to the West Bank and to the hospitals -- does it go directly there? Because I think USAID is not operating in the West Bank anymore.

MR RICHARDSON: No, so we mostly -- we use implementing partners around the world. As I said, we use contractors, NGOs, multilateral organizations to actually be our hands and feet in most places around the world. So we'll be announcing the actual implementing partner here in the next couple days.

MS ORTAGUS: Anybody else? Rich?

QUESTION: Just following up on what the Secretary had to say about the -- and a bit what Nick was talking about -- the director general of WHO has an enormous power available to him to enforce those who violate regulations. What is available to him?

MR BARSA: Well, as the Secretary stated, there are certain mechanisms which oblige member-states to comply with agreements beforehand. So part of our review is to see what authorities did WHO leadership have. Did they execute the authorities and keep compliance? So the question you're asking gets exactly to the heart of what our review -- is the management of the World Health Organization running it the way it should be run?

MS ORTAGUS: And just to follow up on both of your and Nick questions, I think the best thing for us to do is to get a briefing probably with Ambassador Bremberg or someone from IO, so we'll get that -- I know you were wanting that, Nick, so we'll go ahead and get that scheduled, and I think we could through a little bit more detail through Andrew or through IO. Okay?

QUESTION: Can I ask John one more question?

MS ORTAGUS: Sure. Then we've got to -- I just blew off my next meeting, so go ahead.

QUESTION: So – thank you. So you talk about a lot more work that USAID is going to have to do to identify new partners. So how – do you have the capacity to do that? Has USAID had to hire new people? What does your team look like?

MR BARSÁ: No, again, so before the onset of the pandemic, we already knew good government was to diversify the base of implementing partners that we're working with. So under the leadership of Mark Green, who was administrator at the time, we started a pilot program called the New Partnership Initiative. So we started out in 14 missions. So we already knew the good government solution was to not depend on just a few implementers and partners, so what we are doing is that we've been already working with our workforce. We've gotten to pilot – the pilot program has been very successful, so next week I'll be signing an order expanding that pilot to all of our missions worldwide. This is something that was going to occur regardless of the pandemic.

So with the pandemic coming on here, we're already starting to work with new partners. That does not necessitate new contracting staff either in DC or the missions, but what we've been doing is providing guidance to our contracting staff to look and consider other partners. Are there other NGOs, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations which are localized in the country that have more permanence? So this was going to go on regardless of the implementing – regardless of the onset of the pandemic, so we're just fortunate that we've already been thinking along these lines and are able to execute now without any additional investment in staff or personnel.

MS ORTAGUS: Thanks so much, guys. Don't forget about the 1:00 p.m. with Brownlee, the repatriation briefing.

###

[1] USAID is providing \$5 million from International Disaster Assistance funds to an implementer for COVID-19 response in the West Bank. These funds are not being provided to the Palestinian Authority.

[2] USAID is providing \$67 million in migration and refugee assistance to support displaced populations.

Sender: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Stilwell, David R (b)(6)
(b)(6) (b)(6)
Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC: Beijing EXEC Staffers (b)(6)
Subject: RE: E-ACTION MEMO: (b)(5) Proposed Meeting with the Director of China CDC on October 10, 2017
Date: Wed, 27 Sep 2017 21:16:55 -0400

Hi (b)(6)

Just heard back from HHS and FCS. Here are some add-on options that could make the travel time worthwhile (b)(5)

- Tour of China CDC's influenza laboratory which is a WHO collaborating center
- Tour of China CDC's emergency preparedness center
- Tour of nearby Cummins-Foton Engine Factory. The factory is a 50-50 joint venture between Cummins and Beiqi Foton. According to FCS, Cummins is positioning itself to be a prime supplier to OBOR. Secretary Kerry visited the factory in 2014, and CDA Rank visited the facility in March 2017.

(b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 11:41 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: Beijing EXEC Staffers
Subject: Re: E-ACTION MEMO: (b)(5) Proposed Meeting with the Director of China CDC on October 10, 2017

Not exactly sure where China CDC is located, but would like to explore possibility of pairing this event with another in the vicinity to make max use of this travel. Perhaps a company visit? Other important gov't offices out there?

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 11:34 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: Beijing EXEC Staffers
Subject: E-ACTION MEMO: (b)(5) Proposed Meeting with the Director of China CDC on October 10, 2017

(b)(6)

HHS would like (b)(5) to meet with the new director of the China CDC on October 10, 2017 (the day after Columbus Day) at the China CDC campus. HHS estimates that the travel between the Embassy and the China CDC Campus is 45 minutes to an hour each way and believes that, including travel time, the event will occupy about three hours on the (b)(5) schedule.

Below please find an e-action memo.

(b)(6)



E- ACTION MEMORANDUM
UNCLASSIFIED

TO: Ambassador Terry Branstad

THROUGH A/DCM – Jonathan Fritz

FROM: HHS – (b)(6)
CDC – (b)(6)

DATE: September 27, 2017

SUBJECT: (b)(5) Meeting with Dr. George Gao at China CDC
on October 10, 2017

Issue for Decision

Whether to meet with Dr. George Gao, the new Director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), on October 10, 2017, from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., at the China CDC Campus, 155 Changbai Road Changping District, Beijing.

Background

(b)(5)

HHS estimates that the travel between the Embassy and the China CDC Campus is 45 minutes to an hour each way and believes that, including travel time, the event will occupy about three hours on the (b)(5) schedule (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.).

Recommendation

That (b)(5) with Dr. Gao at the China CDC Campus on October 10, 2017.

Drafted by: HHS – (b)(6)
Cleared by: CDC –
ESTH –
HHS –

Official - ~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

Sender: (b)(6) (Beijing)" (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Beijing EXEC Staffers (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

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

CC: (b)(6)

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

Date: Mon, 15 Jan 2018 21:39:30 -0500

We have heard that CAS is setting aside some money for GVP, but the OBOR angle is new. We'll reach out to see if we can learn more.

(b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 9:28 AM

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)

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

Hi (b)(6)

(b)(6) here is on extended leave. I spoke to the office and they suggested we reached out to (b)(6) It might be best to go directly to (b)(6) for clarifications.

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 7:21 AM

To: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)

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

Hi (b)(6)

I want to echo kudos shared during a briefing today from (b)(6) regarding your/this cable – he shared it with folks around the table (INR, OES) to indicate China's interest in this project. Rock on!

Quick follow-up: he mentioned he learned (from CAS?) that China has earmarked a tranche of funding to support their part in the GVP from OBOR Initiative funds. Your cable mentions funding that already exists, but does not get into any possible OBOR funds – have you heard anything echoing what (b)(6) shared today?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

~~Official - SBU~~

UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Core

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:56 AM

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~-SBU~~

**Info Office:**

MTS_INDONESIA, MTS_PRIN, REG_IMO_OFF, PD_ANP,
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EX_ADM_GSO, J_ECON, MLS_BURMA, EAP_BEIJING, SNKP,
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FO_SPEC_ASST, AITW, FO_SR_ADVISOR

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

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this "proof of concept" into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.**Health Security is a Global Agenda**

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.

The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

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.

The Global Virome Project's Audacious Agenda

6. (SBU) The Global Virome Project is, by the project leadership's own admission, ambitious. Over the course of ten years and at an estimated cost of \$1 billion (\$100 million a year for ten years), the Global Virome Project aims to sample 63% of global mammalian diversity to find

71% of mammalian viromes. The projected costs cover sample collection and laboratory analysis, with phases including countries with the highest diversity of mammalian species. Phase One includes 10 countries and 1562 mammals, Phase Two, 16 countries and 970 mammals, Phase Three with 23 countries and 447 mammals. GVP also expects to collect samples from 740 waterfowl species.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP's core principles include embracing an international scope while fostering local ownership, promoting equitable access to data and benefits, instilling transparency, building national capabilities for prevention, detection, and response for emerging viral threats, and encouraging global ownership through an international alliance. If successful, this initiative will provide a wealth of publicly accessible unbiased data, which should enable innovative research on the mechanisms and ecology of disease transmission, and informatics focusing on virus families as opposed to individual viruses. Such research could accelerate the development of new diagnostics, vaccine technologies, and risk mitigation strategies against whole families of emerging viral diseases.

Like all Risky Endeavors Failure is a Possibility

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. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

GVP Enjoys Strong Chinese Government Support in Principle and in Kind

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese government has shown strong interest in the Global Virome Project and is not shy about expressing interest in funding projects where Chinese scientists will take a lead. (b)(6)

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Global Virome Project Provides China a Platform for International Collaboration

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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: DIS_MTS_INDONESIA, DIS_MTS_PRIN, DIS_REG_IMO_OFF,
DIS_PD_ANP, DIS_CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, DIS_ANP_PRIN,
DIS_EP_FROM_APEC, DIS_J_PRIN, DIS_EX_ADM_GSO,
DIS_J_ECON, DIS_MLS_BURMA, DIS_EAP_BEIJING_TAIWAN,
DIS_SNKP_EAP_REGIONAL, DIS_FO_STAFF, DIS_MLS_CAMBODIA,
DIS_RSP_PUB_HEALTH, DIS_EX_DIR, DIS_RSP_CT, DIS_DEP_DIR,
DIS_CM_TC, DIS_FO_CM_TC, DIS_PD_MTS, DIS_AITW2,
DIS_FO_SPEC_ASST, DIS_AITW

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

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

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6);
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date: Tue, 16 Jan 2018 02:36:47 -0500

Thanks (b)(6)

It looks like the official launch is planned for January 30 in Thailand—(b)(6) do you have any updates on this?

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 12:23 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

I have not heard about this, but we can ask around. I recall (b)(6) proposing that this was something that could be a relevant OBOR project (but without any explicit commitment), a year ago when he convened a meeting to discuss China's Virome Project. At the time he was still with (b)(6) but is now no longer at (b)(6). I don't know whether (b)(6) news is from a more recent communication- it would be good to find out what specifically he heard from whom. It would be good to determine if the funding is for GVP (and for what activities? Setting up infrastructure for specimen collection and/or database, or related research, or other? Who will receive the funding?), or for the China National Virome Project (highlighted below).

Best,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

U.S. National Science Foundation 美国国家科学基金会

No. 55 Anjialou Rd.
Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600
CHINA
Office Tel. (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 10:40 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: FW: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

Have you guys hear anything about CAS funding GVP activities under OBOR?

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 7:21 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: FW: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

Hi (b)(6)

I want to echo kudos shared during a briefing today from (b)(6) regarding your/this cable – he shared it with folks around the table (INR, OES) to indicate China's interest in this project. Rock on!

Quick follow-up: he mentioned he learned (from CAS?) that China has earmarked a tranche of funding to support their part in the GVP from OBOR Initiative funds. Your cable mentions funding that already exists, but does not get into any possible OBOR funds – have you heard anything echoing what (b)(6) shared today?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

~~Official-SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Core**Sent:** Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:56 AM**Cc:** (b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

**Info Office:**

MTS_INDONESIA, MTS_PRIN, REG_IMO_OFF, PD_ANP,
CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, ANP_PRIN, EP_APEC, J_PRIN,
EX_ADM_GSO, J_ECON, MLS_BURMA, EAP_BEIJING, SNKP,
FO_STAFF, MLS_CAMBODIA, RSP_SCI_TECH, EX_DIR, RSP_CT,
EAP_DEP_DIR, CM_TC, FO_CM_TC, PD_MTS, AITW2,
FO_SPEC_ASST, AITW, FO_SR_ADVISOR

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, KGH, CDC, AID, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this "proof of concept" into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

2. ~~(SBU)~~

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

Health Security is a Global Agenda

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.

The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

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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6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project is, by the project leadership's own admission, ambitious. Over the course of ten years and at an estimated cost of \$1 billion (\$100 million a year for ten years), the Global Virome Project aims to sample 63% of global mammalian diversity to find 71% of mammalian viromes. The projected costs cover sample collection and laboratory analysis, with phases including countries with the highest diversity of mammalian species. Phase One includes 10 countries and 1562 mammals, Phase Two, 16 countries and 970 mammals, Phase Three with 23 countries and 447 mammals. GVP also expects to collect samples from 740 waterfowl species.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP's core principles include embracing an international scope while fostering local ownership, promoting equitable access to data and benefits, instilling transparency, building national capabilities for prevention, detection, and response for emerging viral threats, and encouraging global ownership through an international alliance. If successful, this initiative will provide a wealth of publicly accessible unbiased data, which should enable innovative research on the mechanisms and ecology of disease transmission, and informatics focusing on virus families as opposed to individual viruses. Such research could accelerate the development of new diagnostics, vaccine technologies, and risk mitigation strategies against whole families of emerging viral diseases.

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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. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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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: DIS_MTS_INDONESIA, DIS_MTS_PRIN, DIS_REG_IMO_OFF,
DIS_PD_ANP, DIS_CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, DIS_ANP_PRIN,
DIS_EP_FROM_APEC, DIS_J_PRIN, DIS_EX_ADM_GSO,

DIS_J_ECON, DIS_MLS_BURMA, DIS_EAP_BEIJING_TAIWAN,
DIS_SNKP_EAP_REGIONAL, DIS_FO_STAFF, DIS_MLS_CAMBODIA,
DIS_RSP_PUB_HEALTH, DIS_EX_DIR, DIS_RSP_CT, DIS_DEP_DIR,
DIS_CM_TC, DIS_FO_CM_TC, DIS_PD_MTS, DIS_AITW2,
DIS_FO_SPEC_ASST, DIS_AITW

UNCLASSIFIED~~SBU~~

Sender: (b)(6) (Beijing)" (b)(6)
(U) (b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date: Tue, 16 Jan 2018 08:27:10 -0500

(b)(6) could you forward to me a final version of the letter sent from Ambassador to Boswell at the NSC on GVP? I will find out what is going on with the launch in BKK. Apparently (b)(6) was briefing the interagency on GVP recently and there might be reasons for Embassy Beijing participation in the event at the end of the month.
Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Monday, January 15, 2018 21:40
To: (b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: FW: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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Official
UNCLASSIFIED

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Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 7:21 AM
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Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6)
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Official ~~-SBU-~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Core

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:56 AM

Cc: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~-SBU-~~



Info Office:

MTS_INDONESIA, MTS_PRIN, REG_IMO_OFF, PD_ANP,
CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, ANP_PRIN, EP_APEC, J_PRIN,
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FO_SPEC_ASST, AITW, FO_SR_ADVISOR

MRN: 17 BEIJING 2458

Date/DTG: Sep 28, 2017 / 280753Z SEP 17

From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING

Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
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Captions: SENSITIVE
Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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(b)(5)

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

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14. (SBU) It is encouraging that China, along with other countries, is ready to take what started as a U.S.-led initiative and proof of concept to a global scale. The GVP still awaits a commitment of funding for its viral sampling and processing infrastructure. It is likely that the Chinese government will engage both with funding and with in-kind support, which will likely give China a large voice in GVP governance and data-sharing policies. While U.S.-based NGOs and academics are likely to provide some leadership for the GVP, (b)(5)

(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) (Rick) (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: DIS_MTS_INDONESIA, DIS_MTS_PRIN, DIS_REG_IMO_OFF,

DIS_PD_ANP, DIS_CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, DIS_ANP_PRIN,
DIS_EP_FROM_APEC, DIS_J_PRIN, DIS_EX_ADM_GSO,
DIS_J_ECON, DIS_MLS_BURMA, DIS_EAP_BEIJING_TAIWAN,
DIS_SNKP_EAP_REGIONAL, DIS_FO_STAFF, DIS_MLS_CAMBODIA,
DIS_RSP_PUB_HEALTH, DIS_EX_DIR, DIS_RSP_CT, DIS_DEP_DIR,
DIS_CM_TC, DIS_FO_CM_TC, DIS_PD_MTS, DIS_AITW2,
DIS_FO_SPEC_ASST, DIS_AITW

UNCLASSIFIED~~SBU~~

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

From: (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date: Thu, 28 Sep 2017 09:48:05 +0000

(b)(6)

You sharpened it nicely. Good team effort.

(b)(6)

U.S. National Science Foundation 美国国家科学基金会

No. 55 Anjialou Rd.

Chaoyang District, Beijing 100600

CHINA

Office Tel. (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 5:13 PM

To: (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Beijing)

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

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)

(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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~—SBU—~~



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

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading

up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this “proof of concept” into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project.

(b)(5)

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

Health Security is a Global Agenda

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.

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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.

The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

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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6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project is, by the project leadership's own admission, ambitious. Over the course of ten years and at an estimated cost of \$1 billion (\$100 million a year for ten years), the Global Virome Project aims to sample 63% of global mammalian diversity to find 71% of mammalian viromes. The projected costs cover sample collection and laboratory analysis, with phases including countries with the highest diversity of mammalian species. Phase One includes 10 countries and 1562 mammals, Phase Two, 16 countries and 970 mammals, Phase Three with 23 countries and 447 mammals. GVP also expects to collect samples from 740 waterfowl species.

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Like all Risky Endeavors Failure is a Possibility

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(b)(5)

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11. ~~(SBU)~~ The GVP expects to raise its \$1 billion ten-year budget from a variety of sources, both public and private. Roughly \$5 million per year will cover operations of the non-governmental organization, to include working groups, sample and data standardization and management, and technical assistance to participating country field operations. However, specifics on funding commitments have not been publicly announced.

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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)

Recipient: (b)(6) (Beijing) (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: (b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
 (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)
 (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID:AAAS) (b)(6)
 (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/AIS) (b)(6)
 (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)
 (b)(6)

CC: (b)(6)

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

Date: Tue, 16 Jan 2018 05:38:32 -0500

Thanks (b)(6) for looping me in. I am adding (b)(6) from USAID Beijing and (b)(6) as well as (b)(6) from ESTH Beijing.

There are a lot of other interested parties here in Beijing, but I can loop them in tomorrow.

(b)(6)

ESTH Beijing

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Bangkok)

Sent: Tuesday, January 16, 2018 6:18 PM

To: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)

Cc: (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID:AAAS); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/AIS) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Bangkok); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN) (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID);

(b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Bangkok);

(b)(6) (Bangkok)

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

Dear colleagues,

Embassy Beijing reports the January 29 Global Virome Project at the Prince Mahidol Conference (described below in 17 BEIJING 2458 and in the attached concept note) is "high on the radar."

Given this detail and the fact this is now around the corner, would it be possible to provide an update on this launch? Is this October concept note still accurate?

I'm adding PAS colleagues and Embassy Beijing's ESTH officer for their visibility to this query.

Thank you, (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Economic Section | Energy, Environment, Science, Technology, and Health
U.S. Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand
Office: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2017 12:06 PM

To: (b)(6) (Bangkok)

Cc: (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID:AAAS); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/AIS); (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH);

(b)(6) (Bangkok); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN); (b)(6)

(GH/HIDN); (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)

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

Hi (b)(6)

Attached is the concept note that was submitted for this event. (b)(6) copied, is following up with the PMAC Secretariat to confirm the event remains planned as a pre-conference side meeting.

We don't have details regarding media and an invitation list for the event, though (b)(6) or his staff on this chain might.

Best,

(b)(6)

On Wed, Nov 29, 2017 at 11:34 AM, (b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6) wrote:

Looping in (b)(6) scheduler per (b)(6) long-term out-of-office message.

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Bangkok)

Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2017 11:31 AM

To: (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID:AAAS); (b)(6) (GH/HIDN/AIS)

Cc: (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH); (b)(6) (USAID); (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH); (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Bangkok)

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

Dear (b)(6)

Possible to provide the below referenced further information and background?

Best, (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Economic Section | Energy, Environment, Science, Technology, and Health

U.S. Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand

Office: (b)(6)

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

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, October 04, 2017 7:26 PM

To: (b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6) (GH/HIDN)

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

(RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (Bangkok)

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

Dear (b)(6)

Thanks for reaching out! Heading into a series of meetings now, but happy to provide further information and background and will do so later today (DC time).

Best,

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 4, 2017, at 3:44 AM, (b)(6) (Bangkok)

(b)(6) wrote:

>

> Dear (b)(6)

> Further to para 5 of 17 BEIJING 2458, would you be able to share additional information about GVP's launch planned for January 30, 2018 (in Thailand) at the Prince Mahidol Awards Conference? Who will attend, particularly from Thailand? Do you anticipate significant domestic media attention?

> Warm Regards, (b)(6)

> (b)(6)

> Economic Section | Energy, Environment, Science, Technology, and

> Health U.S. Embassy, Bangkok, Thailand

> Office: (b)(6)

>

>

>

> MRN:

>

> 17 BEIJING

> 2458<<http://repository.state.gov/searchcenter/Results.aspx?k=mrn%3a%22>

<[<http://repository.state.gov/searchcenter/Results.aspx?k=mrn%3a%22%0b](http://repository.state.gov/searchcenter/Results.aspx?k=mrn%3a%22%0b)>>

17%20BEIJING%202458%22>

>

> Date/DTG: Sep 28, 2017 / 280753Z SEP 17

>

> From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING

>

> Subject: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an

> Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

>

> 1. ~~(SBU)~~ Summary and Comment: The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this "proof of concept" into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

>

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

>

> Health Security is a Global Agenda

>

> 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

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>

> The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

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(b)(5)

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(b)(5)

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> Signature:

>

> BRANSTAD

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> _____
> Drafted By:
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> BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> Cleared By:
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> USAID: (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> HHS/OGA (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> CDC: (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> Approved By:
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> ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> Released By:
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> BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)
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> Info:
>
> TOKYO, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SEOUL, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; ENVIRONMENT
> SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE ROUTINE
>
> _____
> Action Post:
>
> NONE
>
> Dissemination Rule:
>
> POL, MED_INFO, DAO_INFO, RSO_INFO2, CDC_INFO, OIA_INFO
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>
>
> UNCLASSIFIED
> ~~SBU~~

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>
> Official - ~~SBU~~
> UNCLASSIFIED
>
> <winmail.dat>

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

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Sender: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID:AAAS) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (GH/HIDN/AIS) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (GH/HIDN) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (GH/HIDN/ID) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date: Fri, 29 Sep 2017 00:27:18 -0400

Fingers crossed. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 5:15 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

(b)(5) Thanks for leading the effort to get this down on paper. Lets see what happens next.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2017 17:13
To: (b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Fw: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

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)

(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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

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

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading

up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this “proof of concept” into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project.

(b)(5)

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

Health Security is a Global Agenda

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.

The Global Virome Project's Beginnings as a U.S. Investment

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.

The Global Virome Project's Audacious Agenda

6. ~~(SBU)~~ The Global Virome Project is, by the project leadership's own admission, ambitious. Over the course of ten years and at an estimated cost of \$1 billion (\$100 million a year for ten years), the Global Virome Project aims to sample 63% of global mammalian diversity to find 71% of mammalian viromes. The projected costs cover sample collection and laboratory analysis, with phases including countries with the highest diversity of mammalian species. Phase One includes 10 countries and 1562 mammals, Phase Two, 16 countries and 970 mammals, Phase Three with 23 countries and 447 mammals. GVP also expects to collect samples from 740 waterfowl species.

7. ~~(SBU)~~ GVP's core principles include embracing an international scope while fostering local ownership, promoting equitable access to data and benefits, instilling transparency, building national capabilities for prevention, detection, and response for emerging viral threats, and encouraging global ownership through an international alliance. If successful, this initiative will provide a wealth of publicly accessible unbiased data, which should enable innovative research on the mechanisms and ecology of disease transmission, and informatics focusing on virus families as opposed to individual viruses. Such research could accelerate the development of new diagnostics, vaccine technologies, and risk mitigation strategies against whole families of emerging viral diseases.

Like all Risky Endeavors Failure is a Possibility

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.

(b)(5)

GVP Enjoys Strong Chinese Government Support in Principle and in Kind

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese government has shown strong interest in the Global Virome Project and is not shy about expressing interest in funding projects where Chinese scientists will take a lead. (b)(6)

(b)(6) a distinguished virologist, told EmbOffs that the Global Virome Project is a priority project that China CDC must push hard on to get stakeholders involved and organize funding. He stated that China's involvement in this project is a good follow-up to the August 21 World Health Organization dialogue meeting at which Health and Human Services Secretary Price and US Ambassador Branstad where both sides agreed on the need for increased U.S.-China collaboration against growing health threats at the intersection of animal and human health. In February 2017, (b)(6) led a symposium proposing a China virome project, however the specific details of how the two will integrate was left undefined.

10. ~~(SBU)~~ The Beijing Genomics Institute (BGI), now based in Shenzhen, made a blanket offer to conduct 30% of the sequencing for GVP, but did not provide details on how that sequencing would take place or where the subsequent data would be housed. Its current (b)(6) (b)(6) was instrumental in China's involvement in the Human Genome Project in the 1990s, and is a proponent of sharing data. BGI's commitment (as opposed to (b)(6) commitment) to GVP's values of open, free access to data has not yet been officially stated however. [Note: The BGI group has enjoyed significant funding from the Chinese government. BGI Genomics became a publically-traded company in July 2017.]

11. ~~(SBU)~~ The GVP expects to raise its \$1 billion ten-year budget from a variety of sources, both public and private. Roughly \$5 million per year will cover operations of the non-governmental organization, to include working groups, sample and data standardization and management, and technical assistance to participating country field operations. However, specifics on funding commitments have not been publicly announced.

Both the U.S. and China Strongly Support GVP-related Collaborative Research

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.

13. ~~(SBU)~~ (b)(6) the Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) who studied mechanisms of transmission of SARS between species, stated that CAS has already allocated funding for GVP-related research. (b)(6) Department of International Affairs at CAS, stated that CAS is working on a process and mechanism to support Chinese scientists with backing from the Ministry of Sciences and Technology and The National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) for Global Virome Project type research. He noted that CAS encourages Chinese scientists to take part in or lead international research projects and that CAS has a budget for seed funding to incubate research projects, workshops, and collaboration that can be used for the Global Virome Project. Significant USG support for GVP-related research already exists, including the Ecology and Evolution of

Infectious Diseases (EEID) program, which is jointly supported by NIH, USDA, and NSF, is actively seeking collaboration in China, and plans to host a joint workshop supported by NSFC and CAS in early 2017.

Global Virome Project Provides China a Platform for International Collaboration

14. ~~(SBU)~~ It is encouraging that China, along with other countries, is ready to take what started as a U.S.-led initiative and proof of concept to a global scale. The GVP still awaits a commitment of funding for its viral sampling and processing infrastructure. It is likely that the Chinese government will engage both with funding and with in-kind support, which will likely give China a large voice in GVP governance and data-sharing policies. While U.S.-based NGOs and academics are likely to provide some leadership for the GVP, (b)(5)

(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) (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
CC: Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation
Date: Mon, 15 Jan 2018 20:28:00 -0500

Hi (b)(6)

(b)(6) at USAID here is on extended leave. I spoke to the office and they suggested we reached out to (b)(6). It might be best to go directly to (b)(6) for clarifications.

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 12, 2018 7:21 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: FW: China's Interest in the Global Virome Project Presents an Opportunity for Global Health Cooperation

Hi (b)(6)

I want to echo kudos shared during a briefing today from (b)(6) regarding your/this cable – he shared it with folks around the table (INR, OES) to indicate China's interest in this project. Rock on!

Quick follow-up: he mentioned he learned (from CAS?) that China has earmarked a tranche of funding to support their part in the GVP from OBOR Initiative funds. Your cable mentions funding that already exists, but does not get into any possible OBOR funds – have you heard anything echoing what (b)(6) shared today?

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Official - ~~SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: SMART Core**Sent:** Thursday, September 28, 2017 3:56 AM**Cc:** (b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~

**Info Office:**

MTS_INDONESIA, MTS_PRIN, REG_IMO_OFF, PD_ANP,
CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, ANP_PRIN, EP_APEC, J_PRIN,
EX_ADM_GSO, J_ECON, MLS_BURMA, EAP_BEIJING, SNKP,
FO_STAFF, MLS_CAMBODIA, RSP_SCI_TECH, EX_DIR, RSP_CT,
EAP_DEP_DIR, CM_TC, FO_CM_TC, PD_MTS, AITW2,
FO_SPEC_ASST, AITW, FO_SR_ADVISOR

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

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The proposed Global Virome Project (GVP), an international non-governmental organization built on a decade-long prototype initiated by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), seeks to address vulnerability from emerging diseases by creating a global database of viruses of animal origin and identifying those pathogens with greatest potential to jump to humans through sequencing their genomes, understanding the ecology involved in transmission, and assessing risk to humans. This knowledge could then be used to devise treatments and countermeasures. In the months leading up to the planned January 2018 launch of the Global Virome Project to codify this "proof of concept" into an international organization, China has expressed considerable interest in becoming a leader of this nascent global effort by contributing to collaborative academic papers, hosting symposia, participating in international activities, and by proposing its own associated China Virome Project. While the GVP will have to navigate complex issues concerning sharing of specimens and data across national borders, China's interest in the Global Virome Project, represents a positive indication that health cooperation, safeguarding global health security, and advancing innovation in science remain priorities for China and presents new ground for potential U.S.-China collaboration. Absent U.S. government leadership in GVP agenda-setting, governance, and funding the Chinese government could likely take a leading position in this potentially path breaking endeavor undermining years of USG leadership and considerable investment in this critical field of public health.

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

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Summary and Comment.

Health Security is a Global Agenda

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.

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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

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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.

GVP Enjoys Strong Chinese Government Support in Principle and in Kind

9. ~~(SBU)~~ The Chinese government has shown strong interest in the Global Virome Project and is not shy about expressing interest in funding projects where Chinese scientists will take a lead. The new Director of China Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), Dr. George Gao, a distinguished virologist, told EmbOfs that the Global Virome Project is a priority project that China CDC must push hard on to get stakeholders involved and organize funding. He stated that China's involvement in this project is a good follow-up to the August 21 World Health Organization dialogue meeting at which Health and Human Services Secretary Price and US Ambassador Branstad where both sides agreed on the need for increased U.S.-China collaboration against growing health threats at the intersection of animal and human health. In February 2017, Gao led a symposium proposing a China virome project, however the specific details of how the two will integrate was left undefined.

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Global Virome Project Provides China a Platform for International Collaboration

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(b)(5)

(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:Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (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: DIS_MTS_INDONESIA, DIS_MTS_PRIN, DIS_REG_IMO_OFF,
DIS_PD_ANP, DIS_CM_CHINA_MONGOLIA, DIS_ANP_PRIN,
DIS_EP_FROM_APEC, DIS_J_PRIN, DIS_EX_ADM_GSO,
DIS_J_ECON, DIS_MLS_BURMA, DIS_EAP_BEIJING_TAIWAN,
DIS_SNKP_EAP_REGIONAL, DIS_FO_STAFF, DIS_MLS_CAMBODIA,

DIS_RSP_PUB_HEALTH, DIS_EX_DIR, DIS_RSP_CT, DIS_DEP_DIR,
DIS_CM_TC, DIS_FO_CM_TC, DIS_PD_MTS, DIS_AITW2,
DIS_FO_SPEC_ASST, DIS_AITW

UNCLASSIFIED~~SBU~~

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

(b)(6)
Recipient: Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Burke, Kristin D (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6)
CC: (h)(6)
(h)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday
Date: Tue, 19 Jun 2018 22:35:41 +0000

(b)(6) thanks for the great background and context regarding the Chinese Ebola Vaccine. My colleague today (OES/Pandemics) forwarded me a report, FYSA (I suspect you've already seen this):

- ~~(SBU)~~ On 13 June, a Chinese delegation, including one China CDC staff member, attended the lab commission meeting to share data on a recombinant Ebola vaccine called Ad5-EBOV that they are interested in offering for use in DRC. The data on phase 1 and phase 2 trials was shared with the Lab Commission as well as WHO and relevant MoHP entities. The decision of the Government of DRC on whether to allow the vaccine to be registered and used in DRC is pending.

Thanks again for the info!

(b)(6)

Official ~~-SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Thursday, June 14, 2018 11:47 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
(h)(6) (b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hello,

Attached find a background document of summary points regarding the recent response to the DRC and information regarding the Chinese Ebola Vaccine. This includes comments from technical colleagues at China CDC, WHO Beijing office and US CDC and referenced articles.

I have also included the Lancet Article on the Phase 1 Trial of the Vaccine and commentary.

Hope this is helpful (sorry not very brief),

(b)(6)

Health Coordinator
Dept. of Health and Human Services
U.S. Embassy Beijing

Tel: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Friday, June 15, 2018 10:12 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); Switzer, Bryan R (Rick) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi (b)(6)

We have some additional info that (b)(6) will provide to answer the questions today.

Thanks

(b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Friday, June 15, 2018 9:24 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing); (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: FW: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Morning, (b)(6)

I read through the CFR story and don't know enough to answer Kristen. The article, for example, lists two Chinese-produced Ebola drugs. If there's interest, we could try to find out more, but guessing you already know the background. If you'd like me to report, please let me know. I could look for contacts.

Thanks, (b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, June 15, 2018 1:01 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing);
(b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR)
Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi (b)(6)

Just to confirm, China sent their Ebola drug and ran clinical trials in 2014 too, right? Could you explain a little more about how the Chinese trial was rushed?

(b)(6)—the drug will probably at least be made available for those who want it, but having it on the WHO list would allow greater distribution. Even in 2014 a British nurse reportedly used the Chinese drug, and survived.

Here's a good resource:

<https://www.cfr.org/blog/tale-two-anti-ebola-drugs>

Thank you,

(b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, June 14, 2018 7:48 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR)
Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Thanks (b)(6)—I appreciate the additional details. I didn't realize (b)(6) conducted a real-time test in 2014.

Looking forward to hear any additional news. Cheers,

(b)(6)

Official
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 8:55 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6) (Beijing)

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

Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Thanks (b)(6) - This is consistent with what I imagine China CDC may be aiming to do - negotiate a direct agreement with DRC and test in real time. HHS family here asking contacts today at WHO, China CDC so will get anything additional back to you on this.

(b)(6)

Health Attaché
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Embassy Beijing

Tel: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

~~SBU~~

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Sent: Thursday, June 14, 2018 8:46 AM

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

(b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR)

Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)

Subject: Re: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi (b)(6) and all:

I talked this morning with a contact at the (b)(4). She made a few points. She stated that China is working with the DRC to get permission to allow the vaccine's use, tho not sure for only Chinese or others; she thot it likely to be approved for at least limited use. She was more positive about trying the drug as, if it proves effective, it wld be another option, and it is easier to transport etc as it is a solid, vice other two liquid options. She also noted that a human clinical trial is only possible in a pop with ebola patients, so this could be their option to test.

(b)(4) ran a trial during the last outbreak. Ie, the lack of data so far might not mean it doesn't work, tho contacts said the China testing was rushed. I know others know more abt this process and background.

Hope this is useful.

Best, (b)(6)

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, June 13, 2018 9:17 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (OS/OGA)
(CTR) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: Burris, Hannah (HHS/OGA)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi (b)(6)

Post recently shared a night note (copied below) regarding shipment of a newly approved Ebola vaccine to the DRC – thanks for the report. (b)(6) I imagine this is the same drug that you mentioned in your email earlier this year concerning CFDA's licensing of an Ebola virus vaccine (translated media note attached). I note the media coverage indicates the drug will only be used on "Chinese living in Congo." Does that mean it'll only be dispensed from their embassy?

(b)(6) do either of you know whether the China CDC is working to obtain WHO-approval to use this drug? Also, given the drug had "not been demonstrated effective" in a human clinical trial, is there any indication that they're working on different formulation? For example, side effects aside, what is the benefit of shipping out a potentially expensive placebo?

Thanks!

(b)(6)

~~(SBU)~~ **Chinese Team Looks to Use New Ebola Vaccine in the D.R.C:** The government of China (GOC) has shipped a newly approved Ebola vaccine to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where a GOC team will seek to use the largely untested drug, according to Chinese media reports and Emb contacts. The team will "seek to use the Chinese developed vaccine... to help with control and prevention of the disease," the head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention told state-run media. He added that "for the present," the vaccine would likely "only cover Chinese living in Congo." ESTH contacts questioned the speed at which the Chinese Food and Drug Administration approved the vaccine last fall, noting that the drug had "not been demonstrated effective" in a human clinical trial and that "limited animal efficacy data" had been released. The DRC government had not received a request from China to use the vaccine, a DRC spokesman told foreign media on June 8. The World Health Organization has previously recommended use of an Ebola vaccine being developed by (b)(4) (ESTH - (b)(6))

Official ~~(SBU)~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, May 8, 2018 10:12 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (OS/OGA)
(b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi (b)(6)

I know you shared this a while ago. I want to follow up to see whether the WHO has approved this drug for distribution in a possible future Ebola outbreak. I imagine licensing by the CFDA is the first step.

Thanks!

(b)(6)

Official

UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 8:32 AM

To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (OS/OGA)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA) (b)(6)

Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Thanks for flagging (b)(6)

Official

UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 6:46 AM

To: (b)(6) (OS/OGA) (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) (HHS/OGA)

Subject: Fw: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Flagging in case you hadn't seen this. CFDA translated announcement attached.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 17:30

To: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Subject: Fwd: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

(b)(6) here is a quick translation. Best, (b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Date: October 20, 2017 at 5:22:50 PM GMT+8

To: (b)(6)

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

Subject: RE: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

Hi all,

Please see the attached translation. There might be some typo and simplified summary (non-critical parts) due to the time limit, for your reference.

Have a nice weekend!

(b)(6)

Official

UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) [mailto:(b)(6)]

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 4:20 PM

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

Cc: (U) (b)(6) (Santiago) (b)(6) (Beijing)

Subject: Fwd: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

(b)(6) can you please assist?

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Date: October 20, 2017 at 3:47:30 PM GMT+8

To: (b)(6)

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

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

Subject: CFDA licensed Ebola vaccine yesterday

(b)(6)

Could you all by chance provide any further info on the vaccine that was licensed yesterday by CFDA through your contacts perhaps?

Also, (b)(6) is out today, so could an FDA LE staff perhaps translate the announcement link below?

Thanks much!

(b)(6)

(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) [mailto:(b)(6)]
Sent: Friday, October 20, 2017 3:37 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (U) (b)(6) (Beijing | NSF);
(b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: GVP

Dear (b)(6) – I just heard from (b)(6) the person on our team working on the WHO vaccine prequalification program, that the CanSino ebola vaccine was just licensed yesterday by CFDA. Attached is a link:

<http://www.sfda.gov.cn/WS01/CL1746/178705.html>

I've asked (b)(6) for more information – e.g., indication, use, and potential for PQ – and will share what I learn.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Sender: (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (OS/OGA) (CTR) (b)(6)
(b)(6)

From: "Stilwell, David R"

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

To:

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

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

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

Subject: RE: ASEAN ADDENDUM - RE: April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

Date: Thu, 23 Apr 2020 20:25:49 +0000

I was typing too fast. The point was (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 12:15 PM

To: Stilwell, David R

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: RE: ASEAN ADDENDUM - RE: April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

(b)(5)

From: Stilwell, David R

(b)(6)

Sent: Thursday, April 23, 2020 9:36 AM

To: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: FW: ASEAN ADDENDUM - RE: April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 11:26 PM

To: Eapguidance <Eapguidance@state.gov>

Subject: ASEAN ADDENDUM - RE: April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

The following two items were released to the media at the conclusion of the Secretary's video teleconference tonight with his ASEAN counterparts.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY MICHAEL R. POMPEO

April 22, 2020

The United States and ASEAN are Partnering to Defeat COVID-19, Build Long-Term
Resilience, and Support Economic Recovery

Members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are enduring strategic partners as we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and plan for economic recovery. We commit to continue our collaboration with ASEAN to beat this pandemic and get back to the business of building a bright future for the region together.

We thank our ASEAN partners for their valuable support in promoting the continued flow of vital medical supplies into the United States, as well as their support for our repatriation flights. For example, Vietnam expedited clearances for charter flights to deliver 2.2 million personal protective suits to the United States, and we expect more shipments of personal protective equipment (PPE) in the coming weeks. Additionally, since the beginning of April, Malaysia facilitated the speedy delivery of over 1.3 million kilograms of gloves for U.S. health care workers. Cambodia helped American's safely return home from the Westerdam cruise ship.

The United States continues to provide generous support to ASEAN nations to assist them to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. We urge all countries to embrace full and transparent information sharing. Transparency saves lives; suppression puts them at risk. During this meeting, I was pleased to announce the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative to enhance our efforts in health security through research, public health, and training the next generation of ASEAN health professionals. To date, the United States has released more than \$35.3 million in emergency health funding to help ASEAN countries fight the virus, building on the \$3.5 billion in public health assistance provided across ASEAN over the last twenty years.

We also urge authorities to take appropriate measures to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and services to the most vulnerable populations across the Indo-Pacific—including those

displaced by violence inside Myanmar. We call for all to work with the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to make that happen for Rohingya and other displaced persons.

The United States is committed to using all available tools to minimize the economic and social damage from the pandemic and restore global growth. We start from a strong foundation with \$294 billion in two-way goods trade in 2019 and \$273 billion of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment across ASEAN countries. The Development Finance Corporation is investing in infrastructure projects across the region. The USAID-supported ASEAN Single Window is facilitating greater and greater contactless trade throughout ASEAN. The U.S.-ASEAN Internship Program continues to expand with openings at many of our biggest companies in the region. The U.S.-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership promotes U.S. private sector engagement in smart city solutions and the digital economy. We remain committed to sustaining our long-term investments in economic technical assistance and human capacity development through our bilateral USAID programs in the ASEAN member states of Cambodia, Indonesia, LAO PDR, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Given the strong link between illegal wildlife sold in wet markets and zoonotic diseases, the United States has called on the People's Republic of China to permanently close its wildlife wet markets and all markets that sell illegal wildlife. I call on all ASEAN governments to do the same.

Even as we fight the outbreak, we must remember that the long-term threats to our shared security have not disappeared. In fact, they've become more prominent. Beijing has moved to take advantage of the distraction, from China's new unilateral announcement of administrative districts over disputed islands and maritime areas in the South China Sea, its sinking of a Vietnamese fishing vessel earlier this month, and it's "research stations" on Fiery Cross Reef and Subi Reef. The PRC continues to deploy maritime militia around the Spratly Islands and most recently, the PRC has dispatched a flotilla that included an energy survey vessel for the sole purpose of intimidating other claimants from engaging in offshore hydrocarbon development. It is important to highlight how the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is exploiting the world's focus on the COVID-19 crisis by continuing its provocative behavior. The CCP is exerting military pressure and coercing its neighbors in the SCS, even going so far as to sink a Vietnamese fishing vessel. The U.S. strongly opposes China's bullying and we hope other nations will hold them to account too.

We expressed concerns over a scientific report showing that Beijing's upstream dam operations have unilaterally altered flows of the Mekong. The report found that such operations significantly deprived the Mekong countries of water for years, with catastrophic results during the most recent dry season for the 60 million people who depend on the river for food, energy, and transportation.

The story of the ties between the billion people of America and ASEAN is an inspiring, positive one. We have faced shared challenges before. Together, we've made our people safer and more prosperous. We commit to continue to build for the future based upon the tried and true principles that we share – ASEAN centrality, openness, transparency, a rules-based framework, good governance, and respect for sovereignty.

#

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

FACT SHEET

April 22, 2020

U.S.-ASEAN HEALTH FUTURES

Today, Secretary Pompeo launched the U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures initiative. Health Futures captures our existing and ongoing work with ASEAN on public health and lays the groundwork for long-term partnership, targeted assistance, and a renewed focus on our most fundamental resource – the health and wellbeing of our combined one billion people. Over the last 20 years, the United States has invested over \$3.5 billion in shared health goals in collaboration with ASEAN nations, representing a historic level of engagement in a serious and sustained way. This funding lays the foundation for strong public health throughout the region and is the basis for our engagement going forward. Our assistance to ASEAN continues to be responsive to the region's needs, including as of April 22, \$35.3 million in emergency funding for ASEAN Member States to combat COVID-19.

We have advanced our shared goals for a healthy future in a wide variety of fields, including HIV/AIDS and other infectious disease control, expanding safe water access, and improving nutrition and maternal and child health. Together, we are conducting joint health research, strengthening health capacity across the region and working to develop the next generation of human capital. We are also exploring smart city health solutions through the U.S-ASEAN Smart Cities Partnership.

RESEARCH: *Scientific knowledge is fundamental to understanding and diagnosing disease, and the development of new therapeutics. Joint research in the ASEAN region includes:*

- More than 1,000 research projects over the last ten years, including 300+ active research projects in collaboration between ASEAN members and 20+ institutes at the U.S. National Institutes of Health;
- Over \$30 million in direct research funding over the last ten years to universities and government research institutions;
- Support for HIV prevention trials, microbicide trials, AIDS clinical trials, tuberculosis epidemiology, and infectious disease clinical trials.

HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY: *Strong health systems are critical to supporting a vibrant, healthy citizenry and addressing emerging health risks and threats. Collaborative capacity building in ASEAN includes:*

- Supporting quality health care, services, and coverage for all citizens, especially the most vulnerable;
- Fostering public-private partnerships to promote healthy populations, especially in the area of diagnosis and treatment of tuberculosis. Public-private partnerships between USAID and U.S. companies have enabled better detection and treatment of tuberculosis, enabling thousands of patients across ASEAN to start appropriate treatments for tuberculosis and drug-resistant tuberculosis;
- Controlling the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Over 150,000 patients are now on antiretroviral therapy due to joint efforts between the United States and ASEAN countries. With U.S. support, Vietnam is on track to become the first President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief country to achieve full ownership of its HIV/AIDS response by the end of 2020 by mobilizing domestic resources and ensuring sustainable financing;
- Sustained support to ASEAN to reduce tuberculosis and malaria in the region. For example, the number of cases of malaria in Laos dropped 70 percent from 2014 to 2017;
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Global Disease Detection Operations Center monitors and reports on outbreaks and their risk to communities around the world, including 44 infectious disease outbreaks across ASEAN from 2014-2019, reducing the risk of further spread;
- USAID is working with the ASEAN Secretariat to develop a Public Health Emergency Coordination System, bringing together existing ASEAN mechanisms, such as the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre Network, to prepare for and respond to emerging public health emergencies.

DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL IN HEALTH: *Fostering the next generation of health care professionals is a critical part of our shared goals for a healthy future. Efforts include:*

- Through the newly launched U.S.-ASEAN Health Futures Alumni Network, we are connecting 2,400 ASEAN medical and public health visiting scholar and program alumni to share best practices and directly engage with U.S. experts;
- Supporting ASEAN physicians, public health trainees, and science students to learn from U.S. expertise through Fulbright educational exchanges, the International Visitor Leadership Program, and other citizen exchanges;
- Training more than 1,300 disease detectives across ASEAN to track diseases, research outbreaks, and respond to health emergencies;
- Creating One Health university networks (four country-specific, one regional) to prepare health workforces to prevent, detect, and respond to the threat of infectious diseases, which have trained more than 10,000 students and professionals since 2014.

- Promoting telehealth and e-records to help cities and healthcare professionals deliver services and information efficiently.

###

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 8:54 PM
To: Eapguidance <Eapguidance@state.gov>
Subject: April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

April 22, 2020 Press Guidance for the EAP Region

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The Press Guidance below is intended for internal USG use only. Documents already released by the USG (such as statements, media notes, factsheets) may be issued in written form.

The final PA Guidance package is available, each day, at (Open Net):
<https://infocentral.state.gov/outreach-tools/press-guidance-packages/>

There WAS NO State Department Press Briefing by the Spokesperson today.

The Secretary held a Press Briefing today – see transcript below

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CORONAVIRUS - INFOCENTRAL SITE

Information on Coronavirus/COVID-19, including Department guidance, other USG agency guidance (WH, NSC, CDC, HHS, DHS, DOD), and other useful resources are updated regularly on the [Coronavirus InfoCentral Page](#).

<https://infocentral.state.gov/topics/health/coronavirus/>

**CORONAVIRUS - US CITIZEN REPATRIATION AND DOS STAFF
COVID STATISTICS**

Department of State statistics on U.S. citizen repatriation efforts as well as the health impact of COVID-19 on the Department's workforce. This information will be updated daily at 1pm DC time and available at

<https://www.state.gov/coronavirus/repatriation/>.

WHITE HOUSE – BRIEFING VIDEOS

COVID-19 Taskforce Press Briefings and more.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/whitehouse/videos>

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

Statement by Secretary MICHAEL R. POMPEO

April 22, 2020

On the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day

Today, the United States observes the 50th anniversary of the first Earth Day. The United States is proud of its record as a world leader in promoting clean water and air, conserving natural resources, and protecting nature while driving economic growth and fostering resilience to natural disasters at home and abroad. The United States is also a world leader in providing clean and affordable energy to our citizens and providing secure energy to other countries, thanks to our innovative private sector.

On this Earth Day, we also underscore the dangerous consequences of wildlife trafficking. Wildlife "wet markets," in which live species are sold for human consumption, are hotspots for wildlife trafficking, create risks for the generation and spread of diseases, and may have played a critical role in the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. On this Earth Day, we call on the People's Republic of China and other countries to close wildlife wet markets permanently, a move that would reduce risks to human health inside and outside of China and discourage the consumption of trafficked wildlife and wildlife products. We call on all governments to join our efforts to combat and put an end to the scourge that is wildlife trafficking.

Even as we battle the COVID-19 pandemic, it is an extraordinary year to highlight U.S. environmental and scientific achievements. We congratulate the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) as they celebrate their 50th anniversaries. We recognize NASA's Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) program as it celebrates 25 years of students and citizen scientists around the world contributing meaningfully to our global environment. The United States will continue to partner internationally to leave a better America and a better world for future generations.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

April 22, 2020

STATEMENT BY MORGAN ORTAGUS, SPOKESPERSON

U.S. Condemns Attack on UN in Rakhine State

The United States condemns the April 20 attack on a clearly-marked UN vehicle in Rakhine State, which resulted in the death of one World Health Organization (WHO) employee and the wounding of a health worker. We understand these Burmese nationals were working to fight the COVID-19 pandemic when they came under attack. This egregious act undermines efforts to protect vulnerable populations in Burma and again highlights the urgent need for a cessation of fighting in Rakhine State. It also hinders global efforts to stop the spread of the virus. We urge Burmese authorities to investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice. Health and humanitarian workers across the globe must be able to work without threat of violence – now more than ever.

###

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

STATEMENT BY SECRETARY MICHAEL R. POMPEO

April 22, 2020

The United States Continues Leadership in the Global COVID-19 Response with More Than \$270 Million in Additional U.S. Foreign Assistance

For more than a half century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health security and humanitarian assistance. Through the American people's generosity and under the leadership of President Trump, the United States continues this outstanding record in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the announcement of more than \$270 million in additional foreign assistance provided by Congress in supplemental funding specifically to respond to the outbreak.

This new funding will provide approximately \$170 million in humanitarian aid to allow communities in some of the most at-risk countries to prepare for, and respond to the pandemic. At the same time, we are also providing more than \$100 million to help governments, civil society, and the private sector prepare for, mitigate, and address second-order economic, civilian-security, stabilization, and governance impacts of COVID-19.

Today's announcement brings the total global investment from the U.S. Government since the outbreak of COVID-19 to more than \$775 million to date in health, humanitarian and economic assistance – specifically aimed at fighting the pandemic in more than 100 countries in every region of the world.

A healthier world means a healthier United States. Decades of smart and strategic foreign assistance has proven to mitigate further impact to Americans overseas and better protect Americans at home from further transmission across our borders.

The State Department, U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Department of Defense are working together as part of an All-of-America response to support health care, humanitarian assistance, and economic, security, and stabilization efforts worldwide with \$2.4 billion in emergency supplemental funding allocated by Congress.

The United States is without peer as a humanitarian force for good. Together, Americans – separately from our government aid and contributions to multilateral institutions – have generously donated more than \$3 billion to populations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic around the world through private businesses, nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations, and charitable organizations, in addition to what the U.S. Government has provided.

The United States welcomes high-quality, transparent contributions from other donors to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

STATEMENT BY MORGAN ORTAGUS, SPOKESPERSON

April 22, 2020

Selection of U.S. Negotiators for the Compacts of Free Association

We are pleased to announce the selection of Ambassador Karen B. Stewart and Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular and International Affairs Douglas W. Domenech to serve as our negotiators for agreements to amend the Compacts of Free Association with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, and to engage in Compact Review discussions with the Republic of Palau.

We recognize our unique, historic, and special relationships with the Freely Associated States. The selection of Ambassador Stewart and Assistant Secretary Domenech to lead our negotiating team is the latest in a series of actions that the Trump Administration has taken following the historic meeting of the leaders of the Freely Associated States with President Trump. During his August visit to the Federated States of Micronesia, Secretary Pompeo reaffirmed our longstanding commitment to these partners, to our Compacts of Free Association, and the important role that these Compacts play in sustaining our mutual strategic partnerships.

Ambassador Stewart and Assistant Secretary Domenech are particularly well qualified to spearhead these important negotiations.

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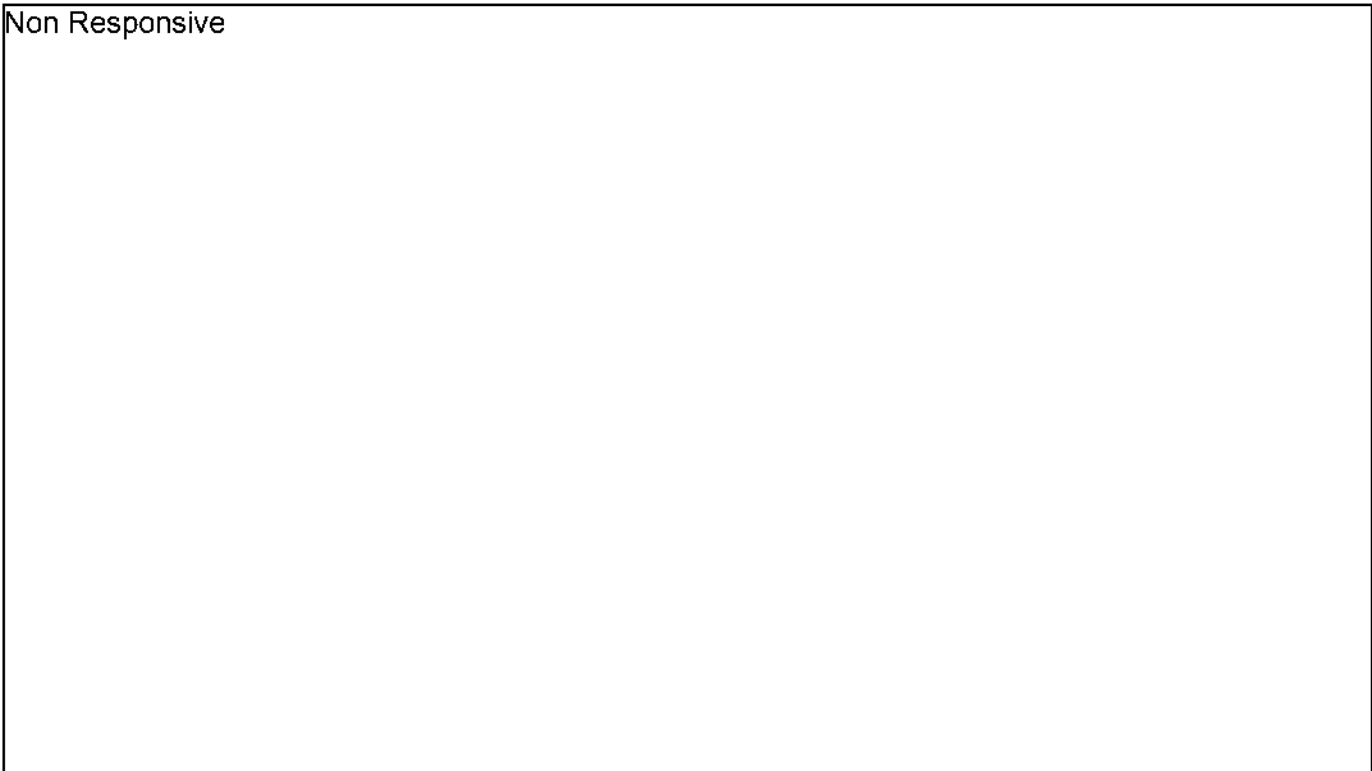
Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

(b)(5)



Non Responsive



- Among the authorities identified was General License E, which authorizes non-governmental organizations to export or re-export services to Iran in support of not-for-profit activities related to humanitarian projects to meet basic human needs in Iran.
- Additionally, the Swiss Humanitarian Trade Arrangement, which has already facilitated transactions for the delivery of cancer and transplant drugs to Iran, is in place as an additional mechanism for companies to export humanitarian goods to Iran, including COVID-19-relief products.

If Asked - Syria:

- The United States' Syria and Syria-related sanctions prohibitions are designed to deter Bashar al-Assad, his cronies, and the Government of Syria from abusing the international financial system and global supply chain to continue brutalizing the Syrian people. We remain committed to ensuring the civilians located in Syria are able to receive humanitarian support from the international community.
- The United States is the largest contributor of humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, and continues to offer humanitarian assistance to help address the coronavirus outbreak, while the Assad regime, Russia, and Iran obstruct aid and starve the Syrian populace of food and medicine.
- Since our Syria-specific sanctions were implemented, we have provided exemptions for humanitarian aid in all areas of Syria. In fact, there are U.S. government programs working with NGOs to deliver medicines and foodstuff to nearly all parts of Syria, including regime-held areas.
- We share the UN and WHO's concerns that conflict-affected and overcrowded areas are fertile ground for COVID-19, with extremely limited options for testing and treatment.
- Our disaster assistance is helping the WHO, UN agencies, NGOs and faith-based groups to build more water, sanitation, and health facilities in camps and informal IDP settings across northern Syria to prevent the spread of the virus.
- While the Assad regime continues to use cynical ploys to divide the population even during this crisis, the United States continues to stand with

the Syrian people by delivering humanitarian assistance and working with teams on the ground to help mitigate the impact of the virus.

If Asked - Venezuela:

- We are concerned about Venezuela's ongoing humanitarian crisis, which is a direct result of the illegitimate former Maduro regime's mismanagement and corruption.
- Our sanctions will continue to target those enabling the former illegitimate Maduro regime or pocketing Venezuela's resources.
- Sanctions relief for Maduro and his inner circle, without any change in behavior, would only benefit the illegitimate former regime, not the Venezuelan people.
- The United States recently announced a framework for a democratic transition in Venezuela that outlines specific actions that would lead to sanctions relief under our Venezuela sanctions program.
- At the same time, the United States is committed to ensuring that humanitarian support flows to the Venezuelan people and is working to mitigate where we can issues of over compliance.
- We support the interim administration's efforts to raise awareness of the potential spread of COVID-19 and its focus on developing practical solutions, and strongly condemn the former Maduro regime's brutal attacks against health care professionals, independent media, and National Assembly deputies for speaking the truth about the pandemic.
- The United States maintains several humanitarian-related exemptions and authorizations to facilitate continued humanitarian support, as outlined in Treasury's "Guidance Related to the Provision of Humanitarian Assistance and Support to the Venezuelan People," issued on August 5, 2019.
- This document provides guidance on authorizations and policies put in place to facilitate humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela.

- We encourage parties to avail themselves of these and any other relevant authorizations and exemptions to provide support to the people of Venezuela that would otherwise implicate the Venezuela sanctions program.
- We will continue to closely monitor the situation and work with the private sector to understand specific challenges they are facing when providing aid to the Venezuelan people.
- We evaluate requests to unblock funds for humanitarian concerns but remain concerned that these funds could be misused by members of the former Maduro regime or its supporters.

If Asked – Cuba:

- We remain concerned about the impact that this global health crisis is having on the long-suffering people of Cuba. The United States' Cuba program continues to target Cuba's oppressive regime while allowing much needed assistance to reach the Cuban people.
- The regime's mismanagement of the economy, not U.S. sanctions, is responsible for Cuban medical supply shortages.
- In 2019, the United States exported \$3.7 million of medicines and medical supplies to Cuba to support the Cuban people, including diagnostic equipment and supplies. That amount represents a fraction of the hundreds of millions of dollars of medical goods the United States authorized for export to Cuba in 2019.
- The Cuban regime has mismanaged Cuba's economy for decades and proven itself incapable of addressing the Cuban people's most basic needs. It alone is responsible for ongoing medical supply shortages.
- The regime exploits Cuban medical professionals to line its pockets by renting out its best and brightest medical staff outside of Cuba while confiscating up to 90% of their salary. Meanwhile the regime leaves Cubans with deteriorating hospitals and empty pharmacies.

If Asked – North Korea:

- In the face of the extraordinary threat to global health and welfare caused by the COVID pandemic, the United States has expeditiously facilitated the

approval of assistance from U.S. and international aid and health organizations to counter and contain the spread of coronavirus in the DPRK.

- Moreover, we've led the UN effort over the last year to expedite processing and approval of exemptions related to humanitarian aid addressing broader health concerns in the DPRK.
- We have also actively supported and established in the UN sanctions regime related to the DPRK language that allows for humanitarian-related bank transactions.

If Asked – Ukraine-Russia:

- Our Russia-related sanctions program does not generally prevent the Russian government from providing aid to Europe, nor would it constrain the United States from providing medical assistance to Russia unless a specially designated national were involved in the transaction – in which case a specific license would likely be needed and those parties should contact OFAC.
- In the case of the Crimea region of Ukraine, General License 4 authorizes U.S. persons to export or reexport agricultural commodities, medicine, and medical supplies to that area, but does not authorize the export or reexport of those supplies to designated persons.
- In addition, CAATSA 231 does not target humanitarian aid – the focus of CAATSA 231 implementation is on significant transactions of a defense or intelligence nature with specified Russian entities.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have seen Russian disinformation seek to blame the United States for the outbreak and discredit the international response. Now we have seen attempts to blame U.S. sanctions policy for hampering the flow of humanitarian aid.
- This narrative is false. Disinformation in the time of a pandemic only serves to further exacerbate the crisis rather than support the global response.

(SBU) Background:

In internal discussions and public remarks, high-level foreign officials, former U.S. officials, and representatives of humanitarian organizations have expressed general concerns about the potential for negative effects of sanctions on humanitarian

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Non Responsive

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, of course, we evaluate all of our policies constantly. So the answer is would we ever rethink it – of course, we’re constantly trying to make sure we have our policies right. When it comes to humanitarian assistance, medical devices, equipment, pharmaceuticals, things that people need in these difficult times, those are not sanctioned anywhere at any time that I’m aware of. I mean, just read that whether it’s – it’s not always an American sanction. In North Korea there are UN Security Council resolutions. In other places they are, in fact, American provisions. But in each of those, if you read them, it’s quite on its face that these items aren’t sanctioned. There’s no prohibition on moving humanitarian assistance into these difficult and challenging places.

You rightfully point out some of these countries continue to build bombs and missiles and nuclear capability, all the while their people are starving. So when they make the claim that, boy, they just don’t have the money to feed their people, these are decisions that these people, leaders have often made, not in the best interest of those peoples. It’s, indeed, quite sad to see those governments make those decisions which harm their own people. The last thing I’ll say is not only do we not sanction any of those, nor does any global entity sanction humanitarian assistance, the United States has worked in every one of those places to provide assistance. We’ve worked to try and get assistance into North Korea. We’ve made offers of assistance to Iran. You’ll recall when we first began we’ve worked diligently in Venezuela to get humanitarian assistance to the Venezuelan people well. No, the United States understands this is a humanitarian challenge, a humanitarian crisis, and we are deeply committed to ensuring that humanitarian assistance gets to the people of those countries. We care more often about the people in those countries than their own leaders do. That’s sad. That’s a reflection of those regimes too often. It’s the reason, in fact, that we’re working to help those people raise up in their countries, so that they can get a better outcome for themselves as well.

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesperson**

For Immediate Release

April 22, 2020

**REMARKS TO THE PRESS
Secretary Michael R. Pompeo**

**April 22, 2020
Press Briefing Room
Washington, D.C.**

SECRETARY POMPEO: Well, good morning, everyone. Happy Ramadan to those of you in time zones where it's Thursday already.

I want to lead off with three commemorations.

First, we remember those slain in terrorist attacks in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday. That was one year ago yesterday.

Second, this week the administration honors the annual Holocaust Days of Remembrance. This is the 75th anniversary year of the liberation of many Nazi concentration camps where so many innocent people were murdered, including 6 million Jews. We bear witness to their stories so that such repugnant acts of evil will never happen again.

Third, it's Earth Day, and especially in light of Secretary-General Guterres' message released this morning to turn our recovery into a real opportunity to do the right thing, I want to remind everyone that the right way to achieve a greener, cleaner, brighter future for the world is to unleash private innovation and free market competition. It's what we've done here in the United States but continue to be our model, and we are a world leader in reducing all types of emission.

One simple data point: From 2005 to 2018, the most recent year we have data, U.S. emissions decreased by more than 10 percent even as our economy grew by 25 percent. China, conversely, has been the largest annual emitter since 2006 and it expects that its emissions will continue to grow until around 2030, thus offsetting the progress of countries all around the world in reducing global emissions. I would urge Secretary Guterres to make sure we have the data right, the facts right about who is actually delivering on the things that we all value. And on Earth Day, the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, I think that's especially important.

Turning to the World Health Organization, I want to spend a few minutes telling the American people a little bit more about the problems that we're trying to work our way through.

The WHO has two primary functions. First, it's a regulator and an advisory role, and a health emergency and humanitarian aid operation on top of that.

After the first SARS outbreak in 2003, the United States led the reform of the WHO, the WHO rules that govern how countries report on public health threats. So a major reform effort at 2003.

Those rules - they're called the International Health Regulations - went into effect in 2007.

We set very clear expectations. We - the world - set very clear expectations for how every country must disclose data to protect global health.

For example, Article 6 of the IHR says that "each State Party shall notify the World Health Organization...within 24 hours...of all events which may constitute a public health emergency of international concern within its territory..."

Annex 2 of those same rules provides that countries must notify the World Health Organization of any unusual or unexpected public health events such as SARS, a close genetic cousin of the virus that causes COVID-19.

Those rules also said how countries should evaluate when to notify the WHO of diseases of unknown causes or sources.

We strongly believe that the Chinese Communist Party did not report the outbreak of the new coronavirus in a timely fashion to the World Health Organization.

Article 6 of the IHRs, which was a part of this reform, further mandates that a State Party - that would include China - "shall continue to communicate to WHO timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed public health information..." That is, there's an ongoing obligation.

Even after the CCP did notify the WHO of the coronavirus outbreak, China didn't share all of the information it had.

Instead, it covered up how dangerous the disease is. It didn't report sustained human-to-human transmission for a month until it was in every province inside of China. It censored those who tried to warn the world, it ordered a halt to testing of new samples, and it destroyed existing samples.

The CCP still has not shared the virus sample from inside of China with the outside world, making it impossible to track the disease's evolution.

Not making a legal determination here today on China's adherence to the IHRs, but the World Health Organization's regulatory arm clearly failed during this pandemic.

I'd also note that when countries adopted these new rules in 2007, we also gave the director-general of the WHO encouragement and the ability to go public when a member-country wasn't following those rules, and that didn't happen in this case either.

It's why we continue to insist this is an ongoing requirement for transparency and openness according to the WHO rules, and the WHO has responsibility to continue to enforce them today. This transparency and getting it right is critical to saving lives today and in the future.

I'll talk for just a minute about humanitarian aid. The United States is the most generous nation on the planet, has been for the past three years, will continue to be this year.

Thanks to the American taxpayers, we've dedicated more than \$140 billion in global funding for global health purposes in the past two decades.

Today I can confirm the United States is making an additional commitment of about 270 million to assist the most at-risk countries in fighting the virus, bringing our total to more than \$775 million to date.

We do this in lots of ways. We do this through multilateral organizations. We help our partners by sharing expertise. Today the CDC has officers stationed in 59 countries and has helped train thousands of epidemiologists worldwide over the years whose knowledge is providing incredibly valuable.

You should know it helps those countries, it saves lives in those countries, but this is a global pandemic and that work protects us right here at home in America as well.

Weeks before the first reported COVID case arrived in Guatemala, USAID helped the Ministry of Health there equip a key hospital to start caring for its first patients.

And the United States is training more than 70,000 pharmacists across Indonesia today so they can provide good advice and referrals.

American generosity isn't limited to our assistance that comes directly from the United States Government.

Our businesses, our NGOs, charities, all faith groups - this is an all-of-America approach to saving lives all across the world and protecting us right here at home as well.

We estimate that the American people, in cume, have given nearly \$3 billion in donations and assistance just to fight this particular virus.

America's global health commitments remain as steady as ever.

Move on to a couple final points. I want to highlight two ways in which the Chinese Communist Party is exploiting the world's focus on COVID-19 crisis by continuing its provocative behavior.

First, we commented on what's taking place in Hong Kong, where amidst increased efforts by Beijing to erode autonomy, law enforcement authorities have arrested pro-democracy activists, including 81-year-old Martin Lee. We've always said that China has an obligation to live up to its promises, its obligation - as I was speaking about the virus earlier - to live up to the rules that it put in place and it signed off on. We'd ask them to continue to do that here.

You've also seen that the Chinese Communist Party is exerting military pressure on Taiwan and coercing its neighbors in the South China Sea, even going so far as to have – so far as to sink a Vietnamese fishing vessel.

The United States strongly opposes China's bullying; we hope other nations will hold them to account, too.

Tonight I'll be on a phone call cochaired by myself and my Laotian counterpart with every ASEAN member.

I want to note, too, that we are now well along in developing the implementing policies required by the law in the NDAA of 2019 prohibiting use of Huawei and other untrusted vendors in U.S. facilities.

Data that come into U.S. facilities will have to follow a Clean Path and reside and transit only through trusted systems. And we'll provide full details on that before too long.

On Venezuela, as I've commented frequently from this podium, we're continuing to apply pressure on the Maduro regime, all the while seeking to provide humanitarian assistance for the Venezuelan people.

As announced by the Department of Treasury yesterday, the general license which allowed certain companies to maintain operations – Venezuela, PDVSA – expires today.

The Treasury Department has announced a new, narrowly limited license for seven months which will allow companies that are operating there to begin their wind-down process.

And with that, I'm happy to take questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, great. Nick.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thanks, Mr. Secretary, for doing this. Let me try Iran and China, if you don't mind. The IRGC today said that it launched a military satellite into orbit for the first time. Could that technology be used for ICBMs? And we've seen from Iran expanded nuclear capacity, Iraqi militia rocket attacks, harassing of a Navy ship in recent days. After the Soleimani strike, there was talk of reestablishing deterrence. Do you fear the deterrence has slipped?

And on China, there are millions of PPE items stuck in China despite the fact they've been bought by U.S. companies. Do you believe the PPE is stuck because of red tape, China trying to make sure the quality is high, or because China is actually hoarding them and keeping them from the U.S.? Thanks.

SECRETARY POMPEO: As for your second question, I'll leave to the Vice President's task force to talk about those goods and their transit. The good news is we have seen China provide those resources. Sometimes they're from U.S. companies that are there in China, but we've had success. The Vice President and his team have talked about the air bridge that has delivered products to the American people from China, and we appreciate that. We are counting on China

to continue to live up to its contractual obligations and international obligations to provide that assistance to us and to sell us those goods – often these are commercial transactions – in a way consistent with all of the international trade rules.

As for Iran, you noted the launch last night. The Iranians have consistently said that these missile programs were disconnected from their military, that these were purely commercial enterprises. I think today's launch proves what we've been saying all along here in the United States: The IRGC, a designated terrorist organization, launched a missile today. And I'll leave to the Department of Defense to talk about the details about that. But when you talk about the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, I think every nation has an obligation to go to the United Nations and evaluate whether this missile launch was consistent with that Security Council resolution. I don't think it remotely is, and I need – I think Iran needs to be held accountable for what they've done. They've now had a military organization that the United States has designated terrorists attempt to launch a satellite.

You talked about the naval ships. You saw the President's statement this morning. The President's been very clear to the Department of Defense and frankly to the State Department team too to do everything we need to do to make sure that we protect and defend our officers, our military officers, our diplomats around the world, to continue to ensure that they are secure and safe. What he said this morning and what I know he's told all of us in leadership inside the government is take whatever action is necessary to make sure that you can defend and keep our people safe. I'm confident that the Department of Defense will do that in response to what the President said this morning as well.

And then finally, you talked more broadly about deterrence. Two thoughts. First: The Iranian regime has gone around the world spreading disinformation in response to this virus. One of the things they've said is that, boy, we need resources in order to take care of the virus at home. And all the while they are launching satellites, driving ships around the Arabian Gulf, coming and harassing U.S. naval vessels. They continue to underwrite Shia militias, they're working to support Hizballah. Yesterday my Iranian counterpart – or the day before – was in Syria talking to the butcher in Damascus.

I hope that the Iranian regime will respond to the Iranian people's demands to prioritize resources, resources that the Iranian regime clearly has, to the health and security and safety of the Iranian people, rather than continuing their global terror campaign. You can see they're still hard at it. You can see they still have resources. You should note, we, the – at the very first news that the COVID virus had hit Iran, offered humanitarian assistance to the people of Iran. That offer was rejected. That offer still stands. We've assisted other countries in delivering humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people. I only wish that the Iranian regime cared about its people as much as the rest of the world has demonstrated that it does.

MS ORTAGUS: Barbara.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, we're hearing that there is panic buying in North Korea at the moment. I was wondering if you have any reading about what's going on there.

And given the reports that Kim Jong-un is in very poor health, has the U.S. tried to reach out to Pyongyang for any information, and what was the response?

And then a broader question on China, if I may. How would you say that the Chinese behavior – this disinformation that you are talking about – what effect do you think that has on a long-term relationship with the U.S.? Do you think it will damage it significantly?

SECRETARY POMPEO: Barbara, thanks. I don't have anything to add on North Korea. As the President said last evening I think it was, we're watching closely what's taking place there. But I don't have anything to add.

As for China, nations that desire to be part of the global landscape have obligations for truthful information – they have obligations to share and be transparent and open. That's our expectation for every country. What I think – I think you were referring to was you called it disinformation. Seeking to transfer responsibility or to deny access to the world so that the world can figure out what's going on – you have to remember, these labs are still open inside of China, these labs that contain complex pathogens that were being studied. It's not just the Wuhan Institute of Virology. There are multiple labs inside of China that are handling these things. It's important that those materials are being handled in a safe and secure way such that there isn't accidental release.

We have an elaborate regime inside the United States to do that. Many countries do it as well. We have lots of regimes where – I'll give you an example in the nuclear context, where the world inspects sites so that we can ensure that there's proper handling. The United States spends a lot of money training others to help them handle nuclear materials in an appropriate way. We have to make sure that the Chinese Government is handling those materials in an appropriate way not only in the Wuhan Institute of Virology but elsewhere. So this is an ongoing obligation that the Chinese Government has as well as an ongoing obligation of the World Health Organization that has responsibility for compliance with the rules.

I hope I didn't bore you with them, but they're important to understand that there are a set of global regulations that the Chinese Communist Party signed up for. These aren't American rules we apply, these are rules that the Chinese Government signed up for, and the World Health Organization has a continuing obligation – not just one from back in December but a continuing obligation to make sure that those rules are being complied with today in a way that protects us not only from the ongoing pandemic but a future one as well.

MS ORTAGUS: Michel.

QUESTION: Thank you so much. Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: -- first, have you delivered the President's warning to Iran directly? And second, do you – are you concerned that the oil price will have an effect on the security and stability of the Gulf states and your partners in the region?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I never comment on communications, internal communications between myself and private – between myself and my counterparts. So I don't have any comment on your first question.

On your second one, the President has been incredibly focused on trying to create a more stable energy market in light of the enormous decrease in demand, right. You've seen crude oil demand fall somewhere between 20 and 35 percent over the past several weeks, and you've seen the price impacts that have resulted from that, right. You had the front futures contract trading for negative \$37 for a few hours a couple days back now. What the President did a couple of weekends ago and the work that he's engaged in today are twofold: one, to do everything we can to ensure that we preserve America's capacity to deliver on its energy resources here; and second, to work to try and create stability in the energy markets so that you get price signals that are consistent with real demand, and that also means getting the global economy cranked back up again. A key element that will have the most significant impact on those price issues, on those supply chain issues in the energy industry is getting the world back going and getting demand back to the levels we had back in October, November, and December of 2019.

Here in the United States we had one of the most robust economies that the United States has ever had. When we get back to those levels and the world gets back to those levels, those governments that depend for a significant amount of their revenue – for their national GDP on oil will be in a better place than they are today. There's real risk. With low prices and low volumes of demand, those countries are really going to face financial challenges, and we've been in conversation with many of them about how we can bridge that gap collectively.

MS ORTAGUS: Rich.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Rich, how are you?

QUESTION: Good, how are you?

SECRETARY POMPEO: I'm good.

QUESTION: Given its failure to notify the WHO in a timely manner, do you think that the Chinese Government owes countries or individuals compensation? And also, just as you'd spoken about the multiple labs within China, what's your assessment of China's handling of these dangerous materials? Do you think that they do a sufficient enough job of it?

SECRETARY POMPEO: So I'm going to leave the accountability piece of this for another day in terms of what we do to assign accountability and how we hold other nations accountable, other than to say is that the rules set – the WHO rules set itself contemplates nations complying with their obligations, and it gives the director general of the WHO enormous authority with respect to nations that do not comply, and we expect every country who signs up for the International Health Regulations and the leadership of the WHO to then enforce them. And so

we're counting on that. We're now counting on that not only retrospectively, but that that continue today.

What's the second question, Rich?

QUESTION: You mentioned multiple labs within China.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Yeah. I'm not going to comment on that. What I will say is it's always easier to know the answer to your question about whether these labs are in compliance not only with the regulations but if they're handling this material in a way that is adequate, safe, and secure, if the world can have access to those places, if they will share that information openly and transparently and in spite – the President said this – we tried to get in to take a look at what was going on early on in this, to come in alongside the World Health Organization early on; it would have been back in January if I remember correctly. We still do not have a sample of the virus nor has the world had access to the facilities or other locations where this virus may have originated inside of Wuhan.

MS ORTAGUS: Said.

QUESTION: Thank you, Morgan. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Sir, a new Israeli Government was formed, a unity government between Mr. Netanyahu and General Gantz, and they vowed to begin annexing parts of the West Bank on the 1st of July. I wonder if you would have a comment on that.

Also on the aid you released recently, you released \$5 million to the Palestinian Authority to fight COVID-19. Are they – they need a lot more. So will there be any more aid in the pipeline? Thank you, sir.

SECRETARY POMPEO: Two good questions. On the first one – on the second one, we are happy to provide that \$5 million of assistance^[1], and we hope that it'll get to the right place. Our concern with having provided assistance, the reason we stopped providing assistance previously was that this – these resources weren't getting to the place they needed to, to the Palestinian people. We hope that this money, this \$5 million will get where it needs to go to provide real assistance to the Palestinian people who, to your point and I agree with, are going to need a lot of help as they move through this. We'll evaluate whether this \$5 million both worked, delivered, and second, if there's more resources that are both either appropriate or can be delivered in a way that actually gets to the Palestinian people.

Your first question was about the election.

QUESTION: The government.

SECRETARY POMPEO: We're happy with the – a new government's formed. A fourth election, we think, wouldn't have been in Israel's best interest, but we'll leave that to them. We think it's not in the world's best interest. We're glad that there is a now fully formed government in Israel.

As for the annexation in the West Bank, the Israelis will ultimately make those decisions. Those are – that's an Israeli decision, and we will work closely with them to share with them our views of this in a private setting.

MS ORTAGUS: I need to get the Secretary to his next meeting, but we still have two special guests to continue this briefing so --

SECRETARY POMPEO: Great. Thank you all. Thanks for being with me. Everybody have a good morning.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. So we're going to have John Barsa first, and then Jim Richardson, and then we'll go right to Q&A again. So, John.

MR BARS: Good morning. Thank you for having us here today. For those of you who I have not yet met, my name is John Barsa. I am the new acting administrator at USAID, and I'm deeply honored to have been chosen for this position. I would like to thank President Trump for the support and confidence he's placed in me with this charge. I look forward to working with him, Vice President Pence, Secretary Pompeo, and other leaders throughout the interagency as we lead one of the finest workforces in the U.S. Government today.

We are here to discuss how the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership and help countries around the world fight the COVID-19 pandemic. With the \$2.7 billion in emergency supplemental funding Congress has provided, USAID is working with the State Department and the CDC to provide assistance that strengthens health systems, meets emergency humanitarian needs, and mitigates the economic impact of the virus's spread.

With the Secretary's announcement today, we have contributed a total of more than \$775 million across more than 100 countries facing the threat of this global pandemic. Here's a little bit more detail for you on the specific pots of money that this announcement encompasses. It includes nearly \$103 million from the Economic Support Fund account, which nongovernmental organizations will use to implement a variety of interventions to support communities and countries. We'll also be committing \$100 million in humanitarian assistance from USAID's International Disaster Assistance Account to help meet urgent, lifesaving needs in crisis-affected areas, and \$667[2] million in migration and refugee assistance to support displaced populations, which remain the most vulnerable populations to this pandemic.

In every corner of the globe, the United States is lending a helping hand to countries that need it the most. Many of these countries are places where we regularly provide assistance. Our expanded presence in other countries demonstrate the extraordinary nature of this crisis.

For example, on April 11th the United States, through USAID, committed critically needed assistance to Italy to mitigate the overwhelming disruption the pandemic has had on the delivery of health care in communities and to help stabilize the country's economic situation. This assistance will help improve Italian citizens' access to essential health care during the current pandemic and support Italy's recovery.

In this latest round of funding, State and USAID will provide COVID-19 assistance to some countries for the first time since the outbreak began. These countries include Algeria, Belize, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Bulgaria, the Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Ecuador, Eswatini, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, Jordan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Montenegro, Morocco, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Lesotho, Liberia, Panama, Namibia, Niger, Romania, Sierra Leone, Turkey, Uganda, the West Bank, and Yemen.

MS ORTAGUS: Well done.

MR BARSA: It was a quick list. Now, did you all memorize it? (Laughter.) As you know, we work through international organizations and NGOs in many of these countries to reach people in need, and as you can see from the list of countries I mentioned, the kind of places where we are responding is, of course, varied. To make sure our assistance is as impactful as possible, the support we provide is tailored to each country's capacity and needs. Our toolkit of support includes investments that improve case management, disease surveillance, and public health screening. It strengthens infection prevention and control of medical facilities, bolsters laboratory capacity, scale of communications campaigns to raise awareness, expand access to water and sanitation, and more.

America remains the leader in global health and humanitarian assistance. Through unmatched generosity, the American people have saved countless lives, protected those people who are most vulnerable to disease, built health infrastructure, and promoted the stability of communities and nations. America has always led the world through times of strife, turmoil, and uncertainty, and this pandemic is no different.

Lastly, I want to highlight President Trump, Vice President Pence, and Secretary Pompeo for their extraordinary leadership on the world stage throughout this crisis. This all-star team and the rest of the Trump administration is working around the clock to stem the spread of virus at home and abroad, and they deserve our recognition. So thank you very much.

MS ORTAGUS: Jim.

MR RICHARDSON: Thank you, Morgan. I'm Jim Richardson, and I'm the director of foreign assistance here at the Department of State. First of all, I want to acknowledge the leadership, as John just did, of the President and the Vice President and of the Secretary, and really our talented teams both at State and USAID around the world, as we work together to defeat COVID-19. To put it simply, pandemics like COVID-19 do not respect national borders, and so that our response, our USG response, can't either.

Through decades of U.S. global leadership in health and humanitarian assistance, we know that the smart and strategic investments are critical to our primary mission of maintaining the health and safety of the American people. We can and must actually fight the pandemic both here and overseas. It's not a zero-sum game; it actually builds on each other.

Through the American people's generosity, the State Department of the United States continues to demonstrate global leadership in the face of this pandemic. In fact – this fact is underscored by what the Secretary just announced of an additional \$270 million for humanitarian and economic security assistance, bringing our total to 775 million spread over 100 countries worldwide, nearly all of them John just mentioned. So we'll implement this funding around – through a strategic, all-of-America approach to ensure that this world is safe from infectious diseases, both today and also in the future.

When it comes to our investments thus far, let me address a couple hot-button topics that I'm sure you will ask me about. First of all, let's talk about Italy. We've provided \$50 million in economic support to Italy, one of our closest allies and friends who has been at the forefront of the fight against COVID. These funds will help support the recovery of the Italian economy, they – and support international organizations and NGOs, including many faith-based organizations, many of which are already on the ground saving lives.

Second, the United States is also providing \$5 million to the Palestinian hospitals in the West Bank and Gaza to battle the pandemic. The United States welcomes the ongoing cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to address the COVID-19 crisis and Israel's facilitation of goods and equipment to the West Bank and Gaza in support of this effort.

Third, I want to talk about the Northern Triangle – El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras. We're providing \$7 million to help address this outbreak. This comes on top of what the President and the Secretary have announced of \$258 million in targeted foreign assistance for these three – for these three countries. These funds will benefit both the United States and our important allies. By targeting economic assistance to regions with high outflow migration, we can help keep people at their – at home while supporting and deterring illegal immigration to the United States.

As you're aware, well aware, the United States – or last week the President announced that we are pausing for the next 60 to 90 days funding for the World Health Organization while we examine the failures to the response. First and foremost, this pause will not impact our commitment to fight COVID around the world. We are focused on outcomes, and as such we are working with other partners around the world, including community and faith-based organizations, to get the job done.

To put it in perspective, as the Secretary, I believe, mentioned, the WHO only receives about 4 percent of U.S. global assistance – global health assistance every year. There are plenty of amazing and highly qualified organizations implementing these programs around the world, and to be honest, no organization – or country for that matter – is owed a single nickel from the American people. We provide assistance out of generosity and U.S. national interest. At the very least, the American people should demand that every organization we fund – every NGO, every contractor, and every multilateral – is transparent, accountable, and results-oriented, and that's what this President's review will do.

To the – at the end of the day this should be about saving lives, not about saving a bureaucracy. For more than half a century, the United States has been the largest contributor to global health

security. We have built the foundations upon which the global health system is based, contributing over \$140 billion in this century alone.

In the face of COVID-19, our global leadership will continue and is once again underscored by what the Secretary has announced. And with that, we'll be available for questions.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay. Let's – you haven't asked one yet, right? Okay, go ahead. And CBS, if you have one, I think you, too, haven't gone yet, right? Okay.

QUESTION: Okay, so I don't know who this goes to, but I'll throw the question out and you guys can decide. So with regard to the pause on the World Health Organization funding, what will determine if they get that funding or not, and who is actually leading the review of that funding right now?

MR RICHARDSON: Go ahead, John.

MR BARSA: In terms of what the President said – so it's a 60- to 90-day pause. I think there are multiple elements within government who will be looking at the review. I'm not going to – we have nothing to announce today in terms of the internal review processes, how it's going to work out. Know that others who interact with World Health Organization are contributing to the review process.

QUESTION: Okay, but what is the review looking for? What does the World Health Organization have to do in order to secure its funding?

MR BARSA: As the President stated, and the Secretary stated this morning, there's numerous questions in terms of the management of the World Health Organization, how they have been operating and holding member states accountable in their actions. So the review is going to be all-encompassing, getting to all manners of management and operation questions.

QUESTION: And one thing that the Secretary said was that the World Health Organization has not highlighted the fact that the CCP didn't reveal what it knew about the coronavirus pandemic when it knew it. If the WHO does that, is that something that you guys are looking for?

MR BARSA: I'm not going to comment on any interim findings or discussions. I just – I'll have to say we'll have to wait till the final review is done.

MS ORTAGUS: You want to add anything?

MR RICHARDSON: Nope, sounds good.

MS ORTAGUS: No? Okay. CBS.

QUESTION: I had a question about the cooperation with vaccine development.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay.

QUESTION: Okay.

MR RICHARDSON: It's probably --

MR BARSA: Vaccine development. Go on.

MS ORTAGUS: Go ahead, ask your question.

QUESTION: Considering that several countries are working on a vaccination, and given that the funding has been halted to WHO, does that mean this will affect at all cooperation between WHO countries on sharing information about a vaccine, depending on who comes up with one first? Or will the U.S. step in to help facilitate cooperation on a vaccination?

MR BARSA: Okay. Couple things to think about. First, let's talk a little bit about scale. As the Secretary and Jim mentioned, over the last two decades the United States has contributed over \$140 billion dollars in health work. In 2018, the last year that I actually have actual figures, it needs to be noted that only 4 percent of U.S. funds went to the World Health Organization. Ninety-six percent of our funds went to other organizations. So during this pause, what USAID and other entities are doing -- we're looking for alternate partners to carry out the important work. So be it vaccines, polio, or any number of health issues, by no means are we pausing our efforts to eradicate polio or come up with vaccines. We're going with existing programs outside of the World Health Organization, and we're looking for different partners.

MS ORTAGUS: Robin.

QUESTION: Just some clarification on that. So first of all, you are -- I was wondering if there might be a carveout for certain WHO programs like polio, but you're saying no, there isn't, you're going to find somebody else to do the polio -- or to do those programs that you're committed to?

And then I just have a few other questions as well, if -- do you want to answer that one first?

MR BARSA: Okay, so I'll start with that one. So even before the onset of this pandemic, USAID was working, piloting a new partnership initiative to look for other regional community-based partners outside of the normal menu of people we work with. I look forward to next week expanding the new partnership initiative in a more formal manner, but what we're doing right now is we're looking for different partners right now in terms of -- working polio or any number of health issues, are there other entities, local community-based entities, faith-based organizations, are there other groups that can continue on this work. So part of the assessment that is taking place during this 60-to-90-day pause is to evaluate the availability of new partners to carry out this work.

So know that the questions you ask in terms of are there other partners for whatever program of interest, that's part of the assessment. So we're evaluating that now. I have people in our missions and our Global Health Bureau. We're looking for new partners right now. It's good government.

QUESTION: And just to --

MS ORTAGUS: I want to get to everybody, (inaudible).

QUESTION: Just a quick -- one quick follow-up.

MS ORTAGUS: Okay, one more (inaudible).

QUESTION: There's a fair bit of U.S. expertise at the WHO, so you've had health experts there -- you still have health experts there. Is that cooperation going to be cut off as well? Are you sort of cutting off the WHO not just in terms of funds, but also in coordination and cooperation?

MR BARSA: So part of your question is getting at to the end point of an assessment. We cannot tell you what decision is going to be made at the end of the assessment. During this assessment that the President announced, 60 to 90 days, we're going to look at all aspects of operations in World Health Organizations. So some of the questions you pose are the questions we ourselves are going to be asking in terms of capabilities during this pause period.

MS ORTAGUS: (Inaudible.)

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just -- so the way I would say it is that the pause is about new decisions to provide assistance through the WHO. There is a lot of existing contracts that we've already essentially sent the check to pay for individuals, and we're not asking for refunds at this point. In terms of exemptions or those types of things, the President said we're pausing all assistance for 60 to 90 days. If the President has a subsequent announcement, we'll leave that to him to make that about target assistance.

MS ORTAGUS: Nick, go ahead.

QUESTION: So on the partners, just to be clear, as you examine the partners, are you taking the money that would have been going to the WHO over the next two to three months and plan to transfer them, transfer that funds to partners? Or are you withholding the money so that you possibly could still give it to the WHO depending on reforms? And if I could zoom in on IHRs, let me ask -- let me have you answer that first and then we --

MR BARSA: Okay. So as the Secretary stated, in the aggregate, we have committed over \$775 million just on the pandemic alone. So when we're looking for new partners, we're looking for partners who can execute the funds in these countries for their specific needs. So it can't be a cookie cutter approach. So a solution for a challenge in one country is not the same as a solution in another country. So we're looking at ways to address the challenges individually with the funds that are being announced.

QUESTION: Right, but does that mean that the money that would have gone to the WHO will instead go to partners? Or is the money for the WHO being held back and possibly could still go to the WHO in the future?

MR BARSA: It – again, it's a pause in new funding. As Director Richardson announced, money that has been given to WHO already is not being taken back, so some of those contracts and existing work is continuing.

QUESTION: Okay. And then on the international --

MS ORTAGUS: Do you have anything to – (inaudible).

MR RICHARDSON: Yeah, let me just – yeah, so at the end of the day, this pandemic can't wait for the review. So our assistance to countries around the world is going to move forward. We will absolutely use the best – every time that we make a decision to provide assistance to any country around the world, we have to make a choice: Do we use a multilateral organization? Do we use an NGO? Do we use a faith-based organization? Do we use a contractor? And that's really what the expertise of USAID does, to – looks at the whole what – how are we going to get the best results in this circumstance.

And so for every contract or every dollar flowing today, we're just taking WHO off the table and we're going to provide that assistance to these other organizations in order to get the job done. Our system simply can't wait. That said, we're going to have a lot of global health resources in response to this pandemic over the coming years. Congress has already provided an additional \$2 billion, and so we'll look forward to continuing to make more announcements about funding over the next several months.

QUESTION: And then quickly on the IHRs, on the International Health Regulations, as I understand them, there is no real enforcement mechanism. I know the Secretary talked specifically about the leadership being able to enforce them, but is one of the reforms that you're asking for to increase the enforcement mechanism, or do you believe that enforcement mechanism is already there, and therefore this is a true failure not of regulation, but of the leadership?

MR BARSA: Well, again, we'll have to get back to you with the details on that. Again, so we're – I'm not going to prejudge the outcome of any assessment.

MS ORTAGUS: Said, go ahead.

QUESTION: A quick question.

MS ORTAGUS: Sure.

QUESTION: Is the money dispensed to the West Bank and to the hospitals – does it go directly there? Because I think USAID is not operating in the West Bank anymore.

MR RICHARDSON: No, so we mostly – we use implementing partners around the world. As I said, we use contractors, NGOs, multilateral organizations to actually be our hands and feet in

most places around the world. So we'll be announcing the actual implementing partner here in the next couple days.

MS ORTAGUS: Anybody else? Rich?

QUESTION: Just following up on what the Secretary had to say about the – and a bit what Nick was talking about – the director general of WHO has an enormous power available to him to enforce those who violate regulations. What is available to him?

MR BARSÁ: Well, as the Secretary stated, there are certain mechanisms which oblige member-states to comply with agreements beforehand. So part of our review is to see what authorities did WHO leadership have.

Did they execute the authorities and keep compliance? So the question you're asking gets exactly to the heart of what our review – is the management of the World Health Organization running it the way it should be run?

MS ORTAGUS: And just to follow up on both of your and Nick questions, I think the best thing for us to do is to get a briefing probably with Ambassador Bremberg or someone from IO, so we'll get that – I know you were wanting that, Nick, so we'll go ahead and get that scheduled, and I think we could through a little bit more detail through Andrew or through IO. Okay?

QUESTION: Can I ask John one more question?

MS ORTAGUS: Sure. Then we've got to – I just blew off my next meeting, so go ahead.

QUESTION: So – thank you. So you talk about a lot more work that USAID is going to have to do to identify new partners. So how – do you have the capacity to do that? Has USAID had to hire new people? What does your team look like?

MR BARSÁ: No, again, so before the onset of the pandemic, we already knew good government was to diversify the base of implementing partners that we're working with. So under the leadership of Mark Green, who was administrator at the time, we started a pilot program called the New Partnership Initiative. So we started out in 14 missions. So we already knew the good government solution was to not depend on just a few implementers and partners, so what we are doing is that we've been already working with our workforce.

We've gotten to pilot – the pilot program has been very successful, so next week I'll be signing an order expanding that pilot to all of our missions worldwide. This is something that was going to occur regardless of the pandemic.

So with the pandemic coming on here, we're already starting to work with new partners. That does not necessitate new contracting staff either in DC or the missions, but what we've been doing is providing guidance to our contracting staff to look and consider other partners. Are there other NGOs, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations which are localized in the country that have more permanence? So this was going to go on regardless of the implementing – regardless of the onset of the pandemic, so we're just fortunate that we've

already been thinking along these lines and are able to execute now without any additional investment in staff or personnel.

MS ORTAGUS: Thanks so much, guys. Don't forget about the 1:00 p.m. with Brownlee, the repatriation briefing.

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Office of the Spokesperson

For Immediate Release

ON-THE-RECORD-BRIEFING

Dr. William Walters, Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Operations, Bureau of Medical Services, and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Ian Brownlee, Bureau of Consular Affairs, on COVID-19: Updates on Health Impact and Assistance for American Citizens Abroad

Via Teleconference

April 22, 2020

MR BROWN: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to what I believe is our 10th briefing on the State Department's historic effort to bring Americans home from every corner of the globe during the COVID-19 pandemic. I have two subject matter experts joining us for this on-the-record briefing, and you've all become quite familiar with them both: Ian Brownlee, our principal deputy assistant secretary from the Bureau of Consular Affairs; and Dr. William Walters, deputy chief medical officer for operations from the Bureau of Medical Services. Dr. Walters will begin with opening remarks and turn it over to PDAS Brownlee. After that we'll take a few questions. A reminder that this briefing is embargoed until the end of the call.

Dr. Walters, please, go ahead.

DR WALTERS: Yeah, thanks, and good afternoon, everybody. Daily statistics: our overseas current cases are 169. I'm happy to say that our recovered cases are at 152, and I would anticipate that those two lines will cross probably in the next couple of days where we have more recovered cases than current cases, and that's a good-news story for everybody and a testament to the countermeasures that have been put in place in each of our embassies around the world. We still have no trends to show employee-to-employee transmission either domestically or overseas. Our current cases domestically are 79. Our current fatalities are unchanged, so very happy to see that. And our current medevac numbers are unchanged as well.

And so overall we have a very healthy workforce overseas that are continuing to deliver on the Secretary's promise. Back to Ian.

MR BROWNLEE: Thank you very much, Will. Hello to my friends in the Fourth Estate. Hello, it's good to be back here with all of you.

The Department of State has coordinated the repatriation of 65,000 U.S. citizens and family members from 122 countries on 687 flights so far.

I'd like to focus today on our efforts in India and Pakistan. We are still tracking significant numbers of U.S. citizens requesting repatriation assistance. In India, we've already coordinated the repatriation of more than 4,000 U.S. citizens. We have four more flights scheduled in the coming days. Getting people to New Delhi and Mumbai, the outbound hubs for those two – for those flights, is no small feat in the midst of a nationwide lockdown, but Mission India team is up to this challenge. They are actively coordinating with passengers arriving on feeder flights and buses from all across this huge country.

In Pakistan --

QUESTION: I can't hear you.

MR BROWNLEE: -- the department has helped bring home more than 1,000 U.S. citizens with six more flights planned. The Pakistani Government's strict lockdown on internal travel has posed significant challenges for us. All internal domestic flights are grounded, and all ground transportation is banned for vehicles holding more than three people. Our team in Pakistan is making every effort to help people get to Islamabad and Karachi to board our repatriation flights, and will continue to do so.

We strongly encourage U.S. citizens in both India and Pakistan and elsewhere to register at step.state.gov and also to monitor our embassy websites carefully for the latest information on flights. Consular sections around the world are consistently sending out detailed messages about the status of repatriation flights and local health conditions via STEP as well as through our embassy websites and social media accounts.

Communicating safety and security information to U.S. citizens overseas is always a top priority for the Department of State, and especially so during this difficult time. We are tracking many cases of U.S. citizens overseas who are not necessarily close to a capital or other major city, and we're making every effort to help people get to where they can take advantage of our repatriation flights, of course local travel conditions permitting.

For example, in the Philippines we have coordinated sweeper flights to collect U.S. citizens from Cebu, Davao, and Iloilo and get them to Manila to fly home. In Cabo Verde, the team is working to arrange a charter repatriation flight that will collect U.S. citizens from several island locations before an onward connection to Boston. We are working hard and creatively to help those who have come forward to request our assistance, but as I've said on multiple occasions, these flights will not go on forever.

And I think with that, I look forward to your questions. Out.

MR BROWN: All right. If you're on a speaker line and you're not speaking, please mute your line. And if you want to get into the queue, of course, press 1 and 0. I think we have one person in the queue right now. Let's go ahead and open the line of Lara Jakes.

QUESTION: Good afternoon, everyone. I wonder if both of you can address different parts of this. Ian, for example, can you say how many American citizens who have registered through STEP are still waiting for some assistance, or do you have any kind of sense of how many thousands of Americans are still hoping to get on some kind of repatriation flight?

And Doc Walters, I wanted to see if you could talk a little bit about risks of people trying to take commercial flights now. I know that in some places the State Department is no longer offering chartered flights and the urging is to get on commercial flights if they want to come home. But I wonder if we have reached a point where there are no good options for coming home, if people are now running the risk of catching the coronavirus if they go through commercial flights or any other kind of commercial transport where they could be in contact with people who have not been in self-isolation. Thanks.

MR BROWNLEE: Lara, yeah, we're tracking – I'm always kind of reluctant to give this number out, but we're tracking something like 17,000 people who have expressed some degree of interest in maybe getting our help, and this – these – there's a range of people out there, which is why the number is not all that meaningful, and some of these are people who say, "Yup, I'm waiting at the airport; you give me a call and I'll show up tomorrow and get on a flight."

There are others who have been registered by, for example, their children in the United States saying, "My aging parents are in country X," Peru or wherever, "and they should be getting out of there," and in fact those aging parents have no particular interest or desire to leave.

So it's this big – a big range. The number is still up in the multiple thousands, though. Over.

DR WALTERS: And hey, it's Dr. Walters. I – you bring up a great question, and that is – and it's really been the question since, like, February: Is it safer to stay where I am or to make my way back to the United States if I am an American expatriate, I'm an American citizen that finds themselves them in – pick a place, Bujumbura. It's a tough – it's a tough calculus for anybody to sort through and it's an individual decision. On the one hand, if you get on a repatriation flight, you are going to be well inside social distancing distances for a short period of time, where you can come back to the United States where you are a citizen and you have access to health care and you have access to an infrastructure that is still intact; or you can stay where you are, understanding that if you're in a place where the infrastructure wasn't good to begin with, that when the peak – when that steep uphill climb starts and when it gets to peak, you will be an American citizen in a foreign country that didn't have great infrastructure to begin with, and now you have less rights and less access to less infrastructure.

I think that is an individual decision that people have to make, but they need to make it very clear-eyed, understanding that the State Department remains committed to taking care of American citizens wherever they are, but taking care of them doesn't necessarily mean a repatriation flight in a timeframe where it's needed. And so we've been keeping up as well as we could, and Africa is a great example, where the vast majority of international airports and the vast majority of international airspace has been closed down, and we've still been working through those problem sets. But if you look at the epidemiology curves for Africa right now, they're only about to start the uphill climb. And so whatever problems we've had in the past

getting repatriation flights in and out of Africa and many other places in the Southern Hemisphere are only going to get worse.

And so to Ian's point over the last many calls, if you're going to make a decision – if you're an American citizen and you find yourself overseas and you feel the earth quake, don't continue to stand on the beach waiting for the tsunami. The tsunami will come. And they still have time to make decisions – make decisions regarding repatriation flights, make decisions based on international commercial flights. Really, there is no difference in the distance between the two seats, and quite frankly, there isn't a whole lot of distance with regard to self-isolation and any assurance that the person sitting next to you has been doing the right thing.

That's not the question. The question is: Are you safer in the United States as an American citizen than you are overseas? I hope that answers your question.

MR BROWN: Okay. For our second question let's go to the line of Matt Lee.

QUESTION: Hi there. Thanks again. I can't remember exactly when this was. Maybe it was last week, maybe it was a month ago, but time runs together. But you guys had talked, or at least one of you had talked about the situation in Brazil, and your concern that there were a huge number of Americans – like more than – significantly more than there were in Peru or ended up being in Peru – who are in Brazil and who are at risk if they – and I'm just wondering if anything more has come of those concerns. Thank you.

MR BROWNLEE: Hey, Matt, Ian here. Yeah, I was probably the one who mentioned that. There's a very large expat population in Brazil. Who knows how many – a couple hundred thousand or so. And there are still commercial flights from Brazil to the United States. There are fewer than there were just a couple of weeks ago, but there are still something on the order of nine or so flights a week between major Brazilian cities and the United States. And so we're strongly encouraging people to focus on where they are, should they stay there, should they go through that analysis that Will just went through and decide, "Am I going to stay here or am I going to head back to the United States?"

Take advantage of those commercial options while they exist. Over.

MR BROWN: Okay, for our next question can we go to the line of Courtney McBride.

QUESTION: Thanks. Do you have a breakdown of the number of Americans who traveled commercially versus on K Fund flights and perhaps the number who availed themselves of the repatriation loans? And then beyond India and Pakistan, and Matt just asked about Brazil, are there other countries with large numbers of Americans who have contacted the department seeking a return?

MR BROWNLEE: Hey, Courtney. Ian here. So I got three questions, right? Number of repat loans, other large countries. I'm sorry, what was the first one?

QUESTION: Yes, and just the commercial versus K Fund flight breakdown, if you have it.

MR BROWNLEE: Oh, commercial v K Fund. Really broadly speaking – and it's not just commercial v K Fund – it will be sort of commercial v USG-funded, because Doc Walters' MED flights have brought home a very large number of people. So – and then we also had some come in on DOD Space-A, et cetera. So – but broadly speaking, if you go appropriated funds versus commercial repat, it's something like 60, 65 to 35 to 40 percent, 35-40 being the commercial rescue flights.

The number of repat loans overall, I don't have that. I do know that we've been doing a lot of them in Brazil – I'm sorry, Brazil – Peru, and I've got a figure here that last week we did 59 in Peru alone. I don't have the number for – the worldwide number from the beginning of this crisis.

And then in terms of other large populations, really – the really heavy populations where we are pulling people out now, we're identifying people, are those that I identified earlier: Pakistan, India. The other populations are smaller. They may accumulate to a fairly large number. Bear with me a second. I'm going to pull up a data point here to give to you. Bear with me just a moment.

Yeah. So looking across the entire world, we're looking, we're tracking – the greatest number are still in South Central Asia, India, Pakistan. And the vast bulk of those are in India; it's like 6,000 or so. Western Hemisphere, we're tracking somewhere in the 4,000 range. Africa comes next with about 3,000.

And after that, it goes down to – I mean, it goes down to much smaller numbers in the rest of the world. So really, the big one – I'm rambling on – the big one is India. Over.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR BROWN: Okay. For the next question, let's hear from Jessica Donati.

QUESTION: Hi, thank you. I – this is just a continuation from Courtney's question. I'm wondering, when you give us the figure of 65,000 Americans that were aided by the State Department to come home, do you have a number for the number of people that were on special – specially organized State Department flights and those that simply got onto commercial flights that became available?

MR BROWNLEE: Well, it's that percentage breakdown I just gave. I'm not very good at math. I can't do the math precisely and I – it's that range, that percentage breakdown. Somewhere in the high 30s, 40 percent are on commercial flights where the State Department and our embassies overseas put in a heavy lift in pressing the local government, wherever that is, to permit these flights to come in.

So a good example would be Peru, where we've had these four Eastern Airlines flights in the past week or so. That took quite a lot of work on the part of the embassy to get permission from the Government of Peru for those flights to take place. Something similar is – there's an outfit down there called Solange. We've not been as heavily engaged on behalf of Solange, but we have been involved there.

Something similar takes place in, for example, the Bay Islands of Honduras, big tourist destination. There are a lot of U.S. citizen tourists on the island of Roatan, and the embassy in Tegucigalpa had to play quite a heavy role in getting permission for U.S. commercial flights to go into Roatan airport and bring those folks home. Over.

MR BROWN: Okay. Christina Ruffini, next question.

QUESTION: Hey, guys. Ian, I'm wondering if you can address the President's announcement about the 60-day immigration freeze and what that means for consular officers of the State Department, visas already in progress, things like that. He also said there would be an easier way for those farm workers to come into the country. Are there any changes in the work to how you're processing H-2A seasonal worker visas or any changes to that program? Thank you.

MR BROWNLEE: Well, Christina, I have been, I think, a hundred percent involved in repats ever since this whole thing started. So I think what I can say about two points there – and I've said this before – is that we have substantially ended routine visa operations around the world in response to the crisis, and we've – folks have been coming home on authorized or ordered departure, or they've been pivoting to do other work, specifically, in many cases, American citizen services. So as I say, routine visa services have been substantially terminated – suspended.

With regard to H-2As, we recognize that these H-2A workers are a priority for the maintenance of the U.S. food supply, and so our posts around the world, and particularly in Mexico and Central America where the vast majority of the H-2As come from, are prioritizing H-2As. Other than that, I'm – I can only speak about repatriations. Over.

MR BROWN: Okay. Next question let's go to Kylie Atwood.

QUESTION: Hello, thank you. Two questions – I may have missed this off the top, but how many Americans are you still tracking that are asking for assistance to come back? And do you have a percentage of the State Department workforce internationally that has come back to the U.S.? Thank you.

MR BROWNLEE: Hey, Kylie, Ian here. As I said earlier, we're tracking a number of around 17,000 who have expressed some degree of interest in maybe being repatriated. As I said, these range from people who are eagerly waiting with their bags packed and would hop on the next air – next flight out, to folks who maybe they want to be on a list, to folks who are on the list because their kids put them on there. So that number of about 17,000 is – that's not 17,000 people lining up at airports around the world waiting to get onboard. The number of people who are seeking immediate assistance is much, much smaller, and that's one of our challenges at the moment is determining exactly what the real, comma, current demand is. Over. And I'll defer to Will on the percentage question.

DR WALTERS: Yeah, I don't happen to have the percentage of the folks that have rotated back. We'd have to take that.

MR BROWN: Okay. Looks like the last question we have in the queue is from Humeyra.

QUESTION: Thank you very much. Just to follow up on Christina's question, Ian, I understand you said the consular, like, visa services have been reduced substantially, but you also mentioned that the process was still continuing for some people in the pipeline, say, like medical professionals who have secured a job in the U.S. Could you talk a little bit about what happens to them, the people who had put their applications already in and may be, like, waiting for an appointment or, like, waiting for paperwork? What happens to those people in the pipeline? Thank you.

MR BROWNLEE: Humeyra, I'm sorry, I am going to have to take that question. This is something that has come up in the past very short while, and I have been entirely focused on repatriation, so I'm sorry I'm not in a position to answer that question. Over.

MR BROWN: Okay. Looks like we have one more. If we could, again, try to keep this on repatriation, and go to the line of Carol Morello.

QUESTION: Hi, thanks for doing that. Can you hear me?

MR BROWN: Sure can.

MR BROWNLEE: We hear you.

QUESTION: Great. You've been saying for quite some time now that these flights will not last forever, but you've also said they're winding down. So while I realize you can't foresee what various countries will do in terms of closing down their airspace, could you give a rough estimate? How much longer do you think at least the U.S. Government-paid-for flights will continue? Are we talking days? Will it go into next month? Do you – can you give a rough idea? What is your sense of how much longer you will continue with this work? Thank you.

MR BROWNLEE: Thank you, Carol. This really – it's hard to say on a worldwide – or better said, there is no single worldwide answer to that question. What we have found in a number of places – and I mentioned Honduras earlier, Guatemala, for example, is another case where intermittent commercial options are now available and relatively frequent. They're not daily, there aren't multiple flights a day, but there are multiple flights a week out of those places. We're looking – we're hoping to see a similar sort of rhythm out of Peru soon. Places like India are more challenging at the moment. Pakistan I mentioned is – both of those places – there is a complete lockdown on internal movement, and there are also relatively large U.S. citizen populations. So we have multiple authorized K Fund charter flights out into the future. It really is going to be very much a country by country, case-specific answer to your question. Are we going to get into May? I – yes, we are. Are we going to get deep into May? That question I cannot answer at this point. Over.

MR BROWN: Okay, that looks like it was our last question, so thank you to our briefers once again for joining us and for everybody who dialed in. That concludes the call and the contents of the call are – the embargo is lifted. All right, thanks.

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WHITE HOUSE - FACT SHEETS

President Donald J. Trump Is Honoring His Commitment to Protect American Workers by Temporarily Pausing Immigration

Issued on: April 22, 2020

By pausing immigration, we'll help put unemployed Americans first in line for jobs as America reopens. So important. It would be wrong and unjust for Americans laid off by the virus to be replaced with new immigrant labor flown in from abroad.

- *President Donald J. Trump*

PROTECTING AMERICAN WORKERS: President Donald J. Trump is taking action to temporarily pause immigration and protect American workers as we confront the coronavirus.

- President Trump is suspending new immigrant visas to put American communities and workers first as we move toward safely reopening the economy.
- President Trump has a duty to ensure we help Americans regain their jobs and livelihoods.
- This is a temporary pause demanded by the crisis we are facing as a Nation.
 - The pause will be in effect for 60 days, and the Administration will continue to monitor the labor market to amend or extend the proclamation if needed.
 - There will be exemptions for medical and other essential workers to combat the outbreak, spouses and minor children of American citizens, and certain other aliens.
- President Trump is also asking his Administration to review guest worker programs to assess whether additional measures should be taken to protect American workers.

HELPING AMERICANS RECOVER: President Trump's efforts will ensure we continue to put American workers first as we begin to reopen our economy.

- American workers have been hurt through no fault of their own due to the coronavirus.
- It would be unfair to allow Americans out of work due to the coronavirus to be replaced by new immigrant labor brought into the United States.
- Mass migration of low-skilled labor into the United States disproportionately harms historically disadvantaged Americans.
- African Americans and other minorities, Americans without a college degree, and others are especially harmed by an influx of foreign labor.

BACKED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE: The American people strongly support common sense efforts to restrict immigration as we confront the coronavirus.

- Recent polling shows Americans strongly stand behind restricting immigration into the country during this crisis.
 - Nearly 80% of those polled said they favor a temporary pause on immigration into the United States, according to a recent USA Today/Ipsos poll.
 - As we face the challenges posed by coronavirus, a recent Pew Research Center poll found that 81% of Americans see mass immigration as a threat.
 - A recent Scott Rasmussen survey found that 70% of those polled agreed that the Government should place a temporary ban on foreign entry into the United States.
- Even Democrats and liberal pundits used to warn against mass migration and advocate for protections for American workers.
 - Sen. Bernie Sanders in 2015: “You think we should open the borders and bring in a lot of low-wage workers, or do you think maybe we should try to get jobs for those [American] kids?”
 - Paul Krugman has said “Immigration reduces the wages of domestic workers who compete with immigrants. That’s just supply and demand.”
 - Then-Sen. Barack Obama warned that mass migration “threatens to depress further the wages of blue-collar Americans and put strains on an already overburdened safety net.”

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WHITE HOUSE - PROCLAMATIONS

Proclamation Suspending Entry of Immigrants Who Present Risk to the U.S. Labor Market During the Economic Recovery Following the COVID-19 Outbreak

Issued on: April 22, 2020

The 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) has significantly disrupted the livelihoods of Americans. In Proclamation 9994 of March 13, 2020 (Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak), I declared that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constituted a national emergency, beginning March 1, 2020. Since then, the American people have united behind a policy of mitigation strategies, including social distancing, to flatten the curve of infections and reduce the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This needed behavioral shift has taken a toll on the United States economy, with national unemployment claims reaching historic levels. In the days between the national emergency declaration and April 11, 2020, more than 22 million Americans have filed for unemployment.

In the administration of our Nation's immigration system, we must be mindful of the impact of foreign workers on the United States labor market, particularly in an environment of high domestic unemployment and depressed demand for labor. We must also conserve critical State Department resources so that consular officers may continue to provide services to United States citizens abroad. Even with their ranks diminished by staffing disruptions caused by the pandemic, consular officers continue to provide assistance to United States citizens, including through the ongoing evacuation of many Americans stranded overseas.

I have determined that, without intervention, the United States faces a potentially protracted economic recovery with persistently high unemployment if labor supply outpaces labor demand. Excess labor supply affects all workers and potential workers, but it is particularly harmful to workers at the margin between employment and unemployment, who are typically "last in" during an economic expansion and "first out" during an economic contraction. In recent years, these workers have been disproportionately represented by historically disadvantaged groups, including African Americans and other minorities, those without a college degree, and the disabled. These are the workers who, at the margin between employment and unemployment, are likely to bear the burden of excess labor supply disproportionately.

Furthermore, lawful permanent residents, once admitted, are granted "open-market" employment authorization documents, allowing them immediate eligibility to compete for almost any job, in any sector of the economy. There is no way to protect already disadvantaged and unemployed Americans from the threat of competition for scarce jobs from new lawful permanent residents by directing those new residents to particular economic sectors with a demonstrated need not met by the existing labor supply. Existing immigrant visa processing protections are inadequate for recovery from the COVID-19 outbreak. The vast majority of immigrant visa categories do not

require employers to account for displacement of United States workers. While some employment-based visas contain a labor certification requirement, because visa issuance happens substantially after the certification is completed, the labor certification process cannot adequately capture the status of the labor market today. Moreover, introducing additional permanent residents when our healthcare resources are limited puts strain on the finite limits of our healthcare system at a time when we need to prioritize Americans and the existing immigrant population. In light of the above, I have determined that the entry, during the next 60 days, of certain aliens as immigrants would be detrimental to the interests of the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including sections 212(f) and 215(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1182(f) and 1185(a), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, hereby find that the entry into the United States of persons described in section 1 of this proclamation would, except as provided for in section 2 of this proclamation, be detrimental to the interests of the United States, and that their entry should be subject to certain restrictions, limitations, and exceptions. I therefore hereby proclaim the following:

Section 1. Suspension and Limitation on Entry. The entry into the United States of aliens as immigrants is hereby suspended and limited subject to section 2 of this proclamation.

Sec. 2. Scope of Suspension and Limitation on Entry.

(a) The suspension and limitation on entry pursuant to section 1 of this proclamation shall apply only to aliens who:

- (i) are outside the United States on the effective date of this proclamation;
- (ii) do not have an immigrant visa that is valid on the effective date of this proclamation; and
- (iii) do not have an official travel document other than a visa (such as a transportation letter, an appropriate boarding foil, or an advance parole document) that is valid on the effective date of this proclamation or issued on any date thereafter that permits him or her to travel to the United States and seek entry or admission.

(b) The suspension and limitation on entry pursuant to section 1 of this proclamation shall not apply to:

- (i) any lawful permanent resident of the United States;
- (ii) any alien seeking to enter the United States on an immigrant visa as a physician, nurse, or other healthcare professional; to perform medical research or other research intended to combat the spread of COVID-19; or to perform work essential to combating, recovering from, or otherwise alleviating the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak, as determined by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or their

respective designees; and any spouse and unmarried children under 21 years old of any such alien who are accompanying or following to join the alien;

(iii) any alien applying for a visa to enter the United States pursuant to the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program;

(iv) any alien who is the spouse of a United States citizen;

(v) any alien who is under 21 years old and is the child of a United States citizen, or who is a prospective adoptee seeking to enter the United States pursuant to the IR-4 or IH-4 visa classifications;

(vi) any alien whose entry would further important United States law enforcement objectives, as determined by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or their respective designees, based on a recommendation of the Attorney General or his designee;

(vii) any member of the United States Armed Forces and any spouse and children of a member of the United States Armed Forces;

(viii) any alien seeking to enter the United States pursuant to a Special Immigrant Visa in the SI or SQ classification, subject to such conditions as the Secretary of State may impose, and any spouse and children of any such individual; or

(ix) any alien whose entry would be in the national interest, as determined by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Homeland Security, or their respective designees.

Sec. 3. Implementation and Enforcement.

(a) The consular officer shall determine, in his or her discretion, whether an immigrant has established his or her eligibility for an exception in section 2(b) of this proclamation. The Secretary of State shall implement this proclamation as it applies to visas pursuant to such procedures as the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, may establish in the Secretary of State's discretion. The Secretary of Homeland Security shall implement this proclamation as it applies to the entry of aliens pursuant to such procedures as the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, may establish in the Secretary of Homeland Security's discretion.

(b) An alien who circumvents the application of this proclamation through fraud, willful misrepresentation of a material fact, or illegal entry shall be a priority for removal by the Department of Homeland Security.

(c) Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to limit the ability of an individual to seek asylum, refugee status, withholding of removal, or protection under the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, consistent with the laws of the United States.

Sec. 4. Termination. This proclamation shall expire 60 days from its effective date and may be continued as necessary. Whenever appropriate, but no later than 50 days from the effective date of this proclamation, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Labor, recommend whether I should continue or modify this proclamation.

Sec. 5. Effective Date. This proclamation is effective at 11:59 p.m. eastern daylight time on April 23, 2020.

Sec. 6. Additional Measures. Within 30 days of the effective date of this proclamation, the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, shall review nonimmigrant programs and shall recommend to me other measures appropriate to stimulate the United States economy and ensure the prioritization, hiring, and employment of United States workers.

Sec. 7. Severability. It is the policy of the United States to enforce this proclamation to the maximum extent possible to advance the interests of the United States. Accordingly:

- (a) if any provision of this proclamation, or the application of any provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this proclamation and the application of its provisions to any other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby; and
- (b) if any provision of this proclamation, or the application of any provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid because of the lack of certain procedural requirements, the relevant executive branch officials shall implement those procedural requirements to conform with existing law and with any applicable court orders.

Sec. 8. General Provisions.

(a) Nothing in this proclamation shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

- (i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or,
- (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This proclamation shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This proclamation is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fourth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

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WHITE HOUSE - REMARKS

Remarks by President Trump and Members of the Coronavirus Task Force in Press Briefing – April 21, 2020

Issued on: April 21, 2020

James S. Brady Press Briefing Room

5:46 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Well, thank you very much everyone. We had a very big day today. I want to start by saying that our love and prayers of every American continue to be with our fellow citizens who have lost a cherished friend or a family member to the virus.

Amidst our grief, we're making tremendous strides against this invisible enemy. Thanks to our aggressive campaign against the virus and the extraordinary talent of our medical professionals, our mortality rate remains roughly half of that of many other countries and one of the lowest of any country in the world. And that's due to a lot of — a lot of things, but our medical professionals have been incredible.

Since we announced our "Guidelines on Opening Up America," as we call it — we say "Opening up America," and we add the word again [sic]. I think we can add the word, probably, "again." But that's what it is: We're opening up America again.

Twenty states representing 40 percent of the U.S. population have announced that they are making plans and preparations to safely restart their economies in the very near future. So that's 20 states; that's about 40 percent of our country. They're moving along pretty quickly. Three announced today, as you know, and they're going to be doing it safely. They're going to be doing it with tremendous passion. There's — they want to get back to work. The country wants to get back to work.

A short time ago, the Senate passed the Paycheck Protection Program and Healthcare Enhancement Act, with additional funding for the Paycheck Protection Program, hospitals, and testing. A lot of money for all of them, especially for our workers and our small businesses.

My administration has worked aggressively with Congress to negotiate this critical 482-billion-dollar funding package. We reached a deal that includes \$382 billion in crucial small-business support to keep workers on the payroll; \$75 billion to aid hospitals, which really need the aid, and very badly — I'm very proud of that; and \$25 billion to support coronavirus testing efforts.

I urge the House to pass the bill, and they're going to be voting on it, I imagine, very — very soon.

I think while we're here, and so he's a very busy man, as you know — Secretary Mnuchin — he's going to be running back, so I thought we'd do — we'll talk about that now, and we'll take a couple of questions on that. And then he can go and start phase four, as the ink is drying.

Probably, they'll be voting tomorrow in the House, but shortly. Shortly. And I think we have tremendous support.

So, Steve, please come up. Say a few words. Steve? Yeah.

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Thank you, Mr. President. And thank you for all your work with us to get this passed. I'd especially like to thank Mitch McConnell and Chuck Schumer and the entire Senate for passing this. I'd also like to thank Kevin McCarthy and Nancy Pelosi, who have been working with us around the clock as well, and our Chief of Staff, Mark Meadows, who was also very instrumental in this.

Let me just comment. We've had tremendous support for the PPP. This gives us another \$310 billion for the PPP. We look forward to the House passing this tomorrow and being up and running quickly after that.

This also gives us \$50 billion for disaster loans, EIDL loans. That will allow the SBA to make \$300 billion of disaster loans, all for small businesses. It also allows us, as the President said, more money to hospitals and an unprecedented amount of money for testing. And again, I think we understand hospitals — not only the hospitals that have been impacted by coronavirus, but more importantly, many hospitals that have been shut down, and making sure that the doctors and nurses get money.

Now, let me make just one more comment on the program. We have over a million companies that have received this with less than 10 workers. So there is very broad participation in really small business. I will comment there have been some big businesses that have taken these loans. I was pleased to see that Shake Shack returned the money. We will be putting out some FAQs. There is a certification that people are making.

And I asked people — just make sure: The intent of this was for business that needed the money. We'll put out an FAQ. But again, the intent of this money was not for big public companies that have access to capital.

THE PRESIDENT: And not for Harvard, you might say, Steve.

Q So, Mr. Secretary, are you going to request that those other companies — because obviously Shake Shack was not alone in being a big company that got money in this. Are you going to be asking —

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to request.

Q You're going to ask them —

THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to request.

Q — to return that money?

THE PRESIDENT: Yep.

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Yeah, I would —

THE PRESIDENT: Harvard is going to pay back the money. And they shouldn't be taking it. So, Harvard is going to. You have a number of them. I'm not going to mention any other names. But when I saw Harvard, they have a — one of the largest endowments anywhere in the country, maybe in the world, I guess. And they're going to pay back that money.

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: And I just — I just want to clarify —

THE PRESIDENT: They shouldn't have taken it.

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: — because certain people on the PPP may have not been clear in understanding the certification, so we will give people the benefit of the doubt. We're going to put an FAQ out, explain the certification. If you pay back the loan right away, you won't have liability to the SBA and to Treasury. But there are severe consequences for people who don't attest properly to this certification.

And again, we want to make sure this money is available to small businesses that need it, people who have invested their entire life savings. We appreciate what's going on, and they're hiring people back.

Q And how are you going to ensure that those small businesses — the small restaurants, cafes, bars — who did not get the money last time around are going to get it this time?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, as I said — you know, there are million — a million of these companies that did get it, that are very small. We're working with the banks. We're extremely pleased that the small banks did great. Twenty percent of the loans were made by banks of a billion and less; sixty percent by 20 billion and less. And the big banks also. We want everybody to participate. There's now a lot of money back in the program, and we look forward to all these small businesses getting access to funds.

Bret, it's great to see you here.

Q Thank you, Mr. Secretary. Do you know, estimate, how long this is going to take? That other pot of money obviously went quickly. Do you assume this is going to go quickly as well?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, let me just say — I mean, you know, kind of, we're pleased with the success of this program and how quickly this got up operationally. We've — we've put out more money in these SBA loans than in the last 10 years of SBA. So I want to thank all the banks that have worked really hard.

We knew that when we passed this originally, if there was full take-out, we wouldn't have enough money. That's why we've worked with Congress for more money. And this is going to — you know, we've already impacted about 30 million workers. There'll be a lot more. So we look forward to this having a big impact on the economy.

Q Thanks. Yesterday, the President said he'd look into the issue of felons, those with criminal convictions getting access to some of these programs. I was wondering if you have an update on that as part of this —

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Sure. So we worked with the White House on this. There were actually much more onerous restrictions in the SBA program. There were people who had misdemeanors that weren't allowed to access the program. It was much longer than five years.

And, you know, we very much — because of the criminal reform legislation that was passed and the work that's been done in the White House by Jared and others, we specifically designed the program, and the five years was significantly shorter than what had been done before. So we had already taken that into account.

Q And there is no consideration of (inaudible)?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: For now, we're not going to do that. But I want to just emphasize: We did take this into account. There were a lot of people that wouldn't have access previously, and we changed those regulations.

Q Mr. Secretary, the President talked about a phase four. I know we all understand the circumstances and why businesses need this, but how many more phases can we afford to have or can businesses expect to have? Do you see a phase five, a phase six, a phase seven? What's your thinking on this?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, first of all, I very much appreciate the President's support for phase four. He put out a tweet. As the President said, we would look forward to phase four; it would be infrastructure. The President has been talking about infrastructure since the campaign: roads, bridges, broadband. Especially, broadband now to rural America is very important.

We've talked about incentives for restaurants, sports, entertainment, because these businesses have been impacted. The President has talked multiple times about a payroll tax cut.

And we've also — we're talking about, in the case of states, the states — we've heard from the governors and the fiscal issues of the states.

I think phase four will most likely be what we need. I think based upon what we're seeing and the reopening of the economy and the amount of money we're putting in, and working with the Federal Reserve on 13(3), I think you're going to see a lot of liquidity. And we look forward to business rebounding, especially later this summer.

Q And just real quick to follow up: In the PPP program, is this the last tranche of money you think you're going to need for small businesses?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: We would expect this is the last tranche, but obviously we can always reconsider that. But this is a lot of money going out.

Again, let me just be clear: You know, it's — it's another \$310 billion here and another \$300 billion of loans. That's over \$600 billion putting into small businesses, which are the backbone of the economy: 50 percent of the private payroll.

Q How much do you think phase four will cost? And it will include all of those things? Payroll tax —

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: It would be premature for us to comment what the cost is. We'll work with Congress on that, and we'll consider it.

Q And it's going to have infrastructure and payroll?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Infrastructure could be a big investment.

Q That's going to be huge (inaudible) —

Q Mr. Secretary, given the size of the taxpayer dollars that are going out the door, have you fellas come to a different way of thinking about the need for oversight — independent oversight on behalf of the taxpayer?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: We have independent oversight. We supported it in the last legislation. Let me be very clear: We have a new inspector general. The President has already picked someone for that position. We look forward to the person being confirmed. We have an oversight committee of Congress that many of them have already been appointed.

And let me just say, we put up last week, for full transparency — we had no obligation to do this. We put up — you can go to Treasury.gov — full transparency on the money that had been sent out on the PPP across states, showing all the big lenders, how it was distributed. No one lender did more than 4 percent. Showed the businesses.

So, again, the President and I very much believe in full transparency. We're spending a lot of money, and we want to make sure that it's done effectively and fairly.

Q Sir, Secretary, thank you. You started by thanking the leaders in the House and the Senate. Can you tell us more about how easy or hard it was to deal with both sides?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, we've been working around the clock. I think there's been very good bipartisan support to get this done. The Congress is coming together, understanding the importance of this. And we've been working around the clock for days.

So this is important legislation. It was a lot. We spoke to a lot of people. Mark Meadows has been fantastic, as I said. It's great to have him here in the White House. I couldn't have done this without him working on this with me. And the President and Vice President have been available to us around the clock. So this was a big team effort.

Q And collaboration of the Democrats?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Absolutely. We couldn't have done this today without unanimous consent and the Democrats being onboard. And we look forward to this being passed on a bipartisan basis tomorrow. This is a real example of the country coming together to fight this virus.

Q What is your best understanding of what Mitch McConnell wants from an infrastructure package?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Again, I think we're not — we're not at the point of designing that. Like every other bill, we will work with senators on both sides, on a bipartisan basis.

I can tell you, there's a lot of support, particularly for things like broadband and especially what's going on today. But the President has talked about — you know, I was on the campaign with the President. We've been talking about bridges and tunnels and rebuilding this country for years. So the President wants to make a big investment in this.

Q But does Mitch McConnell?

Q Thank you, Mr. Secretary. When will we see the 17- billion-dollar portion of CARES reserved for companies — critical for national security? And also, will oil companies fit into that at all, per the President's tweet?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: So we're in the process of putting out guidance. That part was really designed for national security companies that are either major suppliers to the Department of Defense or companies that have top-secret clearance.

So, this — that national security provision was very clear when we did that. The President has asked me to work with the Secretary of Energy. Obviously, the energy business is very important to us. This has national security issues, but different. And we look forward to both looking at both existing capabilities we have, and that will be something we may need to go back to Congress and get additional funding for.

Q Will that look similar to an airplane — or airline bailout at all? Or what —

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: A completely different situation. I mean, what you have with the airlines is — you know, we had a very, very good airline industry. Because of the virus, they basically shut down.

We have a situation now, with the oil business — partially because of the virus, okay, for less demand, but partially also because of too much supply. But, you know, the President is determined: We want to maintain our energy independence. And the President has asked me to look at all of our options, and we're doing that. Obviously, it's a pretty extraordinary situation where you saw the front month of oil futures trade negative.

Q Hi. On the issue of the fourth stimulus bill and aid to state and local governments, any thoughts on whether that money should be proportionate to the rate of infection in states so that harder-hit states —

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, wait — interesting, but way too early to consider that. Whatever we do, we'll do on a bipartisan basis. The President has listened to the governors. I've had the opportunity to be on multiple video conference calls with the President and the Vice President. We're reaching out to a lot of people. There's a lot of states that have been impacted, but way too early to figure out that level of design.

Q You mentioned if a large company applies for one of these loans and maybe manipulates or works the system or works the loopholes to get it, what are some of the consequences to a — you know, if a large company tries to get one of these PPP loans? What can you do?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, you used the word "manipulate"; I'm going to give people the benefit of the doubt. Again, we're going to put up very clear guidance so that people understand what the certification is, what it means if you're a big company.

Again, there is a provision for — you know, where there are multiple affiliates that people can access this, but the intent was not for companies that have access to plenty of liquidity and other sources.

And again, if, to the extent these companies didn't understand this and they repay the loans, that will be okay. And if not, there'll be potentially other consequences.

Q But can you talk about what those consequences could be?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Again, you can look at the certifications. They're quite significant.

THE PRESIDENT: One more. Jon.

Q Do you have an estimate on how many jobs have been saved all with the money that's gone out in PPP so far?

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Well, I can tell you the PPP, so far, is over 30 million jobs. And again, that doesn't account for other money that we've sent out.

And again, we're very pleased the direct deposits have gone out. We started sending out the checks. We're also going to be supplementing our capability and sending prepaid debit cards so we can get money out quickly to people.

So everything that the President has had us working on is providing significant stability in the economy while we're dealing with this difficult time when, for medical reasons, we've closed down major parts of the economy.

Thank you very much.

THE PRESIDENT: That was a very nice question. Very good.

SECRETARY MNUCHIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you, Steve. See you later.

That was a nice question, actually. It's a good question, too.

So the noble fight against the invisible enemy has inflicted a steep toll on the American workforce. As we all know, millions of Americans sacrificed their jobs in order to battle the virus and save the lives of our fellow citizens. We have a solemn duty to ensure these unemployed Americans regain their jobs and their livelihoods.

Therefore, in order to protect American workers, I will be issuing a temporary suspension of immigration into the United States; you heard about that last night. By pausing immigration, we'll help put unemployed Americans first in line for jobs as America reopens. So important. It would be wrong and unjust for Americans laid off by the virus to be replaced with new immigrant labor flown in from abroad. We must first take care of the American worker — take care of the American worker.

This pause will be in effect for 60 days, after which the need for any extension or modification will be evaluated by myself and a group of people, based on economic conditions at the time. This order will only apply to individuals seeking a permanent residency. In other words, those receiving green cards — a big factor — it will not apply to those entering on a temporary basis.

As we move forward, we'll examine what additional immigration-related measures should be put in place to protect U.S. workers. We want to protect our U.S. workers. And I think, as we move forward, we will become more and more protective of them.

This pause on new immigration will also help to conserve vital medical resources for American citizens. A short break from new immigration, depending on the time we're talking about, will protect the solvency of our healthcare system and provide relief to jobless Americans.

Today, Vice President Pence visited the hardworking men and women of General Electric Healthcare in Madison, Wisconsin, who are working three shifts a day to quadruple their production of ventilators.

We're way ahead of schedule on ventilators, as you know. That's why it's never brought up by the media. They don't like to bring things up when we're doing so well. GE is also working with Ford to make 50,000 ventilators in the next 100 days — more than our entire country typically produces in a very long period of time. Doing that in a matter of a few weeks and a few days.

Earlier today, I had a very productive meeting with Governor Cuomo, as you probably saw, to discuss his statewide testing strategy and how we can work together to help expand it, with the goal of doubling testing in the next few weeks. And New York State will be continuing to control the testing of their citizens and will also manage the state and local laboratories. They have a lot of great laboratories there — more than anybody would ever have known, frankly.

The federal government will work along with the state on the national manufacturers and distributors. Together, we'll all work together to help them secure additional tests, and we hope that this model will work with the other states as well. I think it will, for the most part. New York has a lot of very exceptional laboratories, but most of the states do. It's — you saw the chart yesterday. Most of the states do.

I'm proud of the relationship my administration has forged with New York and, I can say very honestly, with New York State and New York City. They've been terrific to work with. The New York metropolitan area has been the epicenter of the outbreak here in America, and the federal government has spared no expense or resource to get New Yorkers the care they need and the care they deserve. We've sent over 5 million masks. We had 5 million masks. And now that number, as of about two days from now, will be more than doubled.

Thousands of ventilators — in fact, so many ventilators that the governor is going to be sending up some to — to Massachusetts and a couple of other locations. We have a great deal of ventilators, which people thought would be impossible about a month ago.

Thousands of hospital beds and the USNS Comfort was sent, as you know, to New York. And it was originally for more of a normal medical purpose, and we changed it over so that

it could take care of people that had the unfortunate circumstance of going through the problem that we — that we know so well; unfortunately, that we know so well.

I said from the beginning that no American who needs a ventilator would be denied a ventilator and we have kept that promise all over the United States. Think of that. Other countries are desperate for ventilators. They have many deaths because they don't have a ventilator.

And I've asked Andrew if we could bring the Comfort back to its base in Virginia so that we can have it for other locations, and he said we would be able to do that. Javits Center has been a great help to them, but we'll be bringing the ship back at the earliest time. And we'll get it ready for its next mission, which will, I'm sure, be a very important one also. But it was — it was an honor. They — they reconverted it after it got there into handling an event that they were not expecting to be handling.

The FDA has now authorized more than 50 diagnostic tests, including, as of late last night, the first test — test that a patient can take home. You can take it at home and it's highly accurate. LabCorp intends to make the home collection kits available to consumers in most states with a doctor's order in the coming weeks.

We also have four different antibody tests already authorized. Tests will help identify individuals who can donate convalescent plasma, thus providing potentially lifesaving antibodies to American patients.

Dr. Hahn will be providing you with an update on these developments in a few moments. He's done a great job at the FDA.

We continue to gain ground in the war against the unseen enemy and I see light at the end of the tunnel. I actually see a lot of light at the end of the tunnel. And we're starting the process. We're starting a very, very powerful, important process. You see that people are getting very anxious. They want to get going. They want to get back to their jobs. They want to make money. They want to take care of their families. So, the light is getting brighter and brighter every day.

And, with that, if I could, I'll ask Dr. Birx to come up and then Dr. Hahn.

Thank you very much.

DR. BIRX: Thank you, Mr. President. So, looking at all of the information across the United States, we do see improvement across all the large metros. I know you know that we've been talking about the New York metro area, New York City, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Long Island. And, really, we do start to see improvement there, and we see improvement, even now, in Rhode Island and Connecticut.

The Detroit metro is doing quite well with significant declines now. New Orleans is nearly back to their baseline of where they started for new infections. We also are seeing improvements in Chicago and Boston. And that has been a great concern for us over the last several weeks. They appear now to be flattening.

Both also Philadelphia and Houston, Atlanta, Nashville, Baltimore, Indianapolis, and St. Louis also appear to be flattening. The D.C. metro area, we don't see a decline yet, so hopefully all of you are still social distancing and doing everything that you can.

I wanted to remind everybody of two points: When we brought up — and the President put out the guidelines for opening up America again — it was very clear to use data and to really work together to mitigate against any resurgence and also, critically, to protect the vulnerable.

And what we're seeing across rural America and in some of the smaller population states is we're still seeing outbreaks in long-term care facilities. And we asked everyone in phase one to make sure that they continued their social distancing in public, to ensure that the vulnerable with comorbidities and other conditions and among the elderly were staying at home, and making sure we're still providing service to them.

But as individual Americans, as we begin to open up, we also made it very clear that individual Americans need to continue all of their hygiene pieces: ensuring social distancing, washing hands, not touching their face, and making sure that they're not bringing the virus home to vulnerable individuals within the household. And remember, those were to continue through all three phases.

And so we really want to call people's attention again to the guidelines. We are continuing to see outbreaks in nursing homes and in confined spaces. And I think, as Americans, we want to stop that. And we have the ability to do that by really paying attention to the guidelines that were to be in all three phases.

And so I'm calling on the states again to note that an informed community, a knowledgeable community is a protected community. So make sure all of your states have your cases visible to the communities so they can make decisions and understand where the virus is in their community and understand how to tackle it with their state and local governments. This will be absolutely critical.

And there's surveillance that we called for to find asymptomatics before people get sick. As an early warning signal, we asked for those to be in the federal clinics in our inner city, more vulnerable areas, among indigenous populations, and of course, in our long-term care facilities and prisons, we really want to support state and local governments to move forward on these critical monitoring to protect individuals that may be in the most critically vulnerable states.

We will continue to see mortality and deaths among our American citizens, particularly in the cities, as they begin to move past peak because deaths will lag. And so we really need to continue to unite and really, really, really support our healthcare providers who are still on the frontlines. They have been on the frontlines now for weeks and weeks and weeks.

And so no matter what city they have been in, they have not seen the relief that we've been able to talk about at the light of the end of the tunnel because of the delay in hospitalizations and death.

So to our healthcare providers, to our respiratory therapists, and to everyone in the labs: Thank you for the work that you're doing to protect Americans and give us one of the lowest mortality rates in the entire world. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. Doctor, please.

DR. HAHN: Thank you, Mr. President, and I just want to echo what Dr. Birx said just a few — few short months ago. I was one of those doctors on the frontlines and I know how terrific they're working and how well they're doing for the American people, and a shout-out to them for just the wonderful work that they — that they do every day.

So President Trump asked the FDA to remove all unnecessary barriers that were in place to help with the development of both diagnostics and therapeutics, and we have done that.

I'm here to give you an update on FDA's efforts around serologic tests, which, as you know, are antibody tests which detect, in the blood, the natural immunity that someone might develop in response to infection — in this case, COVID-19.

These aren't diagnostic tests, but these are tests that actually detect the antibody, so an indication that one has had the infection and has responded. And I think it's important for everyone to understand that the timing of the response of the antibody to the infection isn't completely known, but we know that it takes some time to actually develop that. And there's two types of antibody responses that can be detected.

And the antibody tests are just one piece of the larger response that you've heard in the America returning to work plan that the President has, with the task force, has developed.

And this pandemic is truly unprecedented in nature, and you'll see reports around the world of different antibody tests that have been used. And I think that's a reflection of the fact that we're just learning and beginning to understand what that response looks like. And many of these tests have different characteristics that allow to detect at different points in the infection.

I do want to address one issue that we are laser focused on at FDA, and that is: In an effort to provide laboratories and healthcare providers the early access to tests, we issued a policy earlier in March that allowed test developers the opportunity to quickly get their test to market and address the needs of the nation as posed by the epidemic.

In March, we provided this regulatory flexibility to manufacturers, and here's what we required of them: The manufacturers had to validate their tests; we call it self-validation, similar to what many test developers in the world have done. They had to notify FDA that they had performed that validation. And then they had to label their products appropriately in the package insert with information about the validation, as well as the fact that it's not a diagnostic test, that it's an antibody test.

And the bottom line here is that FDA still expects manufacturers and test developers to validate their antibody tests, even under this revised policy.

Now, we've done a couple of things to actually help end users, to help laboratories, providers, et cetera, states, in terms of their use of these antibody tests. One is that we're working with CDC and NCI to actually validate some of the more than 90 manufacturers

who have notified us that they brought their test to market to do an independent validation. And that process is going. We expect to hear more information this week about that, and we will provide that information in a transparent manner.

And we also want to go after anyone who is saying that that test has been authorized or has been approved by the FDA but actually hasn't. And we've authorized for applications for antibody tests, and 140 test developers are pursuing applications for us as we speak. So it's not okay for someone to say that a test has been authorized or approved by FDA when it hasn't. And we are pursuing them both by — in direct contact with the manufacturers, but also at the border.

And so we have increased these interdiction efforts, and we will continue to outreach and do — and do that with the manufacturers to make sure that we provide the most up-to-date information to the end users of these products. And we will continue to do — make all of our efforts, both in the diagnostics and the therapeutics, to help America open up again.

Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much.

Q Dr. Hahn?

THE PRESIDENT: Please, go ahead.

Q Dr. Hahn, you're speaking of 140 different developers, more than 90 manufacturers. How many of these tests actually work?

DR. HAHN: So, as I mentioned, the 90 that have come forward and said they're marketing in the U.S., they are required by us to have self-validation, and they're required to label that appropriately in their package insert.

And I also said that we're — what we're doing is we're working with folks around the country, but here at home, the U.S. government and with the NCI and CDC, to validate

some of those tests that have come forward to us. So we're actually doing some independent validation.

Q And what have you found so far?

DR. HAHN: So we don't have those results yet. I expect to have more results this week, but we will be transparent about those results because you'll think it's very important.

And your question is superb in that if someone wants to use a test that's come to market, really, it's important to read the information that's in the package insert, but often in some of those cases, it's also important for the independent labs to do the validation also.

And you may have seen reports in the press of labs around the country that have done that. We've actually reached out to them — many academics — and we will be including that information and the information that we generate as well to provide to the American people.

Q Dr. Hahn, while have you here: There was a study out of the VA today on hydroxychloroquine that found a higher mortality rate compared to those who got standard of care. And I know this isn't a large-scale clinical trial, but since this drug is out there and people are using it, can you give some takeaways from that study? Did that change your thinking at all on hydroxychloroquine?

DR. HAHN: So this study is a small retrospective study at the VA. And similar to the data we talked about before with the French study, this is something that a doctor would need to consider as part of a decision in writing prescription for hydroxychloroquine.

And as I've mentioned from this podium and in other venues before, what FDA is going to require is data from clinical trials — randomized clinical trials — hydroxychloroquine placebo, to actually make a definitive decision around safety and efficacy.

But the preliminary data are helpful to providers. And doctors, I want to ask them to incorporate the data as we have come forward. And it's not definitive data; it doesn't help us make a decision from a regulatory point of view. But doctors should incorporate that in the decision making they make on a one-on-one basis.

Q And just the timeline on the clinical trials and when we will be getting a readout of that data?

DR. HAHN: So the good news is we have over 30 clinical trials. Now, the settings are very different. They're in the outpatient setting, they're in the inpatient setting, and also, I think very importantly, in what we call the post-exposure prophylaxis, meaning if you're a healthcare worker or a frontline provider and you've been exposed to the virus, take the drug for a period of time to see if you can prevent the development of illness related to the virus. So all those trials are in progress and will probably be early summer before we get a readout.

Q And, Mr. President, if I can pick up on that?

THE PRESIDENT: And all of these tests, I want to say, are in addition to the test that we already have. And we have tested more people than anybody anywhere in the world, by far — by very far.

Q Mr. President, if I can —

THE PRESIDENT: Bret, do you have a question?

Q Well, I think you wanted to follow up on the hydroxychloroquine and the —

Q Yeah, the hydroxychloroquine. I'm wondering if you're concerned — this VA study showed that actually more people died that used the drug than didn't. And I'm wondering if Governor Cuomo brought you back any results on —

THE PRESIDENT: No, we didn't discuss it, and I don't know of the report. Obviously, there have been some very good reports and perhaps this one is not a good report. But we'll be looking at it. We'll have a comment on it as soon —

Q And a panel of experts at the NIH is actually now recommending against the use of hydroxychloroquine in combination with Z-Pak, which is something you've —

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Well, we'll take a look at that.

Q — been recommending.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm always willing to take a look.

Bret?

Q Another subject. Your signing the executive order. When do you plan to do that?

THE PRESIDENT: The executive order will be — it's being written now, as we speak. Probably tomorrow sometime.

Q So will have exemptions in there for certain —

THE PRESIDENT: We'll have certain exemptions, because you're going to need certain exemptions. But we'll be notifying you tomorrow. We'll sign it, most likely, tomorrow. Being drawn now and tonight. And it's something we have to have in this country. We have to have it.

Q So for the people who say it doesn't track with opening up the country to shut down immigration across the board for companies that and — and the pipeline that's already in place, what do you say to them?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it really does, I think it's very strong, obviously. And it's countrywide, as opposed to specifically, like China or some of the other ones that I've shut down. We're going to see. And you'll see a very accurate definition tomorrow after it's completed by the attorneys.

Q Last thing from me: North Korea. What do you — what can you tell us about the status of Kim Jong Un?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, these are reports that came out, and we don't know. We don't know. I've had a very good relationship with him. I wouldn't — you know, I can only say this: I wish him well. Because if he is in the kind of condition that the reports say, that the news is saying, that would be a — that's a very serious condition, as you know.

But I wish him well. We've had a good relationship. I've said it — I've said it many times: If somebody else were in this position, we would have been right now at war with North Korea. And we're not at war, and we're nowhere close to war with North Korea.

So I just have to say to Kim Jong Un, I wish him very — you know, good luck. Good luck. I mean, they came out with very, very serious medical reports. Nobody has confirmed that. It's — it was CNN that came out. So when CNN comes out with a report, I don't place too much credence in it.

Q In your meeting with Governor Cuomo, did he convince you of a need for expanded testing? Or how did that (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, we had a great talk on testing. And we have an agreement — we have an understanding on testing. They have labs — tremendous labs, as you know — in New York, especially in the Manhattan area, but all over the state, and great, great medical schools and federal labs. So we have a very good understanding. We're going to do very significant testing.

You know, not everybody wants to do such significant testing. Testing is good in some cases and, in some cases, it's not. You have governors that don't want to go all out on the testing because they think they can do it in a different manner and do it better. But we had a very good meeting today. The governor and I had a very good meeting.

Q Is there more federal aid that can be used to help governors who want to expand testing? Because we keep hearing that, all day long, governors want more —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, well, we have — we have \$25 billion. And that's a tremendous amount of money. That's far more money than, in my opinion, than we'll need.

And again, already we're testing more, by far, than any country. I think I read yesterday a report that we've done more than everybody else, every other country combined. And I think our people should be getting a lot of credit for that. We've done a lot — more than everybody else combined — and you never hear that in the news. It's, you know, unfortunate.

Yeah, please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Just back on the executive order for a second. You mentioned the — that there are going to be some exemptions. We're reporting right now that it only applies to employment and green — green cards for employment, but not those for immediate family.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is green cards. But we're going to be reporting on that later on. It might be tonight or tomorrow. We'll give you an exact report.

Q Is there anything you can say to people who may be worried about the ability to bring immediate family members into this country?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think it's been covered pretty accurately, in this case. I think most people know what it is. And some people will be able to get in. We have to do that, obviously, even from a humane standpoint. But there'll be — there'll be some people coming in. But it's a — it's a strong order. It's a strong order. It involves a big, big circle, as you know.

Please.

Q Are immigrants who are already in the country, are they at greater risk of deportation based on this order?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that. Well, I don't think so. They're not supposed to be here. You're saying they're here illegally? Is that what you're saying?

Q Well, for example, if an immigrant is here for a court order, right, are they at risk of deportation based on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, if a court order, then you have to go to court. So then the judge would make a determination as to whether or not they're going to be staying. But if they have a court order, they won't have to leave until they go through that process. So we'll see what happens. But with the court — and there are some with court orders. That means they have a trial coming up.

Please.

Q Yeah, so, obviously, on the immigration executive order, you've raised concern for a long time, even in good economic times, about immigrants taking Americans' jobs. So under what conditions would you consider lifting this halt on immigration? And —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to — yeah.

Q Or is this sort of an opportunity to address what you've seen as a problem for a long time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think — look, right now, obviously there's never been — we had the greatest economy in the world and then, one day, we had to shut it down. They said, "You have to shut it down." We did the right thing, because I think we would have had a million or maybe even 2 million — and maybe more than that — deaths. So we did the right thing.

But certainly, this would pertain. I mean, when you look at it, right now the last thing we want to do is take American workers' jobs. It's one thing when we were at essentially — they used to call it "full employment." And it's another thing right now. Right now, we have people that have lost their jobs and we hope they're going to come back and come back fast, and then we can have an even deeper discussion. But, right now, we have to have jobs for Americans.

Q Would you have any sense of, like, if unemployment gets to 4 percent or 5 percent — you know, people who are looking to come to —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we'll have to see. I mean, I hope we're in that position to have that debate. Right now, we're not in that position. Right now, we closed down a — the largest economy, the greatest economy in the history of the world. It's the most successful economy. When you look at the stock market, we were breaking records virtually every week, sometimes every day. And the stock market is still not doing badly, considering what this country has been through, which really tells you how strong it was in the first place.

But, no, I hope we're going to be able to have that discussion. I hope we're in a position — that's like a good discussion to have. But that'll be a little bit later.

Bret.

Q I have a question for Dr. Birx about — the CDC director said in an interview that perhaps this second wave of coronavirus in the fall could be worse because it is timed with the seasonal flu. Just wondering if you could talk about that in context of — as you're opening up the country and these guidelines that you've laid out.

DR. BIRX: Yeah, so we were very clear in the guidelines that we believe we can monitor — again, monitor communities at the community level by using the influenza-like illness and the syndromic respiratory and gastrointestinal components of this — of this particular virus.

Obviously, when we have flu, we're going to — and we're working on an algorithm that you test for flu, and then you test for COVID, and making sure that we are building the testing capacity to be able to do that. Because I think it's very important that you're going to be able — on the surface, a patient, when they come in with early flu and early COVID, can look very close to identical. So we need to have testing in place to be able to separate and ensure those patients receive the best treatment.

We're also hoping, by that time, that we have additional treatment options for people with COVID-19, so that there will be additional treatment available in the fall.

Q But your — your message would be to prepare for that time, thinking that it'll come back together?

DR. BIRX: The President has made it clear that we have the emergency, which we have been working on — the opening up guidelines. And just like he talks about phase four, he has us very much working on the next 60, 90, and for all on with fall. And that's why he's not stopped any of the ventilator orders.

It's very important that we have a completely refreshed and a comprehensive stockpile going into the fall. And I think that's why we've continued to bring in those shipments and work on the ventilators so that those would be available not only for the United States, but certainly if other — other partner countries have this level of tragedy.

Q Dr. Birx, a follow-up on that. So you agree this could come back actually worse in the fall? And what you need —

DR. BIRX: I don't know if it will be worse. I think this has been pretty bad. When you see what has happened in New York, that was very bad. I believe that we'll have early warning signals, both from our surveillance that we've been talking on — about in these — on the vulnerable populations. We're going to continue that surveillance from now all the way through the fall, to be able to give us that early warning signal.

I think what we've learned is how good Americans are about immediately reverting to all of those issues that they need to do in order to ensure that they are protected and their families.

Q And Mr. President, what — what do you say to the concerns — like, Georgia is opening up barbershops and bowling alleys and the like? And you saw Lindsey Graham is saying he's concerned that Georgia may be going too far too fast, and it could affect people in South Carolina. Obviously, people travel back and forth between states. How do you protect the people of South Carolina, for example, from a potentially bad decision by a governor in Georgia?

THE PRESIDENT: So he's a very capable man. He knows what he's doing. He's done a very good job as governor — Georgia. And — and, by the way, and South Carolina. Governor McMaster also. So you have two very capable people. We're going to find out.

And, in fact, I'm scheduled to speak to the governor of Georgia in a little while. But we'll — we'll find out.

Q But what about Lindsey Graham's concern that what happens in Georgia can affect someone in South Carolina?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, everybody — I have a concern about what happens everywhere. I mean, we've got those concerns. And as far as coming back, if they do come back — and they could come back together with heavy on the flu and much lighter on — because I really believe we'll be able to put out the fires. You know, it's like fires.

And we've learned a lot. You know, we've become very good at this, when you look at what's happening, when you look at the numbers coming down. A lot of states are in really great shape. You're going to see a lot of openings.

But I'll be speaking to the governor of Georgia in a little while. Okay?

Q Mr. President, should the American people need to be prepared for going back to social distancing, even if things relax over the summers — over the summer, but come the fall, if the virus comes back in coincidence with the flu?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I could see them — and I'll speak for the doctor, and, if you'd like, either of you, to say — but I would say that you keep away until this thing is gone. It's going to be gone at some point. It's going to be gone, gone. And I would say you keep away and you do the social distancing until such time as you know it's gone. We'll know when that time is.

Q Your executive order is to last for 60 days. How will you decide whether to extend it? Does it depend upon —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll look at the economy. We'll see where we are with the economy, basically. And I think I'll have a very easy decision to make. I hope — I hope that the economy is going to be great by that time, but we'll see. But, right now, in light of the fact that Americans are out of jobs, I can't be hav- — I can't be taking in.

Q And then, would you roll it for another 60 days or a different period?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I could, or I could roll it for 30 days, or I could roll it for much more than 60 days. We'll have to take a look at the time. But we'll be looking at 60 days and we'll see what it is.

Yeah, in the back. Please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On your immigration order —

Q And there is reporting that you —

Q On your immigration order —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's all right. You go. Why don't you go and then you. Okay?

Q Okay, on the immigration order — we'll continue with that — there is reporting that you may actually sign a second order to even limit more of those exceptions that you were just talking about. Can you confirm that you are considering —

THE PRESIDENT: It could happen if I want. But I won't be doing it tomorrow. I'll be signing the primary order. And then we have a secondary order that, if I want to do that, we'll make that determination.

Q And is that —

THE PRESIDENT: We can do that. Yeah, we can do that at a little bit different time if we want.

Q But that is under consideration at this time — a second order?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, sure. Sure. Secondary orders, yeah.

Please.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I have two questions: one from me and one from a reporter who couldn't be in the room because of social distancing.

THE PRESIDENT: You always that: one from him and one from her.

Q That's this seat. This is the print pooler's seat.

THE PRESIDENT: That's okay. Good. That's good. Fine.

Q So my first question is about your immigration order. You campaigned on reducing legal immigration. I remember your speech in Phoenix in 2016 on reducing legal immigration.

THE PRESIDENT: I campaigned on legal and illegal. But, no, I've always said you have to come into the country legally. So, not legal. What I campaigned on was people just flooding our border and stopping. And, by the way, speaking of that, we have 170 miles — almost 170 miles of — of very powerful border wall up, and it's moving rapidly, very quickly, and it's having a tremendous impact. And it's making our job a lot easier.

Plus, Mexico has 27,000 soldiers right now on our southern border that we share with them. And Mexico has been terrific. They've really helped.

Q You also campaigned on reducing legal immigration. And I'm wondering if — some critics are saying that you are using the virus now and this crisis to follow through on that promise to reduce legal immigration in the country.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I'm not doing that. No, no. Well, I want people that are in this country — I want our citizens to get jobs. I don't want them to have competition. We have a very unusual situation where something came in that nobody has seen for many, many

decades. Probably 1917 would be the closest analogy, if you look at it — when you look at the contagion, the kind of contagion we're talking about.

So, no, I'm not — I'm not doing that at all. I want — I want the American worker and the American — our American citizens to be able to get jobs. I don't want them to compete right now. There's a big difference when we have a full economy, and frankly, where some of the companies — we have many companies moving in, where they need actually — they need workers. That's a big difference between that and where, all of a sudden, a lot of people lose jobs.

Q As you know, a lot of farmers rely on seasonal migrant workers that come in on the H-2A.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, that's not going to be affected. The farmers will not be —

Q Are you going to (inaudible) carve-out —

THE PRESIDENT: That's an important point.

Q — for the seasonal H-2A workers?

THE PRESIDENT: The farmers will not be affected. Yeah, that's a very important point. I mean, it's a great point, actually. I'm — I'm glad you brought it up. No, the farmers will not be affected.

Q Your EO will have a carve-out for those workers (inaudible)?

THE PRESIDENT: You know, they've had cases where they — where they stopped everybody from coming in, and all the farmers went out of business. They were literally out of business. You remember that, Bret. It was not so long ago. But they — it's easy — you know, it's easier to stop everything cold than it is to plan it so that the farmers have the people that have been working on those farms for many years. And — and that's what we're doing.

No, the farmers will not be affected by this at all. If anything, we're going to make it easier, and we're doing a process that'll make it better for those workers to come in, to go to the farm where they've been for a long time.

Q And now for a question from a reporter who's out of the room. This is from the Washington Times, Tom Howell: Why hasn't the CDC, the federal government's main disease-fighting agency, had a more public-facing role amid the pandemic? It was holding regular media calls early on but has not held one since early to mid-March.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I can't tell you that. The CDC has been terrific. We've worked with them very closely. They were very much involved, even in the border decision that I made last night. And the director is —

Q (Inaudible) CDC to hold more media calls?

THE PRESIDENT: — the director is doing a good job. And we have always — whether it's Tony or Deborah or Steve — we have always a lot of people up. And certainly, as you've seen, the director has been here a lot. Right? He's been here, he's been sitting here. He's been speaking a lot.

No, no, CDC is very much involved in everything we've done.

Yeah, please.

Q The director of the CDC said that protests against stay-at-home orders are not helpful. You've encouraged some of these protests. What are your thoughts on the CDC director saying that these protests are not a good idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, people — look, it's not a question of helpful or not. People want to get back to work. And I've watched some of the protests, not in great detail, but I've seen that. And they're separated, they're — a lot of space in between. I mean, they — they're watching, believe it or not, social — they're doing social distancing, if you can believe it. And they are. And they're protesting, but they — they're — the groups I've seen have been very much spread out. So I think that's good.

Look, people — they want to get back to work, they got to make a living. They have to take care of their family. They don't want to do this. It's, you know, unfortunate, maybe, one way or the other. Both are unfortunate. Both are unfortunate. But you have a lot of people out there that are anxious to get back.

Yeah, please.

Q Surveys seem to be indicating that people are actually more concerned. More people are concerned about the virus spread and they don't want to go out. They don't want to go to work; they don't want to go outside.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. No, that's true. They're — they're both — there are two groups. They're both — they're big groups, both of them.

Q So my question is: What — what good is it for these businesses that would reopen if the customers are afraid to go outside?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, at the same time, we have to build back our country. And I'm going to make our country bigger and better and stronger, and we have to get started. There's a big difference, though, because people have really been through a lot. And they understand what to do now.

Before, nobody had ever heard of a thing like this, wouldn't you say? I mean, nobody ever heard of a thing like this — distancing — social distancing. What does that mean? Washing your hands every 15 minutes. What does that mean? I mean, people had never seen or heard about anything like this. Now they really are. They've — they've — not only have they done it, but they've done a good job of it.

But you have people — you can't break the country. At some point, you have to go back. Now, hopefully the governors are going to do, because I want the governors — and I've always wanted that. You can call it federalism, you can call it whatever you want.

But the governors — I want them to do it. If they — if we see them doing something we don't like, we'll stop it very quickly. But they're doing a good job. They're being careful. Some of the governors, frankly, they're in a position where they can do it sooner or they

can do it a little bit later, and that's okay. But people — they don't want to — they — they need money, they need help.

We're going to lose — and we can't break our country over this. We can't do it. We have to get going. With that being said, some are going to go soon and some are not.

Yeah, in the back, please.

Q If I might just — pardon me. Hair salons, nail salons, tattoo parlors. Dr. Birx, can you weigh in on this? Because the people of Atlanta want to hear from you as well, as much as they want to hear from their governor and from you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, I think — I think it's fine.

Q What — what about — how do you success- — safely have hair salons and nail salons and tattoo parlors where people apparently —

THE PRESIDENT: Where is that? Where is that?

Q This is in Georgia. Where people have to inherently be close together.

DR. BIRX: I think what I've been trying to communicate over the last several days is it's really important that the governors and mayors communicate critical information to their communities and show very clearly the data.

Remember we wanted this data and evidence-based — the data that they utilize to make decisions and the data that the mayors should use in each of the communities, because it will have to be on a community-by-community opening because there are different communities in different places, even in Georgia.

And so I believe people in Atlanta would understand that if their cases are not going down, that they need to continue to do everything that we said: social distancing, washing your hands, wearing a mask in public.

So if there's a way that people can social distance and do those things, then they can do those things. I don't know how, but people are very creative. So I'm not going to prejudge, but we have told people, very clearly, and the President's guidelines made it very clear about the expectations of phase one.

And remember, phase one also included social distancing in restaurants, social distancing in every place that was entertainment, and keeping your own individual social groups to less than 10. I mean, we've been very clear in the guidelines, and I think it's up to the governors and mayors to ensure that they're following the best they can each of those phases to make sure that both the public is completely protected.

But the governors and mayors also need to communicate very clearly on the data that was used for decision making and make that transparent and available to their communities.

THE PRESIDENT: And it also depends — as an example that you just gave — are they doing testing before they go in? We have to find that out. That's why I'm speaking to the governor in a little while, and I'll be asking him those questions.

Please, go ahead.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. I'm just trying to get a sense of what you have left in the toolbox as it relates to oil. You hashed out the deal with OPEC Plus. You've ordered for purchases into the SPR. I mean, what else can be done?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the biggest thing in the tool — the toolbox is to get our country open. That's, by far, the biggest thing there is.

If we can open pretty well — and I think we're going to over a period of time; piece by piece, a puzzle, remember? If we can open well, I think that's your biggest part by far. That's where the engine is, more important than any other thing that we can work on.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. Two New York-related questions. In your meeting with Governor Cuomo, was there talk about providing states, like New York, with aid in the fourth stimulus package? I'm wondering if you have any thoughts on whether that aid

should be tied to infection rates; whether states like New York, New Jersey that have been hardest hit should receive more money.

And also wondering if you have any thoughts on Mayor Bill de Blasio saying today that he'd like to host a ticker-tape parade of sorts, once this is all over, to honor the healthcare workers. As a New Yorker, do you have any —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, frankly, that sounds like a good idea to me, when it's all over. That sounds like a great idea. They deserve it. They're warriors. They've done an incredible job.

We mentioned briefly the state aid. We talked about that — Governor Cuomo and myself — and I agree with him on that. And I think most Republicans agree too, and Democrats. And that's part of phase four.

And I think infrastructure is going to be a big part. We have to rebuild our country. I mean, you take a look where we spend — and we go over this all the time — but \$8 trillion in the Middle East. We want to rebuild our country, and that means our bridges, our tunnels, even schools. We're doing something with schools. We have to do our roadways. They're — what's happened? We spend so much money on other countries that don't even — that they don't appreciate it. Okay? They don't appreciate it.

We're going to spend money now on our country, and we're going to have — it's going to be our jobs, and it's going to be our equipment. It's going to be made — much of it is going to be made here. Hopefully, at some point, all of it's going to be made here.

Jon?

Q Mr. President, at that podium back on March 9th, Vice President Pence said that over a million tests had been distributed. And then he said, and this is an exact quote, "Before the end of this week, another 4 million tests will be distributed." As you know now, six weeks later, we still aren't at 4 million tests. What —

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know — I don't know what his statement —

Q What went wrong with the testing?

THE PRESIDENT: Ready? Are you ready?

Q Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: Again, I'll say it for the fifth time: We have tested more than any country in the world. And some of the countries are very big. Okay? More than any country in the world. We have one of the most successful — if you call mortality — rates because one person — and I always say that for you in particular — one person is too many.

But we've done very well — our testing. If you add them all up, we've — we've tested more. Now, I don't know what Mike Pence said, but I'm sure he could answer that question.

Q Well, he said 4 million — he said 4 million tests, and we're — six months later, we're not even at that point.

THE PRESIDENT: You know what? You ready, again? We've tested more than every country in the world, even put together. So that's all I can say. As far as Mike, he'll answer your question when he's here. He'll be back tomorrow.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. It's — I just want to go back to the China deal and the phase one of this China deal.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q The flight ban is still in place. How confident are you that the Chinese are not going to use — invoke the natural disaster clause to just wait before getting into their —

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're going to see. Look, there's nobody ever been tougher on China than me. And that means for 20 years. You go back 20 years. I probably got

elected, at least partially, on the fact that I've been very tough. I said China has been ripping us off for years." I'd go into Michigan, I'd go into Pennsylvania, and make speeches unrelated to being a politician. I'd be invited. I'd be speaking to people — which I like to do because I love the people, I love the people of this country. And I'd make speeches — nobody — I'd say, "How did you let this happen with China?"

I even asked the leaders of China, "How — how did this ever happen where our country loses tens of billions of dollars a year?" And I don't mean just tens. Take a look: \$200 billion, \$300 billion, \$400 billion, \$500 billion a year. How did they ever let a thing like this happen?

Now, if you look at this last year, the deficit went way down. And I'm talking about even before; now it's much different. But a lot of things are happening. Great things were happening, except, all of a sudden, out of nowhere, came the invisible enemy. And we think we know where it came from, and we'll be talking about that probably a lot. But came — the invisible enemy. There's been nobody tougher than me on China.

Q So you have no guarantee that they are going to go ahead with this phase one?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. But if that happens, we'll do a termination and we'll do what I can do better than anybody.

Yeah, please.

Q Mr. President, on China: Have U.S. intelligence analysts told you that they think that the virus escaped from a Chinese research lab, that it was — infected someone?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I can't tell you that. "Have U.S. intelligence agents told me..." I mean, what kind of a question is that?

Q Do you feel — do feel confident about it, that that happened?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't — I can't. You want me to tell you — oh, let me tell you what they told me. Look, they told me plenty. They told me plenty.

Bret?

Q I wanted to follow up on — you said about the small business program, Harvard is going to pay the money back. How confident are you that you can claw back money from places like Harvard?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm going to have to look. I don't like when Harvard — that has, I think, a \$40 billion endowment or some incredible amount of money — that Harvard gets this money. Harvard should pay that money back. I want Harvard to pay the money back. Okay? And if they won't do that, then we won't do something else. They have to pay it back. I don't like it. I don't like it.

This is meant for workers. This isn't meant for one of the richest institutions, not only — far beyond schools — in the world. They got to pay it back. I want them to pay it back.

Yeah.

Q Mr. President, your Florida clubs have had to furlough workers —

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah. That's true.

Q Have you thought about, you know, asking your family members to maybe keep some of those workers on the payroll to help — sending them to the federal coffer? We've seen companies — other companies do that.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I — you know, yeah. In Doral, you're not allowed to have the golf courses open. You can't have the clubs open. You can't have anything. It's a — it's a big hotel and resort. And I think there's probably 700, 750 people. So you can't have anything open. And you say, "What are we going to do? Have full payroll and have the whole place with..." You know, there's no income coming in.

First of all, everyone's home and they're supposed to be. Second of all, in Florida, you can't use golf courses. That one, I'm not sure I agree with. You know, you have parks and golf courses where you have open space. But that's what it is.

So I have others also. Then I have others in different states. I have a lot of different properties. But again, my children run them, and I love my children and I wish them well. I look forward to comparing my numbers to my children's numbers. I think I'll do better.

Q You haven't thought about asking them to keep these —

THE PRESIDENT: You understand that. It's called closed property, it's like, you know, you have to close them up and then hopefully when things get better, we'll just open it up. But you can't have, you know, many hundreds of employees standing around doing nothing. There's no customer. You're not allowed to have a customer.

So, in some places, it's very strict. New Jersey is strict. New York is strict. And you have to do what you have to do. And it's too bad. I feel so badly when I see that. I think that it's a tough policy, but I go by whatever the policy — that's a state policy, in the case of Florida.

Please, Steve.

Q You've communicated — you've communicated regularly with Kim Jong Un, the North Korean leader.

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah.

Q Are you going to try to reach out to him to check on his condition and call him?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I may. But I — look, I just hope he's doing fine. I mean, I've had a very good relationship with Kim Jong Un, and that's to the benefit of the country. That's not a bad thing; that's a good thing. And I'd like to see him be well, and we'll see how he does.

Again, I don't know that the reports are true.

Q And do they have a line of succession, as far as you know? Is —

THE PRESIDENT: I — I don't want to ask him that. I have asked him that, but it's not — it's not — it's not my purpose to tell you that, in all fairness. But, you know, I hope he does well.

Please.

Q Can I get a follow-up with Dr. Birx for a moment. Dr. Birx, if you don't mind, I just wanted to follow up on the question we were asking you about, with social distancing in some of these states. So, you know, with Georgia opening back up, you know, things like tattoo parlors, getting a massage, social distancing — maybe there are some creative ways, but it seems very difficult to do social distancing. So, do you have a message for people in Georgia who are soon going to have a choice about going to the hair salon or the nail salon or getting that tattoo if they're not six feet apart and they're not able to follow these social distancing guidelines? What's your message to people in a state like Georgia?

DR. BIRX: Well, we made it very clear in a message to all of the American people with Opening Up America Again. The criteria that we wanted states to follow, those were careful criteria. There were only six. They were carefully, carefully selected, in conversations with epidemiologists around the world and with CDC, to really pick things that people could understand and use platforms that people have utilized in the past.

But it was built on the premise that it needs to be data-driven and it needs to protect those who are most vulnerable. And then it went through the phases. And the very first thing it says, in all phases, "all individuals need to continue to wash hands, protect the vulnerable, ensure the safety of others." But in phase one, it made it clear that social distancing was absolutely key. And I think it's on the White House website. We ask every American to read it and to use that as their guidelines.

Now, we've also asked governors to create county-level information so that communities can see the information and understand why they may be different than a different county, so that it's very transparent and understandable.

I had a question here a couple of days ago on a Jacksonville Beach. And Jacksonville is dramatically different than Miami. And I think that was reflected in why Jacksonville had a different set of information and regulations.

So I'm not going to second- — you know, judge anyone about their decision-making. What I'm going to say is: We were very clear in what we really believe protects the safety of Americans. And that is clearly laid up — laid out in the Opening Up America Again.

Q Dr. Birx, if I may, I have question, because we got data from Tokyo. An increase of cases and it doubled — of the cases in Singapore. What we've been, you know, looking a lot at Europe after China, and then we're back into this area of the world. Here we're talking about a plateau and then cases going down. Any lessons to take out of what we — what's happening in this area, in Asia, after having put our attention somewhere else for so — for so long?

THE PRESIDENT: The lesson is to be careful.

DR. BIRX: Yeah.

THE PRESIDENT: We've got to be very careful. We don't want that to happen; it could happen. I think we stamp it out if it does happen. We're not going to be doing any mass closings, I hope. So I think we could. You know, I call them "some burning embers," and we put them out. And I think we've gotten very good at that, but we'll see. But we don't want that to happen. No, absolutely.

Q So are you concerned, Mr. President, once the reopening happen, we won't need to go back into reclosing?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to do that. You don't want to do that. Nobody in this room wants to do that. You look forward — I think, Bret, very soon, and Jon — sitting next to a lot of your fellow reporters. Right? The room seems so empty this way. But it's one of those things.

Yeah, go ahead, please.

Q Mr. President, thank you. On the topic of public support for your immigration freeze

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q An Ipsos/USA Today poll just came out and found 80 percent of Americans are supportive of the immigration halt — the temporary freeze.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I know that.

Q Did that have any — did public support have any effect on your decision making here? And are you surprised by those numbers?

THE PRESIDENT: Yeah, it's a high number. I did not see that number. I heard there was a poll. I'm sure there'll be a lot of polls.

No, look, I think the American people want to make sure that they have jobs for the American people, not for people that come in, in many cases, illegally into our country. So we're doing that. I don't know what the numbers are, but I think just common sense tells you that's where we should be, and that's where the American people want to be.

And we're going to build our country back. And I'm telling you, with all the — the things that we're doing and infrastructure, which we desperately need, it's going to be an incredible thing taking place. I think it's going to be a renaissance. And we're going to have something that will be — a lot of people going to go to work building those roads and bridges and tunnels and highways and all of the other things we're going to be building — and broadband for the Middle West.

I mean, the farmers haven't been treated fairly. Let's face it, the farmers have been treated terribly, when it comes to the Internet. So we're going to take care of that. We're going to — we're going to make them very happy.

So we'll see you all tomorrow. And we'll have some interesting things to put out tonight. And I appreciate you being here. And it's an honor to have Bret Baier here.

I've used his slot a lot, Jon. I've used that slot a lot.

Q It's the only way I could get on, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Huh? It's — no —

Q It's the only way I could get on.

THE PRESIDENT: We want to have you back soon. Thank you very much.

Thank you, everybody.

END

6:56 P.M. EDT

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Below: Nature commentary pointing out the futility, waste, and opportunity costs associated projects pursued by Ecohealth, WIV, NIAID, et al, in the name of "predicting the next outbreak". Though they don't address the grove hazards, and BW dual use issues, involved with the gain of function work in WIV's prediction research, they loid out other important fundamental flaws with Ecohealth and WIV's approach. The authors go on to make the more compelling case for better bio surveillance instead. <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05373-w>



COMMENT

07 JUNE 2018

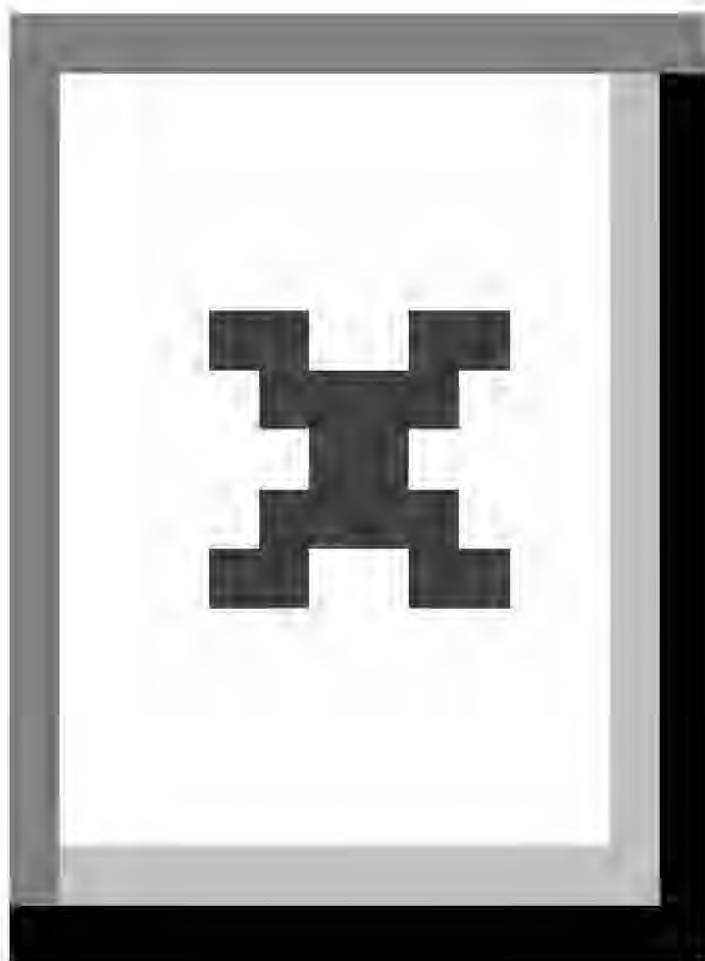
Pandemics: spend on surveillance, not prediction

Trust is undermined when scientists make overblown promises about disease prevention, warn Edward C. Holmes, Andrew Rambaut and Kristian G. Andersen.

The resurgence of Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo this May is a stark reminder that no amount of DNA sequencing can tell us when or where the next virus outbreak will appear. More genome sequence data were obtained for the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic than for any other single disease outbreak. Still, health workers in Mbandaka, the country's northwestern provincial capital, are scrambling to contain a growing number of cases.

Over the past 15 years or so, outbreaks caused by viruses such as Ebola, SARS and Zika have cost governments billions of US dollars. Combined with a perception among scientists, health workers and citizens that responses to outbreaks have been inadequate, this has fuelled what seems like a compelling idea. Namely, that if researchers can identify the next pandemic virus before the first case appears, communities could drastically improve strategies for control, and even stop a virus from taking hold^{1,2}. Indeed, since 2009, the US Agency for International Development has spent US\$170 million on evaluating the “feasibility of preemptively mitigating pandemic threats”¹.

Various experts have flagged up problems with this approach (including the three of us)^{3,4}. Nonetheless, an ambitious biodiversity-based approach to outbreak prediction — the the [redacted] — was announced in February this year, with its proponents soliciting \$1.2 billion in funding from around the world (see ‘High stakes’). They estimate that other mammals and birds contain 1.67 million unknown viruses from the families of viruses that are most likely to jump to humans, and will use the funding to conduct a genomic survey of these unknown viruses, with the aim of predicting which might infect people¹.



Sources: NIH; Global Virome Project

Broad genomic surveys of animal viruses will almost certainly advance our understanding of virus diversity and evolution. **In our view, they will be of little practical value when it comes to understanding and mitigating the emergence of disease.**

We urge those working on infectious disease to focus funds and efforts on a much simpler and more cost-effective way to mitigate outbreaks — proactive, real-time surveillance of human populations.

The public has increasingly questioned the scientific credibility of researchers working on outbreaks. In the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic, for instance, the international response was repeatedly criticized for being too slow. And during the 2009 H1N1 influenza epidemic, people asked whether the severity of the virus had been overblown, and if the stockpiling of pharmaceuticals was even necessary⁵. Making promises about disease prevention and control that cannot be kept will only further undermine trust.

Forecasting fallacy

Supporters of outbreak prediction maintain that if biologists genetically characterize all of the viruses circulating in animal populations (especially in groups such as bats and rodents that have previously acted as reservoirs for emerging viruses), they can determine which ones are likely to emerge next, and ultimately prevent them from doing so. With enough data, coupled with artificial intelligence and machine learning, they argue, the process could be similar to predicting the weather⁶.

Reams of data are available to train models to predict the weather. By contrast, it is exceedingly rare for viruses to emerge and cause outbreaks. Around 250 human viruses have been described, and only a small subset of these have caused major epidemics this century.

Advocates of prediction also argue that it will be possible to anticipate how likely a virus is to emerge in people on the basis of its sequence, and by using knowledge of how it interacts with cells (obtained, for instance, by studying the virus in human cell cultures).

This is misguided. Determining which of more than 1.6 million animal viruses are capable of replicating in humans and transmitting between them would require many decades' worth of laboratory work in cell cultures and animals. Even if researchers

managed to link each virus genome sequence to substantial experimental data, all sorts of other factors determine whether a virus jumps species and emerges in a human population, such as the distribution and density of animal hosts. Influenza viruses have circulated in horses since the 1950s and in dogs since the early 2000s, for instance⁷. These viruses have not emerged in human populations, and perhaps never will — for unknown reasons.

In short, there aren't enough data on virus outbreaks for researchers to be able to accurately predict the next outbreak strain. Nor is there a good enough understanding of what drives viruses to jump hosts, making it difficult to construct predictive models.

Biodiversity-based prediction also ignores the fact that viruses are not fixed entities. New variants of RNA viruses appear every day. This speedy evolution means that surveys would need to be done continuously to be informative. The cost would dwarf the proposed \$1.2-billion budget for one-time sequencing.

Even if it were possible to identify which viruses are likely to emerge in humans, thousands of candidates could end up being identified, each with a low probability of causing an outbreak. What should be done in that case? Costs would skyrocket if vaccines and therapeutics were proposed for even a handful of these.

Screen and sequence

Currently, the most effective and realistic way to fight outbreaks is to monitor human populations in the countries and locations that are most vulnerable to infectious disease. This can be done by local clinicians, health workers in non-governmental organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF; also known as Doctors Without Borders), and global institutions such as the World Health Organization (WHO).

We advocate the detailed screening of people who are exhibiting symptoms that cannot easily be diagnosed. Such tests should use the latest sequencing technologies to characterize all the pathogens that have infected an individual — the human 'infectome'⁸. To track previous infections, investigators should also assess each person's immune response, by analysing components of their blood using broad-scale serology⁹.

Emerging diseases are commonly associated with population expansions — when people encroach on habitats occupied by animals — as well as with environmental disturbances and climate change. Deforestation, for instance, can promote human interactions with animals that carry new threats, and can increase encounters with new vector species such as ticks and mosquitoes¹⁰. Animal die-offs, for example that of bar-headed geese (*Anser*

indicus) at Lake Qinghai in China in 2005 (which was caused by the H5N1 influenza virus), can also flag problem regions or emerging pathogens. Surveillance efforts should therefore focus on communities that live and work in such environments.

Identifying which pathogen is causing an outbreak is no longer the bottleneck it once was. It took researchers two years to determine HIV as the cause of AIDS in the early 1980s using microscopy and other techniques. By contrast, in 2012 it took only weeks for investigators using genomic technologies to discover the coronavirus that caused Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

Rapid identification of viruses can be achieved only if such technologies — and the people trained to use them — are globally available, including in resource-limited regions where the risk of outbreaks might be higher. Thankfully, relevant capacity-building programmes are now beginning to be established, such as the Human Heredity and Health in Africa (H3Africa) Initiative, run by the UK Wellcome Trust and the US National Institutes of Health¹¹.

Once an emerging outbreak virus has been identified, it needs to be analysed quickly to establish what type it is; which molecular mechanisms (such as receptor type) enable it to jump between individuals; how it spreads through human populations; and how it affects those infected. In other words, at least four kinds of analysis are needed: genomic, virological, epidemiological and clinical. And the data must be passed to key stakeholders, from researchers and health workers on the ground to international agencies such as the WHO and the MSF. Data must be kept as free of restrictions as possible, within the constraints of protections of patient privacy and other ethical issues.

This will best be achieved through an established global network of highly trained local researchers, such as the WHO Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). Real-time tools for reconstructing and tracking outbreaks at the genomic level, such as portable sequencing devices, are improving fast⁸. Information gathered during recent outbreaks has quickly had tangible impacts on public-health decisions, largely owing to data generation and analysis by many research teams within days of people being infected¹².

For instance, in the 2013–16 Ebola epidemic, genome sequencing of the virus proved that a person could sexually transmit the disease more than a year after becoming infected. This prompted the WHO to increase its recommended number of tests for persistent infection in survivors of the disease.

Ultimately, the challenge is to link genomic, clinical and epidemiological data within days of an outbreak being detected, including information about how people in an affected community are interacting. Such an open, collaborative approach to tackling the emergence of infectious disease is now possible. This is partly thanks to technology, but is mainly due to a shift in perception about the importance of this approach. At least in genomic epidemiology, there is a growing move towards real-time, open-access data and analysis, aided by the use of preprint servers and wikis such as Virological (<http://virological.org>). This type of collaborative effort can complement the work of agencies including the WHO and the MSF, which focus predominantly on providing information, isolating those who have been infected, and so on.

So far, researchers have sampled little of the viral universe. Surveys of animals will undoubtedly result in the discovery of many thousands of new viruses. These data will benefit studies of diversity and evolution, and could tell us whether and why some pathogens might jump species boundaries more frequently than others. But, given the rarity of outbreaks and the complexity of host-pathogen interactions, it is arrogant to imagine that we could use such surveys to predict and mitigate the emergence of disease.

New viruses will continue to emerge unexpectedly. There is a lot we can and must do to be better prepared.

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Subject: RE: 04/22 - GEC and EAP CCP Twitter, Chinese Media, and MFA Coverage of COVID and U.S.
Date: Wed, 22 Apr 2020 12:51:28 +0000

Logical Fallacy: Virus could have only come from animals or the lab. False Choice.

It could have come from animals in a lab.

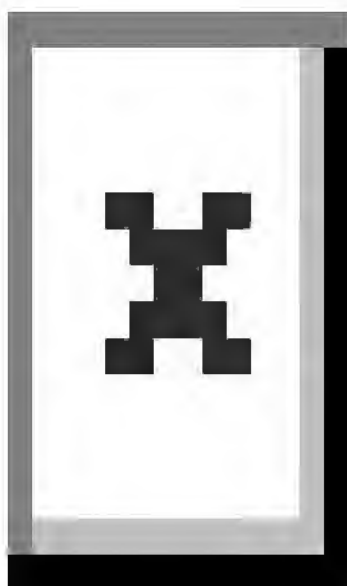
I'm learning!

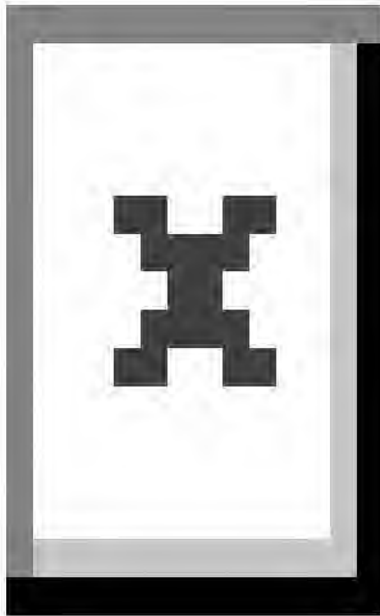
From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2020 8:49 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (h)(6)
Cc: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) (h)(6) (Shenyang) (b)(6)
Subject: 04/22 - GEC and EAP CCP Twitter, Chinese Media, and MFA Coverage of COVID and U.S.

Twitter

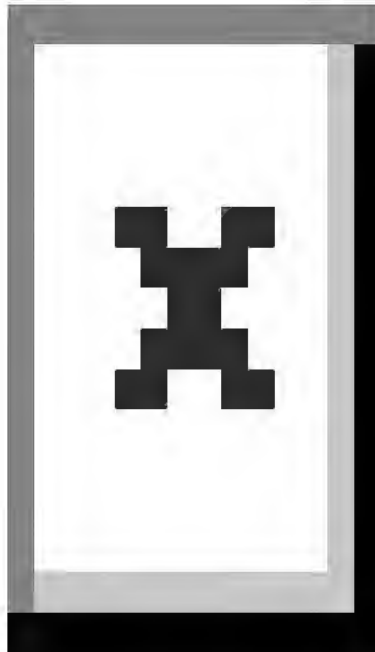
BLUF: China continues to refute Wuhan lab origin claims. Chinese Embassy in Kenya reiterates PRC stands by its African friends in Guangzhou and multiple platforms criticize Missouri lawsuit against PRC, including labeling it a "political farce." Other posts highlight claims that the US is spreading COVID-19 through deportation of sick migrants, allegations of US spreading disinformation and attempts to discredit recent GEC report on PRC, Russia and Iran disinfo convergence, and continued coverage of US inadequate response, including with a cartoon that this is evidence of Western decay. PRC state media, foreign missions and ambassadors continue to push positive localized messaging on COVID cooperation and assistance and reinforce Beijing as a global health leader and that its COVID-19 response should be a model for others.

1. Global Times, Chinese Embassy in Italy, CGTN France, Chen Weihua tweet and reply: China refutes Wuhan lab origin claims



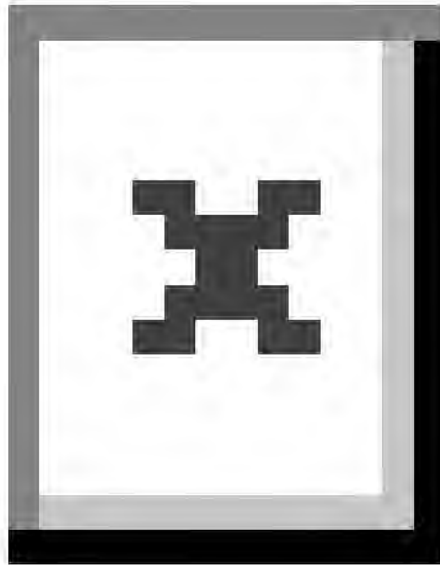


2. Chinese Embassy in Kenya replies: Response to allegations of discrimination against Africans in China

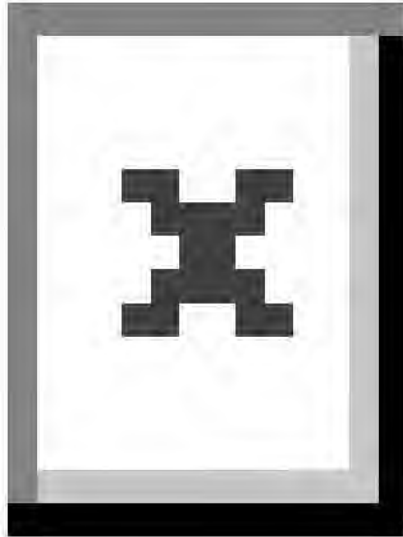


3. Hu Xijin, CGTN, Chen Weihua, Global Times: China response to lawsuit from Missouri

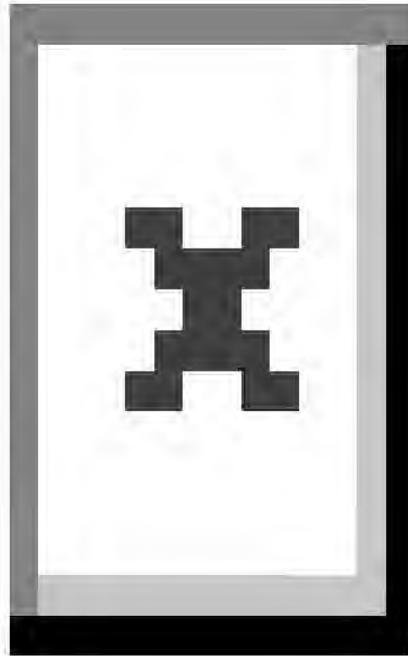




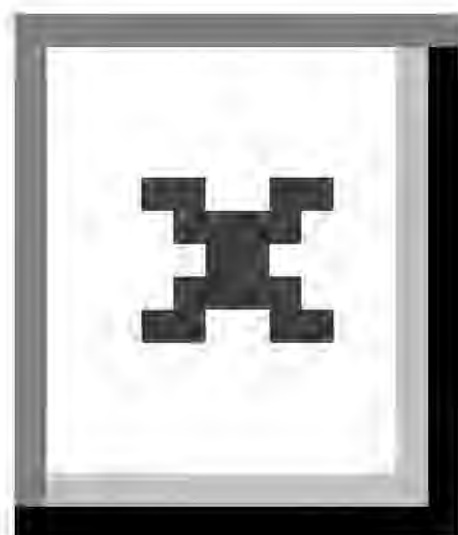
4. China Daily: US exporting COVID-19 cases to vulnerable countries via deportation of sick migrants

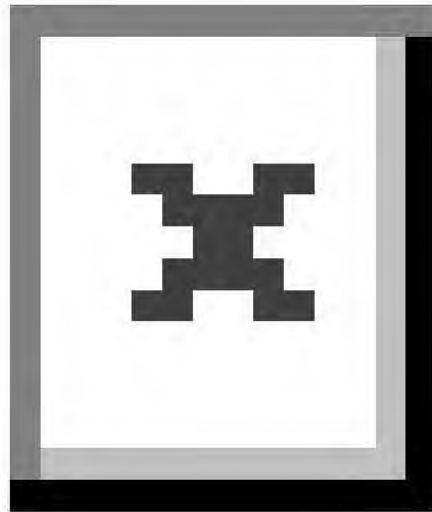


5. Chen Weihua reply, CGTN, China Daily: Accusations of US spreading false statements about Chinese disinformation, malaria drug and Chinese “fake” death numbers



6. Hu Xijin, Chen Weihua retweets, GlobalTimes, GT Opinion: US Inadequate response





Note: From the 43 accounts monitored, a total of 962 tweets were published between 21 April 8am EST and 22 April 8am EST. Of the 962 total tweets, 193 tweets included mentions of the U.S.

Chinese Media and MFA Coverage of COVID and U.S.

BLUF: The U.S. fabricates rumors and lies to cover up its own failures. U.S. unleashes political viruses to cover up its own failure. Navarro's remarks are irresponsible. The U.S.' high mortality rate in this epidemic has led to a serious humanitarian crisis. PRC will continue to support WHO. Missouri lawsuit is absurd. Ambassador Cui at Bloomberg event ""It's clear if our two countries can cooperate with each other, both will benefit. If we have confrontation, both will lose."

In the News: Local cases in Harbin, new CCP high-level coordination group – the Safe China Construction Coordinating Small Group and Li Keqiang chaired State Council meeting. Missouri lawsuit is absurd, PRC medical donations to other countries, PRC sovereignty in the South China

Sea, Beijing issues plans for reopening sports venues, and MFA reminds Chinese citizens not to travel abroad for the time being.

MFA on Twitter: Ambassador Cui delivered remarks at Bloomberg event and tweeted event. MFA tweets support for PRC citizens overseas, retweets from the briefing on the Missouri lawsuit and U.S. bills, and retweets of PRC aid including to France, Japan, Zimbabwe, ASEAN, and the U.S. PRC Embassy in U.S. retweeted aid donation in Utah and donations from Jack Ma to WHO. Hua retweeted China Daily on "facts and truth" and Zhao retweeted PRC Mission to ASEAN re. support for ASEAN.

4/22 MFA Briefing: Geng Shuang

- **Missouri lawsuit:** This so-called "lawsuit" is very absurd and has no factual and legal basis at all. China has started to regularly inform the United States of updated information since Jan 3. The so-called "lawsuit" is purely malicious vexatious litigation, which violates basic legal principles. According to the principle of sovereign equality in international law, sovereign actions taken by Chinese governments at all levels in terms of epidemic prevention and control are not subject to the jurisdiction of the U.S. courts.
- **Pew Survey:** The friendship between China and the United States conforms to the will of both countries and their peoples, and also serves the common interests of the two. We always believe that China and the United States will both benefit from cooperation and stand to lose from confrontation.
- **Chinese aircraft in Vanuatu:** The relevant report you mentioned is not accurate. We also want to express regret and dissatisfaction with the untrue statements made by Australia. The Australian media should not look at it with political considerations or even make a fuss of it intentionally. Also, individual Australian politicians should not fan the fire out of ulterior motives.
- **Compensation from China:** Individual US politicians turn a blind eye on facts and discredit China in order to shirk their responsibility for improper handling of the epidemic. They continue political manipulation to disrupt China-U.S. cooperation at such a critical moment when all dedicate to the fighting against the epidemic. Their behaviors are unpopular and unhelpful to containing the spread of the virus in the U.S.
- **Canadian supply planes return empty:** China has provided positive assistance and convenience to the Canadian side in terms of material procurement and charter flight permits. The Canadian side also expressed its gratitude many times. The relevant media reports are not accurate. Neither the relevant Chinese airport nor the air traffic control department has imposed restrictions on the transit time of Canadian cargo charter flights.
- **NSA O'Brien:** Virus knows no nationality. The epidemic is a common enemy of all mankind. It's clear to all that the real purpose of passing responsibilities at this time is to hide their own problems. We advise these people to spend the efforts and time on caring their own business and do good deeds to their people.

Chinese Media

4/22 China Daily: U.S. unleashes political viruses to cover up its own failure. The political viruses of blame games and racial stigmas spreading in the United States have exposed the chronic ills of U.S. society — unending bipartisan fight, a divided public, and accusing others for their own blunders, many of which are contradictory and ridiculous. But the so-called investigation will only lead to the U.S. administration further scapegoating China to cover up its own failures.

4/22 People's Daily: Tracing the origin of the coronavirus is a serious issue of science and calls for rationality and professionalism. The conspiracy theory of the coronavirus originating from laboratories has long been smashed by the international science community. Certain U.S. politicians and the media's politicization of the science issue is an attempt to disturb international solidarity on cooperation to fight the virus and has bad ramifications. Any person with the slightest rationality and respect for sciences will disdain these U.S. politicians' show. Lies will not last long.

4/21 Xinhua: The U.S has some of the world's most innovative scientists. Yet their ability to imagine can be easily outshined when some Washington politicians scramble to smear China during the coronavirus pandemic. White House trade advisor Peter Navarro alleged that China may have withheld data on the virus during its early stages to win a business race to find a vaccine ahead of others, adding "but we're going to beat them." Navarro's remarks only lay bare his cold-blooded calculation that for him, commercial and political interests override people's lives and health. It is time for those China hawks in Washington to abandon their old-fashioned Cold War mentality and zero-sum game mindset and build both trust and cooperation with others.

4/21 Xinhua: White House trade advisor Peter Navarro made irresponsible remarks on April 20 saying that China may have withheld data on the virus during its early stages to win a business race to find a vaccine ahead of others. Such "Navarro thinking" ignores facts and defies scientific common sense. Navarro's remarks show that his dictionary contains only profit and calculation. The world needs to recognize the dangers of Navarro thinking and must not allow this "political virus" to wreak havoc and undermine global cooperation in fighting the epidemic

4/22 Guangming Daily: The ups and downs in the global fight against COVID-19 warn us of political viruses such as hegemonism, racism, and populism that have pushed the moral

envelope to join forces with the coronavirus. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and a group of American lawmakers are making up lies in an astonishing manner, judging others by themselves, and playing the trick of a thief crying "Stop thief." Behind their rumor fabrication is an extremely selfish nature of ignoring lives and deviating from morality.

4/22 Xinhua: In the face of rising COVID-19 infections, certain Western politicians' smearing of China aims to shift blame and evade responsibility. Such a course of action does little to help their countries cope with the outbreak and has a negative impact on international cooperation on COVID-19. The global wave of condemnation of U.S. halting membership fees to the World Health Organization shows any act of politicization of the pandemic will not be supported. Grumbling, recriminating, and buck-passing serves no one.

4/21 Global Times: Navarro hits new low with vaccine conspiracy theory. The last thing the world needs in the face of the global coronavirus pandemic is groundless conspiracy theories, which are not only misleading but also interfere in global efforts to combat the virus. But some U.S. politicians, turning a blind eye to what people in the U.S. really need, only care about how to seize political interests by stigmatizing China.

4/21 CRI: Since the outbreak, the Wuhan institute of virology has come under constant attack from U.S. politicians and media. These attacks are full of conjecture and preposterous reasoning, without any basis in fact, and are made up entirely by imagination. If some people continue to fabricate "conspiracy theories" for political purposes, it will only cause interference and damage to the international scientific community's anti-epidemic cooperation. America's enemy is the virus, not China.

4/21 Global Times: Observers said the impact of COVID-19 pandemic is like a war, which would cause more catastrophic damage and weigh on the foundation of global governance and stability, even leading to serious geopolitical instability. Some countries' moves against the cooperative trend, including the U.S.' intensive sanctions and disinvestment from the WHO, will do no good to pandemic controlling but possibly rather hurt the U.S.' international prestige and influence.

4/21 Xinhua: MFA: supporting for WHO equals to safeguarding the solidarity and cooperation of the international community. The WHO upholds objectivity and justice, Geng said, adding that there is no factual basis for the U.S. to smear and attack the WHO.

4/21 China Daily: The WHO confirmed it has been working very closely with United States COVID-19 experts since the beginning of the outbreak, a rebuke to U.S. President Donald Trump's claim that the WHO did not inform the U.S. of the threat in a timely fashion.

4/21 Global Times: The head of the WHO warned that "the worst is yet ahead of us" in the coronavirus outbreak. The warning came as many in the U.S. and Europe are eager to go back to work amid the outbreak. The restless sentiment in the West has been exploited and manipulated by some politicians. Pre-mature resumption of work may trigger the coronavirus situation in the West to rebound and drag down global achievements in fighting the virus and plunge countries like China and South Korea into more risks.

4/21 Global Times: The U.S.' high mortality rate in this epidemic has led to a serious humanitarian crisis. Some American politicians have realized the seriousness of the problem after the U.S. mortality rate increased. They want to find fault in China, trying to prove that the U.S.' relatively high mortality rate is because of China's so-called fake data. The U.S. is trying to justify its high death toll, because the U.S. government has regarded the COVID-19 fight as a political tool from the very beginning.

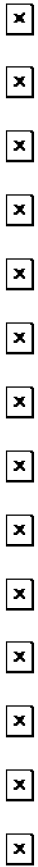
4/21 Global Times: While the coronavirus epidemic in China has been tamed, it has not stopped Western media, especially those in the U.S., from trying to exploit the crisis. They have now found another weapon to demonize China, calling it "racist" and "xenophobic." In China, many foreigners enjoy preferential policies, and overall, foreigners have a better life than the average Chinese. It is ludicrous to see Western media reports pinning the racism label on China while there is a growing number of news reports about Chinese and Asians facing racist abuse in the U.S., proving that xenophobia has flared there.

4/22 CGTN: Chinese Ambassador to the U.S. Cui Tiankai says China have shared everything we learned from COVID-19 with the WHO and the medical communities of other countries, including the U.S. Speaking at an event hosted by the Bloomberg New Economy Forum on Tuesday, Cui urged the public to pay more attention to the views of scientists on the COVID-19 pandemic instead of groundless accusations made by some politicians.

4/21 Xinhua: Most of the discharged COVID-19 patients retesting positive in nucleic acid tests showed no obvious symptoms, and very few saw their symptoms worsen, a health expert said Tuesday.

MFA Twitter





Sender: "Stilwell, David R (b)(6)

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

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

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

From: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)

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

For den, Robert W (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

CC: (b)(6)

Subject: Press Guidance Request: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

Date: Wed, 1 Apr 2020 11:50:09 +0000

Hello China Desk,

Since DCM Rob For den will be speaking with a journalist today at 12:45. Could you help provide a point on (b)(5)? I've drafted this response to help get this flash clearance started. Thank you for the FEMA points on China PPE yesterday.

If Asked:

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit

SharePoint | [state.gov](#) | [InfoCentral](#)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 1, 2020 6:30 AM

To: (b)(6) EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>; SES-O <SES-O@state.gov>; Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6);

(b)(6) Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit <CoronavirusGlobalResponseCoordinationUnit@state.gov>; CGRCU Internal Site <S_CGRCU@groups.state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6) Mission China ESTH Americans - DL <MissionChinaESTHAmericans-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) BEIJING 2020 Coronavirus <BEIJING2020Coronavirus@state.gov>;

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 <ChinaMCCA@state.gov>; (h)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
 (Beijing) (h)(6) (Beijing FCS) (b)(6)
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 (b)(6) Beijing ECON clearances
 <BeijingECONclearances@state.gov>; BEIJING 2020 Coronavirus <BEIJING2020Coronavirus@state.gov>;
 SES-O <SES-O@state.gov>; EAP Bilateral Support <EAPBilateralSupport@state.gov>; (b)(6)
 (b)(6) @nsc.eop.gov>; Beijing HHS Unit Chiefs <BeijingHHSUnitChiefs@state.gov>
Subject: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

Colleagues,

Joint Embassy Beijing ESTH-POL cable sent. Regards, (b)(6)

UNCLASSIFIED

-SBU-



Action Office: POL, MGT, RSO, CONS, ECON, PAS, MED, IMO, SCIENCE, TSA, CLO, CDC

Info Office: DAO_INFO, MGT_INFO, SCIENCE_INFO, IMO_INFO, POL_INFO, EXEC_INFO, RSO_INFO, CONS_INFO, ECON_INFO

MRN: 20 BEIJING 614

Date/DTG: Apr 01, 2020 / 011021Z APR 20

From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING

Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE ROUTINE

E.O.: 13526

TAGS: SHLH, CDC, HHS, NIH, PGOV, PREL, CN, SENV, AMED, KPAO, KMDR, KHIV, KFLU, KGHI, KHLS, KSCA, KTBT, CASC, AMGT, ASEC, AID, KFLO, KFPC

Captions: ~~SENSITIVE~~
Reference: A) 20 BEIJING 294
B) 20 BEIJING 510
C) 20 BEIJING 560
D) 20 BEIJING 592
Subject: PRC Starts Asymptomatic COVID-19 Case Reporting, Omits Retrospective Cases

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary and Comment:** The PRC National Health Commission (NHC) announced March 31 that it will begin reporting identified asymptomatic COVID-19 cases starting April 1. While the new reporting requirement is a positive step, the omission of retrospective asymptomatic case information limits understanding of the pandemic's scope for global and U.S. health risk assessment. Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, PRC health authorities have publicly dismissed the risks of transmission from asymptomatic cases and downplayed fears that "silent carriers" could spread COVID-19. As some of the areas hardest hit by the epidemic reopen, top PRC officials appeared to finally acknowledge this risk. Statements by Premier Li Keqiang and China's COVID-19 leading group indicate increasing concern by PRC leadership that infections by asymptomatic cases could lead to another outbreak. Publicly reported data are lacking on the number of asymptomatic cases in China confirmed through contact tracing and laboratory testing, as the PRC's official guidelines required that reported cases of COVID-19 have signs and symptoms of clinical illness. At the same time, China's NHC has rebuffed repeated requests by HHS and the U.S. CDC for information on testing, asymptomatic cases, and other epidemiological data that could assist with addressing knowledge gaps in COVID-19 epidemiology. While the WHO technical team that visited China in February concluded that the risk of transmission from asymptomatic individuals was "relatively rare," a growing body of newly available scientific studies, epidemiological data from other affected countries, and news media reports indicate that asymptomatic cases were likely significantly undercounted during the initial phase of the outbreak and pose a greater risk than originally thought. The forthcoming serological studies announced by the NHC March 31 will potentially help provide more accurate risk assessments of asymptomatic cases. **End Summary and Comment.**

PRC Reports Number of Asymptomatic Cases for the First Time

2. (U) China's NHC on April 1 officially reported the number of current and new asymptomatic cases in Mainland China for the first time ([link](#)). According to the NHC, public health authorities reported 130 new asymptomatic infections on March 31 as of midnight, with a total of 1,367 asymptomatic patients currently in quarantine under medical observation. These asymptomatic cases include individuals who do not show any signs of illness but who have a positive laboratory test result for SARS-CoV-2. The NHC report on April 1 did not provide any retrospective information about the total number of asymptomatic infections to date, or the total number of people who have been tested.

3. (U) NHC officials stressed the need for local public health authorities to strengthen the reporting of asymptomatic infections. Consistent with the rules and guidelines for reporting diagnosed cases of symptomatic COVID-19 patients, Director Chang Jile of NHC's Disease

Control Bureau said on March 31 that local authorities would be required to upload reports of positive asymptomatic cases to the national online reporting system within two hours, and that county-level CDCs would be expected to confirm cases in order to identify close contacts and the possible source of transmission within 24 hours. Asymptomatic cases and any close contacts are required to undergo 14 days of medical quarantine at a government-designated facility. Chang also announced on March 31 that the NHC would conduct a representative serological survey of populations in major outbreak-affected areas to identify the larger population of affected individuals, including symptomatic and asymptomatic persons ([link](#)).

[**Note:** The results of the serological survey will be especially critical for helping us understand the burden of disease, including the true estimated burden of asymptomatic cases. As of now, it seems as if asymptomatic cases are being identified through testing of contacts of confirmed cases, which means that these numbers would not represent the true burden of asymptomatic individuals. **End Note.**]

PRC Leadership Increasingly Uneasy

4. (SBU) Commentary by senior CCP leaders indicated the party is increasingly concerned about a second wave of infections, particularly the risks posed by asymptomatic cases of COVID-19. Premier Li Keqiang called on cadres to actively and accurately report cases of COVID-19 during a March 23 leading small group meeting, one of the first times a senior leader has publicly exhorted cadres to accurately report data during the epidemic. Li also called for transparent reporting at a March 26 meeting, emphasizing the importance of testing and reporting on cases of asymptomatic persons, which posed a particular risk as China began to reopen. Li reiterated these points on March 30, when he again underscored to cadres that China must strengthen its focus on preventing COVID-19 transmission, particularly by asymptomatic patients.

Shifting Diagnosis Procedures Left Out Asymptomatic Cases

5. (U) Since January, China's National Health Commission (NHC) has revised its diagnosis and reporting guidelines for COVID-19 several times but, until now, had not included lab-confirmed but asymptomatic persons as reportable cases. Until April 1, NHC reported only confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases. Under NHC guidelines, patients reported as "suspected" and "confirmed" cases of COVID-19 must show some sign of illness, such as fever, cough, or radiographic pneumonia, usually in combination with evidence of possible exposure, whether through contact with an infected person or travel to an affected area. Per the current guidelines, in addition to the epidemiological and clinical criteria for suspected cases, confirmed cases must also be diagnosed through a respiratory or blood specimen test. [**Note:** On February 12, NHC had re-defined "confirmed" cases to also include "clinically diagnosed" patients in Hubei Province who exhibited pneumonia-like symptoms on chest scans in the absence of a positive lab test. NHC reversed this decision a week later. **End note.**] Patients who later develop symptoms are shifted to the category of "confirmed" cases. PRC officials have maintained that the rationale for excluding asymptomatic cases from the case definitions was to ensure resources were directed to patients showing illness. [**Note:** Directing tests towards ill patients is a sensible approach for case finding especially when laboratory resources are limited. A serosurvey, which is often conducted later in an outbreak, is the best approach for identifying the true

burden of asymptomatic cases. **End Note]** In practice, however, the exclusion of asymptomatic cases from the official reports for COVID-19 in China has resulted in a lack of public information on the presence of such cases, as provincial health authorities had not been required to include such cases in their daily reports until now.

6. ~~(SBU)~~ PRC public health experts partially attributed the omission of asymptomatic cases during the initial phase of the COVID-19 outbreak to limited Chinese testing capabilities, as opposed to a national effort to suppress case numbers. Chinese hospitals were initially unfamiliar with reporting procedures and the healthcare system was overwhelmed with the thousands of cases, explained NHC Director-General of Healthcare Reform Liang Wannian. Other PRC public health officials have said Chinese healthcare workers were grossly under-resourced and lacked proper testing kits, forcing them to concentrate solely on symptomatic cases for testing and official reporting. An executive at a government-approved testing kit company told ESTHOff that initial PRC reporting on COVID-19 case numbers was initially questionable, but that the mass mobilization of medical supplies, testing kits, and hospital personnel had since equipped Chinese medical facilities with the resources to detect both symptomatic and asymptomatic cases.

Underestimating the Risk

7. ~~(SBU)~~ Assessments by PRC health authorities and the WHO during the height of the COVID-19 epidemic in China in February reinforced the view that asymptomatic cases did not constitute a significant risk. The first large-scale epidemiological study by China's CDC of COVID-19 cases in China, published February 17 in *China CDC Weekly* and the *Chinese Journal of Epidemiology*, reported that asymptomatic cases represented only 1.2 percent of the 72,314 COVID-19 cases documented between December 31 and February 11 ([link](#)). The study sample included 44,672 lab-confirmed cases, 10,567 clinically diagnosed cases, 889 asymptomatic cases, and 16,186 suspected cases. **[Note:** The asymptomatic cases included in the studies were reportedly diagnosed based on nucleic acid tests. **End note.]** Shortly thereafter, the WHO noted in the summary report of the technical mission to China published February 28 that, "The proportion of truly asymptomatic infections is unclear but appears to be relatively rare and does not appear to be a major driver of transmission" ([link](#)). The WHO report lacked a critical assessment of the data provided to the WHO team by the PRC, including on asymptomatic cases. The WHO report also did not include a presentation or evaluation of laboratory testing data, despite WHO guidelines and requests for information about the total number of lab tests conducted and the number of laboratory tests positive for COVID-19 (Ref A).

8. ~~(SBU)~~ As the domestic epidemic situation in China improved, PRC public health officials continued to downplay the risk of transmission from asymptomatic cases and focused their attention on reducing foreign imported cases. During a March 24 press conference, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) Chief Epidemiologist Wu Zunyou flatly rejected a possible resurgence of COVID-19, elaborating that PRC contact tracing already identified all asymptomatic patients. **[Note:** Contact tracing is the process of identifying people that may have entered close contact with an infected individual and isolating them in quarantine for testing regardless of whether they manifest symptoms. **End Note]**. In a March 28 press

briefing, NHC spokesperson Mi Feng declared the number of confirmed cases still being treated dropped to less than 3,000, and that China successfully prevented further spread of COVID-19 domestically. Mi warned, however, that China would remain cautious toward foreign imported cases. [Note: While the exclusion of asymptomatic cases hindered our ability to conduct risk assessment on the publicly available data, the official PRC case counts showing an overall declining trend of COVID-19 cases during late February and March is consistent with other indicators, including reduced hospital burden and relaxation of closed management measures. Post has assessed the overall improvement in the epidemic situation in China in its recent reporting (Refs B-D). **End note.**]

9. (SBU) Recent studies and case data from other countries have revealed that asymptomatic infections may represent a much higher percentage of total infections than originally thought. PRC officials did not include asymptomatic cases in publicly available reports as they did not meet the case definition designated for confirmed cases. Citing unpublished official documents, however, *South China Morning Post* reported on March 23 that the PRC had identified more than 40,000 asymptomatic cases in China. Researchers at Huazhong University of Science and Technology estimated that asymptomatic cases could represent 30-60 percent of all COVID-19 infections in China.

Risks of a Resurgence

10. (SBU) The lack of public information on asymptomatic cases has exacerbated the difficulty of detecting and preventing the transmission of COVID-19, especially when contact tracing failed. On March 28, NHC reported a new case in Henan province where an asymptomatic case of COVID-19 transmitted the virus to a friend who unknowingly transmitted the disease to two people. Public health authorities eventually tracked the asymptomatic cases down, but the three individuals already had close contact with 68 other individuals before undergoing quarantine for symptom monitoring. Public health experts have worried that these types of cases would become more frequent as restrictions in Hubei province and the rest of the country eased, creating higher risks for a resurgence of COVID-19 to a susceptible population.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING: (b)(6)

(b)(6) (Wuhan/Beijing)

Cleared By: HHS: (b)(6) (Beijing)

ECON: (b)(6) (Beijing)

POL: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Approved By: ESTH: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Released By: BEIJING: (b)(6) (Beijing)

Info: SEOUL, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; TAIPEI, AIT ROUTINE; HANOI, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; SINGAPORE, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; ULAANBAATAR, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; PHNOM PENH, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; BANGKOK, AMEMBASSY ROUTINE; HONG

XMT:

KONG, AMCONSUL *ROUTINE*; MANILA, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; PARIS, AMEMBASSY *ROUTINE*; NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; ATLANTA GA, CDC *ROUTINE*; DIA
WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; PACOM
IDHS HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*;
ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*
CARACAS, AMEMBASSY; ST PETERSBURG, AMCONSUL

Action Post:

NONE

Dissemination Rule:

POL, MGT_ACTION, RSO, CONS_ACTION, ECON, DAO_INFO,
POL_INFO, SCIENCE_INFO, IMO_INFO, PAS, MED, IMO, SCIENCE,
RSO_INFO, TSA, CONS_INFO, CLO, CDC

UNCLASSIFIED

SBU

Sender:

(b)(6)

EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>;
Forden, Robert W (Beijing)

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Recipient:

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: Beijing Econ Unit Chiefs <BeijingEconUnitChiefs@state.gov>
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
CC: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Night Note on Chinese Ebola Vaccine Use
Date: Wed, 13 Jun 2018 03:07:37 -0400

From ESTH:

~~(SBU)~~ **Chinese Team Looks to Use New Ebola Vaccine in the D.R.C:** The government of China (GOC) has shipped a newly approved Ebola vaccine to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where a GOC team will seek to use the largely untested drug, according to Chinese media reports and Emb contacts. The team will "seek to use the Chinese developed vaccine... to help with control and prevention of the disease," the head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention told state-run media. He added that "for the present," the vaccine would likely "only cover Chinese living in Congo." ESTH contacts questioned the speed at which the Chinese Food and Drug Administration approved the vaccine last fall, noting that the drug had "not been demonstrated effective" in a human clinical trial and that "limited animal efficacy data" had been released. The DRC government had not received a request from China to use the vaccine, a DRC spokesman told foreign media on June 8. The World Health Organization has previously recommended use of an Ebola vaccine being developed by Merck.
(ESTH - (b)(6))

Official -~~SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

Sender: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Beijing Econ Unit Chiefs <BeijingEconUnitChiefs@state.gov>;
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Recipient: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing)

From: (b)(6)
EAP-FO-Principals-DL <EAP-FO-Principals-DL@state.gov>;
DL NSC Asia (b)(6)
Matthew Pottinger (b)(6)
(b)(6) (S) (b)(6)
To: Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) (Geneva) (b)(6)
(b)(6)
(b)(6) (Bangkok) (b)(6)
Subject: More COVID coverup reporting
Date: Wed, 3 Jun 2020 02:35:02 +0000

Lest we forget. Highlights of particularly notable bits, including on the Jan. 3 order to destroy samples, Professor Zhang Yongzhen releasing the genome sequence before the government, early Wall Street Journal reporting that angered officials, the coverup complicating the first foreign case in Bangkok, etc.

<https://apnews.com/3c061794970661042b18d5aeaaed9fae?>

China delayed releasing coronavirus info, frustrating WHO

By The Associated Press

June 2, 2020

Throughout January, the World Health Organization publicly praised China for what it called a speedy response to the new coronavirus. It repeatedly thanked the Chinese government for sharing the genetic map of the virus "immediately," and said its work and commitment to transparency were "very impressive, and beyond words."

But behind the scenes, it was a much different story, one of significant delays by China and considerable frustration among WHO officials over not getting the information they needed to fight the spread of the deadly virus, The Associated Press has found.

Despite the plaudits, China in fact sat on releasing the genetic map, or genome, of the virus for more than a week after three different government labs had fully decoded the information. Tight controls on information and competition within the Chinese public health system were to blame, according to dozens of interviews and internal documents.

Chinese government labs only released the genome after another lab published it ahead of authorities on a virologist website on Jan. 11. Even then, China stalled for at least two weeks more on providing WHO with detailed data on patients and cases, according to recordings of internal meetings held by the U.N. health agency through January — all at a time when the outbreak arguably might have been dramatically slowed.

WHO officials were lauding China in public because they wanted to coax more information out of the government, the recordings obtained by the AP suggest. Privately, they complained in meetings the week of Jan. 6 that China was not sharing enough data to assess how effectively the virus spread between people or what risk it posed to the rest of the world, costing valuable time.

"We're going on very minimal information," said American epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove, now WHO's technical lead for COVID-19, in one internal meeting. "It's clearly not enough for you to do proper planning."

"We're currently at the stage where yes, they're giving it to us 15 minutes before it appears on CCTV," said WHO's top official in China, Dr. Gauden Galea, referring to the state-owned China Central Television, in another meeting.

The story behind the early response to the virus comes at a time when the U.N. health agency is under siege, and has agreed to an independent probe of how the pandemic was handled globally. After repeatedly praising the Chinese response early on, U.S. President Donald Trump has blasted WHO in recent weeks for allegedly colluding with China to hide the extent of the coronavirus crisis. He cut ties with the organization on Friday, jeopardizing the approximately \$450 million the U.S. gives every year as WHO's biggest single donor.

In the meantime, Chinese President Xi Jinping has vowed to pitch in \$2 billion over the next two years to fight the coronavirus, saying China has always provided information to WHO and the world "in a most timely fashion."

The new information does not support the narrative of either the U.S. or China, but instead portrays an agency now stuck in the middle that was urgently trying to solicit more data despite limits to its own authority. Although international law obliges countries to report information to WHO that could have an impact on public health, the U.N. agency has no enforcement powers and cannot independently investigate epidemics within countries. Instead, it must rely on the cooperation of member states.

The recordings suggest that rather than colluding with China, as Trump declared, WHO was kept in the dark as China gave it the minimal information required by law. However, the agency did try to portray China in the best light, likely as a means to secure more information. And WHO experts genuinely thought Chinese scientists had done "a very good job" in detecting and decoding the virus, despite the lack of transparency from Chinese officials.

WHO staffers debated how to press China for gene sequences and detailed patient data without angering authorities, worried about losing access and getting Chinese scientists into trouble. Under international law, WHO is required to quickly share information and alerts with member countries about an evolving crisis. Galea noted WHO could not indulge China's wish to sign off on information before telling other countries because "that is not respectful of our responsibilities."

In the second week of January, WHO's chief of emergencies, Dr. Michael Ryan, told colleagues it was time to "shift gears" and apply more pressure on China, fearing a repeat of the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome that started in China in 2002 and killed nearly 800 people worldwide.

"This is exactly the same scenario, endlessly trying to get updates from China about what was going on," he said. "WHO barely got out of that one with its neck intact given the issues that arose around transparency in southern China."

Ryan said the best way to "protect China" was for WHO to do its own independent analysis with data from the Chinese government, because otherwise the spread of the virus between people would be in question and "other countries will take action accordingly." Ryan also noted that China was not cooperating in the same way some other countries had in the past.

"This would not happen in Congo and did not happen in Congo and other places," he said, probably referring to the Ebola outbreak that began there in 2018. "We need to see the data.....It's absolutely important at this point."

The delay in the release of the genome stalled the recognition of its spread to other countries, along with the global development of tests, drugs and vaccines. The lack of detailed patient data also made it harder to determine how quickly the virus was spreading — a critical question in stopping it.

Between the day the full genome was first decoded by a government lab on Jan. 2 and the day WHO declared a global emergency on Jan. 30, the outbreak spread by a factor of 100 to 200 times, according to retrospective infection data from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The virus has now infected over 6 million people worldwide and killed more than 375,000.

"It's obvious that we could have saved more lives and avoided many, many deaths if China and the WHO had acted faster," said Ali Mokdad, a professor at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington.

However, Mokdad and other experts also noted that if WHO had been more confrontational with China, it could have triggered a far worse situation of not getting any information at all.

If WHO had pushed too hard, it could even have been kicked out of China, said Adam Kamradt-Scott, a global health professor at the University of Sydney. But he added that a delay of just a few days in releasing genetic sequences can be critical in an outbreak. And he noted that as Beijing's lack of transparency becomes even clearer, WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus's continued defense of China is problematic.

"It's definitely damaged WHO's credibility," said Kamradt-Scott. "Did he go too far? I think the

evidence on that is clear....it has led to so many questions about the relationship between China and WHO. It is perhaps a cautionary tale."

WHO and its officials named in this story declined to answer questions asked by The Associated Press without audio or written transcripts of the recorded meetings, which the AP was unable to supply to protect its sources.

"Our leadership and staff have worked night and day in compliance with the organization's rules and regulations to support and share information with all Member States equally, and engage in frank and forthright conversations with governments at all levels," a WHO statement said.

China's National Health Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had no comment. But in the past few months, China has repeatedly defended its actions, and many other countries — including the U.S. — have responded to the virus with even longer delays of weeks and even months.

"Since the beginning of the outbreak, we have been continuously sharing information on the epidemic with the WHO and the international community in an open, transparent and responsible manner," said Liu Mingzhu, an official with the National Health Commission's International Department, at a press conference on May 15.

The race to find the genetic map of the virus started in late December, according to the story that unfolds in interviews, documents and the WHO recordings. That's when doctors in Wuhan noticed mysterious clusters of patients with fevers and breathing problems who weren't improving with standard flu treatment. Seeking answers, they sent test samples from patients to commercial labs.

By Dec. 27, one lab, Vision Medicals, had pieced together most of the genome of a new coronavirus with striking similarities to SARS. Vision Medicals shared its data with Wuhan officials and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, as reported first by Chinese finance publication Caixin and independently confirmed by the AP.

On Dec. 30, Wuhan health officials issued internal notices warning of the unusual pneumonia, which leaked on social media. That evening, Shi Zhengli, a coronavirus expert at the Wuhan Institute of Virology who is famous for having traced the SARS virus to a bat cave, was alerted to the new disease, according to an interview with Scientific American. Shi took the first train from a conference in Shanghai back to Wuhan.

The next day, Chinese CDC director Gao Fu dispatched a team of experts to Wuhan. Also on Dec. 31, WHO first learned about the cases from an open-source platform that scouts for intelligence on outbreaks, emergencies chief Ryan has said.

WHO officially requested more information on Jan. 1. Under international law, members have

24 to 48 hours to respond, and China reported two days later that there were 44 cases and no deaths.

By Jan. 2, Shi had decoded the entire genome of the virus, according to a notice later posted on her institute's website.

Scientists agree that Chinese scientists detected and sequenced the then-unknown pathogen with astonishing speed, in a testimony to China's vastly improved technical capabilities since SARS, during which a WHO-led group of scientists took months to identify the virus. This time, Chinese virologists proved within days that it was a never-before-seen coronavirus. Tedros would later say Beijing set "a new standard for outbreak response."

But when it came to sharing the information with the world, things began to go awry.

On Jan. 3, the National Health Commission issued a confidential notice ordering labs with the virus to either destroy their samples or send them to designated institutes for safekeeping. The notice, first reported by Caixin and seen by the AP, forbade labs from publishing about the virus without government authorization. The order barred Shi's lab from publishing the genetic sequence or warning of the potential danger.

Chinese law states that research institutes cannot conduct experiments on potentially dangerous new viruses without approval from top health authorities. Although the law is intended to keep experiments safe, it gives top health officials wide-ranging powers over what lower-level labs can or cannot do.

"If the virologist community had operated with more autonomy....the public would have been informed of the lethal risk of the new virus much earlier," said Edward Gu, a professor at Zhejiang University, and Li Lantian, a PhD student at Northwestern University, in a paper published in March analyzing the outbreak.

Commission officials later repeated that they were trying to ensure lab safety, and had tasked four separate government labs with identifying the genome at the same time to get accurate, consistent results.

By Jan. 3, the Chinese CDC had independently sequenced the virus, according to internal data seen by the Associated Press. And by just after midnight on Jan. 5, a third designated government lab, the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, had decoded the sequence and submitted a report — pulling all-nighters to get results in record time, according to a state media interview. Yet even with full sequences decoded by three state labs independently, Chinese health officials remained silent. The WHO reported on Twitter that investigations were under way into an unusual cluster of pneumonia cases with no deaths in Wuhan, and said it would share "more details as we have them."

Meanwhile, at the Chinese CDC, gaps in coronavirus expertise proved a problem.

For nearly two weeks, Wuhan reported no new infections, as officials censored doctors who warned of suspicious cases. Meanwhile, researchers found the new coronavirus used a distinct spike protein to bind itself to human cells. The unusual protein and the lack of new cases lulled some Chinese CDC researchers into thinking the virus didn't easily spread between humans — like the coronavirus that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS, according to an employee who declined to be identified out of fear of retribution.

Li, the coronavirus expert, said he immediately suspected the pathogen was infectious when he spotted a leaked copy of a sequencing report in a group chat on a SARS-like coronavirus. But the Chinese CDC team that sequenced the virus lacked specialists in the molecular structure of coronaviruses and failed to consult with outside scientists, Li said. Chinese health authorities rebuffed offers of assistance from foreign experts, including Hong Kong scientists barred from a fact-finding mission to Wuhan and an American professor at a university in China.

On Jan. 5, the Shanghai Public Clinical Health Center, led by famed virologist Zhang Yongzhen, was the latest to sequence the virus. He submitted it to the GenBank database, where it sat awaiting review, and notified the National Health Commission. He warned them that the new virus was similar to SARS and likely infectious.

"It should be contagious through respiratory passages," the center said in an internal notice seen by the AP. "We recommend taking preventative measures in public areas."

On the same day, WHO said that based on preliminary information from China, there was no evidence of significant transmission between humans, and did not recommend any specific measures for travelers.

The next day, the Chinese CDC raised its emergency level to the second highest. Staffers proceeded to isolate the virus, draft lab testing guidelines, and design test kits. But the agency did not have the authority to issue public warnings, and the heightened emergency level was kept secret even from many of its own staff.

By Jan. 7, another team at Wuhan University had sequenced the pathogen and found it matched Shi's, making Shi certain they had identified a novel coronavirus. But Chinese CDC experts said they didn't trust Shi's findings and needed to verify her data before she could publish, according to three people familiar with the matter. Both the National Health Commission and the Ministry of Science and Technology, which oversees Shi's lab, declined to make Shi available for an interview.

A major factor behind the gag order, some say, was that Chinese CDC researchers wanted to publish their papers first. "They wanted to take all the credit," said Li Yize, a coronavirus researcher at the University of Pennsylvania.

Internally, the leadership of the Chinese CDC is plagued with fierce competition, six people

familiar with the system explained. They said the agency has long promoted staff based on how many papers they can publish in prestigious journals, making scientists reluctant to share data.

As the days went by, even some of the Chinese CDC's own staff began to wonder why it was taking so long for authorities to identify the pathogen.

"We were getting suspicious, since within one or two days you would get a sequencing result," a lab technician said, declining to be identified for fear of retribution.

On Jan. 8, the Wall Street Journal reported that scientists had identified a new coronavirus in samples from pneumonia patients in Wuhan, pre-empting and embarrassing Chinese officials. The lab technician told the AP they first learned about the discovery of the virus from the Journal.

The article also embarrassed WHO officials. Dr. Tom Grein, chief of WHO's acute events management team, said the agency looked "doubly, incredibly stupid." Van Kerkhove, the American expert, acknowledged WHO was "already late" in announcing the new virus and told colleagues that it was critical to push China.

Ryan, WHO's chief of emergencies, was also upset at the dearth of information.

"The fact is, we're two to three weeks into an event, we don't have a laboratory diagnosis, we don't have an age, sex or geographic distribution, we don't have an epi curve," he complained, referring to the standard graphic of outbreaks scientists use to show how an epidemic is progressing.

After the article, state media officially announced the discovery of the new coronavirus. But even then, Chinese health authorities did not release the genome, diagnostic tests, or detailed patient data that could hint at how infectious the disease was.

By that time, suspicious cases were already appearing across the region.

On Jan. 8, Thai airport officers pulled aside a woman from Wuhan with a runny nose, sore throat, and high temperature. Chulalongkorn University professor Supaporn Wacharapluesadee's team found the woman was infected with a new coronavirus, much like what Chinese officials had described. Supaporn partially figured out the genetic sequence by Jan. 9, reported it to the Thai government and spent the next day searching for matching sequences.

But because Chinese authorities hadn't published any sequences, she found nothing. She could not prove the Thai virus was the same pathogen sickening people in Wuhan.

"It was kind of wait and see, when China will release the data, then we can compare," said Supaporn.

On Jan. 9, a 61-year-old man with the virus passed away in Wuhan — the first known death. The death wasn't made public until Jan. 11.

WHO officials complained in internal meetings that they were making repeated requests for more data, especially to find out if the virus could spread efficiently between humans, but to no avail.

"We have informally and formally been requesting more epidemiological information," WHO's China representative Galea said. "But when asked for specifics, we could get nothing."

Emergencies chief Ryan grumbled that since China was providing the minimal information required by international law, there was little WHO could do. But he also noted that last September, WHO had issued an unusual public rebuke of Tanzania for not providing enough details about a worrisome Ebola outbreak.

"We have to be consistent," Ryan said. "The danger now is that despite our good intent...especially if something does happen, there will be a lot of finger-pointing at WHO."

Ryan noted that China could make a "huge contribution" to the world by sharing the genetic material immediately, because otherwise "other countries will have to reinvent the wheel over the coming days."

On Jan. 11, a team led by Zhang, from the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, finally published a sequence on virological.org, used by researchers to swap tips on pathogens. The move angered Chinese CDC officials, three people familiar with the matter said, and the next day, his laboratory was temporarily shuttered by health authorities.

Zhang referred a request for comment to the Chinese CDC. The National Health Commission, which oversees the Chinese CDC, declined multiple times to make its officials available for interviews and did not answer questions about Zhang.

Supaporn compared her sequence with Zhang's and found it was a 100% match, confirming that the Thai patient was ill with the same virus detected in Wuhan. Another Thai lab got the same results. That day, Thailand informed the WHO, said Tanarak Plipat, deputy director-general of the Department of Disease Control at Thailand's Ministry of Public Health.

After Zhang released the genome, the Chinese CDC, the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences raced to publish their sequences, working overnight to review them, gather patient data, and send them to the National Health Commission for approval, according to documentation obtained by the AP. On Jan. 12, the three labs together finally published the sequences on GISAID, a platform for scientists to share genomic data.

By then, more than two weeks had passed since Vision Medicals decoded a partial sequence,

and more than a week since the three government labs had all obtained full sequences. Around 600 people were infected in that week, a roughly three-fold increase.

Some scientists say the wait was not unreasonable considering the difficulties in sequencing unknown pathogens, given accuracy is as important as speed. They point to the SARS outbreak in 2003 when some Chinese scientists initially — and wrongly — believed the source of the epidemic was chlamydia.

“The pressure is intense in an outbreak to make sure you’re right,” said Peter Daszak, president of the EcoHealthAlliance in New York. “It’s actually worse to go out to the public with a story that’s wrong because the public completely lose confidence in the public health response.”

Still, others quietly question what happened behind the scenes.

Infectious diseases expert John Mackenzie, who served on a WHO emergency committee during the outbreak, praised the speed of Chinese researchers in sequencing the virus. But he said once central authorities got involved, detailed data trickled to a crawl.

“There certainly was a kind of blank period,” Mackenzie said. “There had to be human to human transmission. You know, it’s staring at you in the face... I would have thought they would have been much more open at that stage.”

On Jan. 13, WHO announced that Thailand had a confirmed case of the virus, jolting Chinese officials.

The next day, in a confidential teleconference, China’s top health official ordered the country to prepare for a pandemic, calling the outbreak the “most severe challenge since SARS in 2003”, as the AP previously reported. Chinese CDC staff across the country began screening, isolating, and testing for cases, turning up hundreds across the country.

Yet even as the Chinese CDC internally declared a level one emergency, the highest level possible, Chinese officials still said the chance of sustained transmission between humans was low.

WHO went back and forth. Van Kerkhove said in a press briefing that “it is certainly possible there is limited human-to-human transmission.” But hours later, WHO seemed to backtrack, and tweeted that “preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission” — a statement that later became fodder for critics.

A high-ranking official in WHO’s Asia office, Dr. Liu Yunguo, who attended medical school in Wuhan, flew to Beijing to make direct, informal contacts with Chinese officials, recordings show. Liu’s former classmate, a Wuhan doctor, had alerted him that pneumonia patients were

flooding the city's hospitals, and Liu pushed for more experts to visit Wuhan, according to a public health expert familiar with the matter.

On Jan. 20, the leader of an expert team returning from Wuhan, renowned government infectious diseases doctor Zhong Nanshan, declared publicly for the first time that the new virus was spreading between people. Chinese President Xi Jinping called for the "timely publication of epidemic information and deepening of international cooperation."

Despite that directive, WHO staff still struggled to obtain enough detailed patient data from China about the rapidly evolving outbreak. That same day, the U.N. health agency dispatched a small team to Wuhan for two days, including Galea, the WHO representative in China.

They were told about a worrying cluster of cases among more than a dozen doctors and nurses. But they did not have "transmission trees" detailing how the cases were connected, nor a full understanding of how widely the virus was spreading and who was at risk.

In an internal meeting, Galea said their Chinese counterparts were "talking openly and consistently" about human-to-human transmission, and that there was a debate about whether or not this was sustained. Galea reported to colleagues in Geneva and Manila that China's key request to WHO was for help "in communicating this to the public, without causing panic."

On Jan. 22, WHO convened an independent committee to determine whether to declare a global health emergency. After two inconclusive meetings where experts were split, they decided against it — even as Chinese officials ordered Wuhan sealed in the biggest quarantine in history. The next day, WHO chief Tedros publicly described the spread of the new coronavirus in China as "limited."

For days, China didn't release much detailed data, even as its case count exploded. Beijing city officials were alarmed enough to consider locking down the capital, according to a medical expert with direct knowledge of the matter.

On Jan. 28, Tedros and top experts, including Ryan, made an extraordinary trip to Beijing to meet President Xi and other senior Chinese officials. It is highly unusual for WHO's director-general to directly intervene in the practicalities of outbreak investigations. Tedros' staffers had prepared a list of requests for information.

"It could all happen and the floodgates open, or there's no communication," Grein said in an internal meeting while his boss was in Beijing. "We'll see."

At the end of Tedros' trip, WHO announced China had agreed to accept an international team of experts. In a press briefing on Jan. 29, Tedros heaped praise on China, calling its level of commitment "incredible."

The next day, WHO finally declared an international health emergency. Once again, Tedros

thanked China, saying nothing about the earlier lack of cooperation.

"We should have actually expressed our respect and gratitude to China for what it's doing," Tedros said. "It has already done incredible things to limit the transmission of the virus to other countries."

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(b)(6)

Senior Advisor

Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)

U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

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Matthew Pottinger (b)(6)

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Ortagus, Morgan D (b)(6)

Recipient:

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

(b)(6)

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

From: "Branstad, Terry E (Beijing)" <(b)(6)>
To: (b)(6);
Beijing POL Unit Chiefs <BeijingPOLUnitChiefs@state.gov>
Subject: Meeting w/ GVP Steering Committee
Date: Mon, 4 Sep 2017 20:39:32 -0400

Purpose:

Meeting with Members of the U.S.-China Global Virome Project (GVP) Steering Committee.
This Steering Committee works on disease prevention and preparedness.

Participants:

(b)(6) ESTH
(b)(6) USAID
(b)(6) CDC
(b)(6) APHIS

GVP Participants:

Dr. Dennis Carroll, Director, Global Health Security and Development, Bureau for Global Health, USAID, Washington D.C.

Dr. George Fu Gao, Director-General, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC), Beijing

Dr. Peter Daszak, President, EcoHealth Alliance, NY

Dr. Shi Zhengli, Senior Scientist, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences

Sender: "Branstad, Terry E (Beijing)" <(b)(6)>
Recipient: (b)(6);
Beijing POL Unit Chiefs <BeijingPOLUnitChiefs@state.gov>

From: (b)(6)**To:** Me (b)(6) (b)(6)**Subject:** Fwd:**Date:** Tue, 7 Apr 2020 16:17:02 +0000

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.

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.

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)

Get Outlook for iOS

From: (b)(6)**Sent:** Friday, April 3, 2020 5:14:18 PM**To:** Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)

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

Cc: (b)(6); Keshap, Atul (b)(6)**Subject:** Re: WIV Cable

Attached. They're also on an email from a few days ago with (b)(6) others.

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

On April 3, 2020 at 5:11:51 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R. (b)(6) wrote:
First one to get me a soft copy of (b)(6) Wuhan cables gets a Samoa Cookie.
drs

David R. Stilwell
Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

Sender: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Recipient: (b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: {Rogin's VIP List} Senators demand answers from Pompeo on Wuhan lab cables
Date: Wed, 29 Apr 2020 07:42:51 +0000

Oh (b)(6) if they had only listened to you.....Nice to see your name in the paper. I'll bet the Chinese just love you right now... (b)(6)

From: josh-rogin---vip-distribution-list (b)(6)

(b)(6) on behalf of Josh Rogin (b)(6)

Sent: Wednesday, April 29, 2020 5:08 AM

To: josh-rogin---vip-distribution-list (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Subject: {Rogin's VIP List} Senators demand answers from Pompeo on Wuhan lab cables

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/28/senators-demand-answers-pompeo-wuhan-lab-cables/>

Senators demand answers from Pompeo on Wuhan lab cables



By

Josh Rogin

Columnist

April 28, 2020 at 3:49 p.m. EDT

The State Department was warned two years ago of safety concerns at a Wuhan lab doing dangerous research on bat coronaviruses. Now, two Democratic senators want to know if those warnings were ignored — and why, despite these warnings, the Trump administration reduced our government's health presence in China before the novel coronavirus pandemic broke out.

On Tuesday, Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) sent a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo requesting information about two sensitive but unclassified diplomatic cables sent from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing back to the State Department in Washington in early 2018. The cables, one of which I obtained, reported that scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology complained about a lack of properly trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate their highest-security lab, which claimed the top level of biological security (Biosafety level 4). The U.S. diplomats also warned of the risk of a new virus pandemic breaking out at the lab if more wasn't done to address these concerns.

The cables contain no firm evidence the novel coronavirus outbreak originated in the WIV lab. But their emergence has stirred an intense debate inside the Trump administration — and now on Capitol Hill — over whether this lab or the nearby Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention lab is connected to the origin of the pandemic. The lab and the Chinese government have categorically denied any connection.

“The cables raise really serious red flags and it would stand to reason that anybody that received these cables would take steps to figure out whether there was fire underneath the smoke,” Murphy told me in an interview. “But we still have more questions than we have answers about the origin of this virus.”

These Democrat senators are not endorsing the lab origin theory outright and they definitely don't agree with Trump on China policy. But they do not dismiss the possibility that the Wuhan labs were connected to the outbreak, and they want the U.S. government to get to the bottom of it.

First of all, they want Pompeo to hand over the cables. The House Foreign Affairs Committee minority side has also put in a formal request for the cables. The State Department denied my request for the cables and declined to comment for this article.

The senators also want to know: What did the State Department do to follow up on the cables? Did the U.S. government investigate its assertions, address its concerns, share the information with other agencies, engage the Chinese government on the matter or offer the WIV lab the help it was clearly asking for to be able to operate safely? Why did the Trump administration slash the staff of our own CDC inside China in 2018 and 2019? And why did the Trump administration cancel funding for the USAID Predict program, which was trying to prevent the next viral pandemic by working with Chinese researchers, including the WIV lab? Murphy is proposing new funding for international public health infrastructure and restoration of the mechanisms the Trump administration cut.

"If you got this cable and you had an infrastructure inside China that could help you investigate the claims, you would think the response would be to increase that presence," Murphy said. "It appears that the

Trump administration's response to these cables was to pull out our investigators rather than empower them."

Since the existence of the cables was revealed, top Trump administration officials have said they're still trying to understand the virus's origins but the Chinese government is intentionally thwarting their efforts. The National Institutes of Health has suspended its work with the WIV lab and is conducting its own investigation, but without China's help.

"We are still asking the Chinese Communist Party to allow experts to get into that virology lab so that we can determine precisely where this virus began," Pompeo said earlier this month. The Chinese government rejected Pompeo's request.

U.S. intelligence agencies have been looking for evidence about the virus origin for months, but they haven't found any proof that would either implicate or exonerate the labs. There's an intelligence gap, several officials told me, which means they don't know anything either way.

Murphy said China should allow international experts into Wuhan to investigate the lab-related theory as well as a scenario that links the outbreak to a local seafood market. He wants the Trump administration to take a more international approach to bringing pressure to bear on Beijing.

"Everything [Chinese authorities] have done suggests that they have something to hide," he said. "If this virus did emanate from bats in a

wet market as they claim, then why not allow outsiders inside to confirm that claim? You have to view their actions incredibly suspiciously.”

He thinks the Trump administration and its allies are attacking China to deflect from Trump’s mishandling of the pandemic and make up for Trump’s early praise of the Chinese government’s response. Whatever one’s view on the Trump administration’s coronavirus response, however, Americans’ public health depends on figuring out the truth about the labs — not just in Wuhan but in all of China.

“If there is an ongoing security crisis in Chinese labs, then we need to resource our overseas public health infrastructure to address that,” Murphy said.

The important question of how the coronavirus pandemic started is caught up in our domestic political fight over how to deal with China. But there’s a bipartisan consensus that we must figure out what happened in Wuhan in order to help mitigate this pandemic and prevent the next one.

Josh Rogin
Columnist - Washington Post
Political Analyst - CNN

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ADM Davidson

Good luck with this. We're still getting our foreign assistance funding cut, in spite of all the rhetoric. I pushed back, so far without success. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

I'll stay in touch with your folks on this.

V/R

Stilly

Pentagon Getting a Push to Shift Resources to Asia

The Wall Street Journal [4/16/2020 3:16 PM, Gordon Lubold, Neutral] reports that a push to shift U.S. military resources to Asia to counter Chinese influence is drawing new support in Congress, where a leading lawmaker wants to compel the Pentagon to invest at least \$6 billion per year in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The legislative effort seeks to mirror the dedicated funding stream provided for years to the U.S. European Command to counter Russia. That funding, known as the European Deterrence Initiative, has been the envy of China hawks who believe the Pentagon should dedicate at least as much in funding and resources to counter China as it does Russia. The Pentagon has directed nearly \$30 billion to efforts to counter Russia over the past seven years, while Defense Secretary Mark Esper last year called the Asia Pacific region the "priority theater." The Pentagon budget in the current fiscal year is more than \$700 billion. "If it's really going to be the priority theater, we need to put our money where our mouth is on that," Rep. Mac Thornberry (R., Texas), the sponsor of the new legislation, said. The legislation, which is being introduced Thursday, would designate the funding for the region and the military command that oversees it. Foreign Policy Magazine [4/16/2020 11:44 AM, Joe Gould, Neutral] reports that the concept of an Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative has support not only from Republican China hawks such as Sen. Josh Hawley and arch-conservatives such as the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Jim Inhofe, but also the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith. While the coronavirus pandemic response is expected to put pressure on defense spending this year, the initiative is likely to become law in some form. Tensions over the contested South China Sea, where China has built several islands to house military equipment, saw a flash point this month when the U.S. State Department condemned China for allegedly

ramming and sinking a Vietnamese fishing boat near the islands. (Beijing says the fishing boat did the ramming.) Officials from the U.S. and China have also traded jabs over COVID-19, with the White House accusing Beijing of withholding information about how badly China was struck by the virus. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have at times controversially called it the "China virus" or "Wuhan virus," while Chinese officials have denied the virus originated in China even as most evidence indicates that it did, possibly even emerging from a poorly regulated research lab in Wuhan.

From: TechMIS - DOS Daily <dos@techmis.com>

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Subject: State Department News Briefing (4-16-20 - 9 PM ET)

STATE DEPARTMENT NEWS BRIEFING

Prepared for the U.S. Department of State

By TechMIS

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DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2020 9:00 PM ET

State Department News

Trump faces global resistance to U.S. plan to cut WHO funding

The AP [4/16/2020 4:35 PM, Darlene Superville, Neutral] reports that President Donald Trump faced international resistance Thursday to his plan to cut U.S. payments to the World Health Organization over its handling of the coronavirus pandemic. Trump has accused the organization of mishandling its response and showing too much deference to China, where the new coronavirus first emerged. The White House said Trump's conversation with the leaders of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan "centered on the lack of transparency and chronic mismanagement of the pandemic by the WHO" and said the Group of Seven leaders called for a "thorough review and reform process." Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said everyone on the call recognized the importance of continuing to coordinate and collaborate on the science around the pandemic, to work on public health measures and to share information about vaccine development and possible treatments. German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed her "full support" for the WHO and similar international groups, and stressed that it will take "a strong and coordinated international response" to defeat the pandemic, said her spokesman, Steffen Seibert. British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, who is standing in for Prime Minister Boris Johnson as he recovers from the coronavirus, said the leaders agreed that rapid development and production of treatments and a vaccine are crucial, the British government said. The Italian foreign ministry said it was committed to consolidating a global governance of health care

"in which the WHO plays a crucial leadership role." A statement issued after a separate teleconference of French, German and Italian foreign ministry officials said Italy is considering new contributions to the WHO for research and distribution of a vaccine "for which a global, inclusive effort will be necessary." Separately, Germany's foreign minister warned Thursday that cutting funding for the WHO was like "throwing the pilot out the plane."

G7 seeks WHO review and reform, commits to coordinated virus response – White House

Reuters [4/16/2020 2:08 PM, Staff, Neutral] reports that leaders from the G7 group of industrialized nations on Thursday called for a review and reform process at the World Health Organization and agreed to ensure a coordinated global approach to the coronavirus pandemic, the White House said. "G7 leaders agreed to remain committed to taking every necessary measure to ensure a strong and coordinated global response to this health crisis and the associated humanitarian and economic calamity and to launch a strong and sustainable recovery," the White House said in a statement after a video conference call between the leaders. "The leaders recognized that the G7 nations annually contribute more than a billion dollars to the World Health Organization (WHO), and much of the conversation centered on the lack of transparency and chronic mismanagement of the pandemic by the WHO. The leaders called for a thorough review and reform process," it said.

New York Extends Coronavirus Lockdown as Some Asian Countries See Rise in Cases

The Wall Street Journal [4/16/2020 3:31 PM, Jennifer Calfas, Newley Purnell and Matthew Dalton, Neutral] reports that New York state and the U.K. moved to extend coronavirus lockdowns as U.S. jobless claims jumped and countries around the world wrestled with how to revive economies closed by the pandemic. Globally, confirmed cases of the virus passed 2.1 million as some Asian nations that seemed to have dodged the worst fallout saw an increase in infections and deaths from Covid-19, the pneumonialike disease caused by the virus. The total number of deaths world-wide topped 140,700, according to data from Johns Hopkins University. More than 31,500 people in the U.S. have died from the virus, according to Johns Hopkins. President Donald Trump said his administration would detail guidelines Thursday for reopening the U.S., where lockdowns have battered the economy. An additional 5.2 million Americans last week sought unemployment benefits as the pandemic shut down large segments of the U.S. economy, raising the total for the month to 22 million. New Chinese export restrictions are exacerbating the chronic shortage of protective gear in the U.S. Face masks, test kits and other medical equipment bound for the U.S. are sitting in warehouses across China unable to receive necessary official clearances, some suppliers and brokers told The Wall Street Journal. Chinese officials have said the policies, instituted this month, are intended to ensure the quality of exported medical products and to make sure needed goods aren't being shipped out of China. They have created bottlenecks at a time of urgent need, according to the suppliers, brokers and the State Department memos. In the U.K., the government extended a national lockdown for at least three more weeks. Singapore, initially lauded for moving quickly to control initial outbreaks, confirmed 447 new cases of Covid-19 late Wednesday, its highest daily count to date. Although daily death rates have been declining in Iran, hospitals in Tehran have seen an uptick in patients with severe symptoms in recent days, according to Alireza Zali, head of the city's committee to combat the coronavirus. In Japan, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe

expanded a state of emergency to the whole country after the death toll reached a daily high of 17 on Wednesday, bringing the total to 136. Under Japanese law, the state of emergency doesn't force any business to close, but has led many offices to institute work-from-home policies and caused stores to pull down their shutters. In Italy, the heart of the pandemic in Europe, many critics have faulted regional and national authorities for the death toll in the Lombardy region, which has recorded 11,400 Covid-19 fatalities. France remains in lockdown while other European countries begin to lift some restrictions. German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced plans Wednesday to gradually reopen the nation, even as it recorded 315 Covid-19 deaths, the first 24-hour count above 300.

U.N. warns economic downturn could kill hundreds of thousands of children in 2020

Reuters [4/16/2020 4:36 PM, Michelle Nichols, Negative] reports that hundreds of thousands of children could die this year due to the global economic downturn sparked by the coronavirus pandemic and tens of millions more could fall into extreme poverty as a result of the crisis, the United Nations warned on Thursday. The world body also said in a risk report that nearly 369 million children across 143 countries who normally rely on school meals for a reliable source of daily nutrition have now been forced to look elsewhere. "We must act now on each of these threats to our children," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said. "Leaders must do everything in their power to cushion the impact of the pandemic. What started as a public health emergency has snowballed into a formidable test for the global promise to leave no one behind."

Coronavirus could cause upheaval across Middle East: Red Cross

Reuters [4/16/2020 6:17 AM, Stephanie Nebehay, 5304K, Negative] reports that coronavirus outbreaks across the Middle East threaten to shatter the lives of millions of already destitute people in conflict zones, and could fuel socio-economic upheaval, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said on Thursday. Curfews and lockdowns imposed as public health measures to stem spread of the virus are already making it difficult or impossible for many to provide for their families, it said. The Geneva-based agency, in a statement naming Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Gaza, Lebanon and Jordan, called for authorities in the volatile region to prepare for a "potentially devastating aftermath" and a "socio-economic earthquake." "The Middle East is today facing the twin threats of potential mass virus outbreaks in conflict zones and looming socio-economic upheaval. Both crises could have severe humanitarian consequences," said Fabrizio Carboni, ICRC director for the Near and Middle East.

Africa may see millions of coronavirus cases, tentative WHO forecast shows

Reuters [4/16/2020 11:47 AM, Duncan Miriri and Katharine Houreld, Negative] reports that coronavirus cases in Africa could shoot up from thousands now to 10 million within three to six months according to very provisional modelling, a regional World Health Organization (WHO) official said on Thursday. But Michel Yao, head of emergency operations for WHO Africa, said that was a tentative projection which could change and noted worst-case predictions for the Ebola outbreak had not come true because people changed behaviour in time. "This is still to be fine-tuned," he told a media teleconference. "It's difficult to make a long-term estimation because the context changes too much and also public health measures when they are fully implemented, they can actually have an impact." The world's poorest continent has seen more than 17,000 confirmed cases of the COVID-19 disease

and about 900 deaths so far – relatively little compared to some other regions. But there are fears that could balloon and overwhelm shaky health services.

Africa to G20: Debt relief deal to ease coronavirus crisis not enough

Politico [4/16/2020 8:54 AM, Simon Marks, 2003K, Neutral] reports that Africa wants the G20 to go further in helping the world's poorest countries survive the coronavirus crisis despite the group agreeing to suspend debt payments until the end of the year, officials said. Finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's largest economies held a virtual meeting on Wednesday to agree on ways they could help countries in Africa and elsewhere to free up liquidity and invest more in their health systems and economic recovery. They agreed to suspend the terms on poor countries' debt from May 1 until the end of the year, with an option to extend until the end of 2021 if needed. But faced with a recession and rising fiscal deficits, many African capitals feel the current deal does not stretch far enough. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, one of four special envoys to the African Union to solicit G20 support in dealing with the coronavirus, said Africa would need additional help in order to guarantee the livelihoods of millions of people. The International Monetary Fund on Wednesday said sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product would shrink this year by 1.6 percent due to the effects of the coronavirus, low oil prices and poor commodity prices.

Trump's WHO Funding Cut May Prevent Africa From Being Polio-Free

Bloomberg [4/16/2020 1:14 PM, Yinka Ibukun and Tope Alake, Neutral] reports that the fight to eradicate polio from Africa could become an early casualty of President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw funding to the World Health Organization, the international body said. Nigeria, the last polio-endemic country in Africa, hasn't had a reported case of the virus since August 2016, according to the WHO. The only two other endemic countries in the world are Afghanistan and Pakistan. The U.S. is a major supporter of the fight against polio, which was on the verge of being eradicated on the continent before the coronavirus emerged, Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa, told reporters Thursday on a video conference call. The U.S. also supports "programs that address diseases such as HIV, malaria and work on strengthening our health systems," she said. The WHO hopes that the decision to withdraw funding "will be rethought because the U.S. government is an important partner, not only in financial terms but also, it's an important strategic partner," Moeti said. The organization needs \$300 million over the next six months to help African nations respond to the coronavirus alone, Moeti said.

U.S. Sends Funds to Needy Nations to Fight the Virus, but Maybe Not for Masks

The New York Times [4/16/2020 5:03 PM, Lara Jakes, Neutral] reports that the Trump administration is considering new rules that would limit how American humanitarian aid is used to buy masks, plastic gloves and other protective medical equipment to combat the coronavirus in some of the world's neediest nations. Instead, the administration is working to secure those supplies for Americans first as the pandemic sweeps around the world. Already, officials have told some nonprofit aid groups that they cannot use money from the United States Agency for International Development to buy personal protective equipment for needy nations while American health providers face dwindling supplies. A draft presidential memorandum, described to The New York Times on Thursday, would allow funds to be used to buy only protective gear that was produced in the countries where it was needed. The issue is still under debate, officials said, and could be broadened to

prohibit the government from paying to provide equipment to foreign medical systems when it is needed in the United States. "Where there is a critical shortfall in the United States, obviously, we can't pay for donations of materials that we can't actually procure," Jim Richardson, the director of the State Department's foreign assistance resources, told reporters on March 26. The aid agency and the State Department have provided about \$508 million to the United Nations and nonprofit humanitarian aid organizations to help confront the virus in 104 needy nations and the Palestinian territories. Announcing the funding on April 8, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo described it as an example of "the unmatched generosity of the American people." "The United States is the undisputed leader in the provision of health and humanitarian aid, around the world," Pompeo said. That money has largely paid for messaging campaigns to educate people on how to protect themselves from the virus, to provide water and sanitation services like hand-washing stations, and to offer health services to refugees, migrants and other homeless people. Some of the funds have been spent on what an agency fact sheet released Thursday described as "infection prevention and control."

U.S. gives \$5 million to Palestinians amid pandemic, after years of aid cuts

Reuters [4/16/2020 4:36 PM, Staff, Neutral] reports that the United States is giving \$5 million to the Palestinians to help them fight the coronavirus epidemic, a U.S. envoy said on Thursday. The donation announced by U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman follows years of aid cuts by President Donald Trump's administration to the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza. "I'm very pleased the USA is providing \$5M for Palestinian hospitals and households to meet immediate, life-saving needs in combating COVID-19," Friedman wrote on Twitter. "The USA, as the world's top humanitarian aid donor, is committed to assisting the Palestinian people," he added. The \$5 million will be international disaster assistance from the U.S. Agency for International Development, according to the State Department's website.

U.S. opposes massive liquidity IMF boost: Mnuchin

Reuters [4/16/2020 8:14 AM, Andrea Shalal, Neutral] reports that the United States opposes creation of liquidity through issuance of the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as part of the response to the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Thursday. In a statement to the IMF's steering committee, Mnuchin said 70% of the funds created through an SDR allocation, something akin to a central bank "printing" new money, would go to G20 countries, most of whom did not need it, while only 3% would go to low-income countries. The 24-member International Monetary and Financial Committee is meeting on Thursday to review the IMF's response to the pandemic and a possible SDR allocation that could provide hundreds of billions of dollars in urgently needed foreign exchange reserves for all of the IMF's 189 members. The move was first floated by IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva last month and is supported by many finance ministers, prominent economists and non-profit groups. But Washington, the IMF's dominant shareholder, is blocking an allocation because it would give new avenues of funding for Iran and China, Reuters reported this week.

Russia to spell out stance on U.N. truce plea in coming days: Kremlin

Reuters [4/16/2020 7:15 AM, Maria Tsvetkova, 5304K, Positive] reports that Russia will spell out its stance on the United Nations' call for a global truce, so the world can focus on

the coronavirus epidemic, in the coming days after consultations are completed, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday French President Emmanuel Macron has said he has secured the agreement of three of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, to back the call and hopes Russia, which is also a member, will support it.

Pentagon Getting a Push to Shift Resources to Asia

The Wall Street Journal [4/16/2020 3:16 PM, Gordon Lubold, Neutral] reports that a push to shift U.S. military resources to Asia to counter Chinese influence is drawing new support in Congress, where a leading lawmaker wants to compel the Pentagon to invest at least \$6 billion per year in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The legislative effort seeks to mirror the dedicated funding stream provided for years to the U.S. European Command to counter Russia. That funding, known as the European Deterrence Initiative, has been the envy of China hawks who believe the Pentagon should dedicate at least as much in funding and resources to counter China as it does Russia. The Pentagon has directed nearly \$30 billion to efforts to counter Russia over the past seven years, while Defense Secretary Mark Esper last year called the Asia Pacific region the "priority theater." The Pentagon budget in the current fiscal year is more than \$700 billion. "If it's really going to be the priority theater, we need to put our money where our mouth is on that," Rep. Mac Thornberry (R., Texas), the sponsor of the new legislation, said. The legislation, which is being introduced Thursday, would designate the funding for the region and the military command that oversees it. Foreign Policy Magazine [4/16/2020 11:44 AM, Joe Gould, Neutral] reports that the concept of an Indo-Pacific Deterrence Initiative has support not only from Republican China hawks such as Sen. Josh Hawley and arch-conservatives such as the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Sen. Jim Inhofe, but also the Democratic chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Adam Smith. While the coronavirus pandemic response is expected to put pressure on defense spending this year, the initiative is likely to become law in some form. Tensions over the contested South China Sea, where China has built several islands to house military equipment, saw a flash point this month when the U.S. State Department condemned China for allegedly ramming and sinking a Vietnamese fishing boat near the islands. (Beijing says the fishing boat did the ramming.) Officials from the U.S. and China have also traded jabs over COVID-19, with the White House accusing Beijing of withholding information about how badly China was struck by the virus. President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have at times controversially called it the "China virus" or "Wuhan virus," while Chinese officials have denied the virus originated in China even as most evidence indicates that it did, possibly even emerging from a poorly regulated research lab in Wuhan.

[Iran] Tensions rise at sea between Iran and the U.S.

Reuters [4/16/2020 1:30 AM, Libby Hogan, 5304K, Negative] reports that 11 vessels from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy came dangerously close to U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships in the Gulf, the U.S. military said on Wednesday, calling the moves "dangerous and provocative." [Editorial note: consult source link for video]

[Yemen] U.N. Yemen envoy expects warring parties to agree truce in 'immediate future'

Reuters [4/16/2020 10:55 AM, Staff, Neutral] reports that United Nations Yemen envoy Martin Griffiths said on Thursday he expects the warring parties to formally adopt "in the

immediate future" agreements on a nationwide ceasefire, key economic and humanitarian measures and a resumption of political talks. Griffiths said he has been negotiating with the parties on the texts for the past two weeks. "We expect them to agree on and formally adopt these agreements in the immediate future," he told the U.N. Security Council.

[Russia] Russia Fires Shot in Space Arms Race

Foreign Policy Magazine [4/16/2020 12:12 PM, Jack Detsch, Robbie Gramer and Dan Haverty, Neutral] reports that Russia tested a missile on Wednesday that is capable of destroying satellites in low-earth orbit, U.S. Space Command said in a statement, as the Pentagon faced military challenges from Russia, China, and Iran over the course of a busy day. The move could be a significant challenge to U.S. efforts to invest in communications satellites and sensor layers to track missiles in-flight – as the Space Force did during Iran's ballistic missile attack on Iraq's Al Asad air base in January, which left more than 100 U.S. troops with traumatic brain injuries. "This test is further proof of Russia's hypocritical advocacy of outer space arms control proposals designed to restrict the capabilities of the United States while clearly having no intention of halting their counter-space weapons programs," said Gen. Jay Raymond, Space Command's chief.

[United Kingdom] British American Tobacco Under Investigation in U.S.

The Wall Street Journal [4/16/2020 12:39 PM, Mengqi Sun, Neutral] reports that British American Tobacco PLC is under investigation by U.S. authorities for a possible breach of sanctions, the company said. The London-based cigarette maker said in its annual report, filed last month with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, that it is cooperating with the Justice Department and the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control, which enforces U.S. economic sanctions. British American Tobacco added that while it couldn't assess "the potential for fines, penalties or other consequences" they might be "material." A company spokesperson declined to comment beyond the filing. "We take allegations of sanctionable conduct seriously but cannot comment on any investigations, including to confirm whether or not one exists," an OFAC spokesman said in an email. British American Tobacco operates in a number of countries that are subject to various sanctions, including Cuba and through a non-U.S. subsidiary, Iran. The U.S. has sanctions restrictions against both Cuba and Iran.

[Australia] Australian foreign minister speaks with Pompeo about W.H.O. (AP)

The AP [4/16/2020 1:13 PM, Staff, Neutral] reports that the Australian foreign minister says she has spoken to U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about the World Health Organization and agrees the international agency needs to be reviewed, but Australia continues to support WHO's valuable work in the Pacific. President Donald Trump has directed his administration to freeze WHO funding, claiming the agency didn't deliver adequate early reports on the coronavirus and cost the U.S. valuable response time. Foreign Minister Marise Payne told Seven Network television on Thursday: "We share some of the concerns of the United States and I do think there are areas of the operation of WHO that absolutely require review." Australia had made several decisions on the coronavirus' spread based on its own health advice ahead of the WHO, Payne said. Australia contributed \$67 million to WHO in the past two years, which is 0.75% of the organization's total funding.

[China] Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Coronavirus Origins, China's Resistance
(B) FOX's The Story With Martha MacCallum [4/16/2020 7:00 PM, Staff, 3.9M] reports that multiple sources say that the U.S. government has "high confidence" that the coronavirus emanated from a virology lab in Wuhan rather than the wet markets. When asked about this at a press conference, President Donald Trump said the administration is hearing that story "more and more." Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says that the question of the virus's origins having to be asked is "very, very telling" when it comes to China's lack of cooperation and transparency. While he says the U.S. government is "working diligently" to accurately pinpoint the source, "we really need the Chinese government to open up." He adds, "They say they want to cooperate. One of the best ways they can find to cooperate would be to let the world in, to let the world's scientists know exactly how this came to be, exactly how this virus began to spread." Secretary Pompeo called out China again for withholding information about the virus for days, during which there was "a lot of cases, a lot of movement, a lot of travel around the world." Reports say that Chinese officials knew about the virus as early as December, but Pompeo says it wasn't until the end of January that the U.S. brought 800 Americans back from Wuhan, where "they were at risk for an awfully long time." Pompeo adds that "international health organizations didn't do us any favors either," reflecting criticism of the World Health Organization helping China cover up mishandled information.

[China] U.S. explores possibility coronavirus started in Chinese lab, not a market
CNN [4/15/2020 2:24 PM, Josh Campbell, Kylie Atwood and Evan Perez, Neutral] reports that U.S. intelligence and national security officials say the United States government is looking into the possibility that the novel coronavirus spread from a Chinese laboratory rather than a market, according to multiple sources familiar with the matter who caution it is premature to draw any conclusions. The theory is one of multiple being pursued by investigators as they attempt to determine the origin of the coronavirus that has resulted in a pandemic and killed hundreds of thousands. The U.S. does not believe the virus was associated with bioweapons research and the sources indicated there is currently no indication the virus was man-made. Officials noted that the intelligence community is also exploring a range of other theories regarding the origination of the virus, as would typically be the case for high-profile incidents, according to an intelligence source. An intelligence official familiar with the government analysis said a theory U.S. intelligence officials are investigating is that the virus originated in a laboratory in Wuhan, China, and was accidentally released to the public. Other sources told CNN that U.S. intelligence hasn't been able to corroborate the theory but is trying to discern whether someone was infected in the lab through an accident or poor handling of materials and may have then infected others. The Washington Post has reported on State Department cables from 2018 demonstrating concerns about the safety and the management of the Wuhan Institute of Virology biolab. When asked about those cables, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo – who has continued to call the coronavirus the "Wuhan virus" – did not dismiss them, but neither did he say that they show any legitimate linkage to Covid-19. "The Chinese Communist Party didn't give Americans access when we needed it in that most timely point at the very beginning," Pompeo said earlier this week. "Then we know they have this lab. We know about the wet (fresh food) markets. We know that the virus itself did originate in Wuhan. So all those things come together. There's still a lot we don't know, and this is what the President was talking about today. We need to know answers to these things." NBC News [4/16/2020 12:05 PM, Ken Dilanian and Courtney Kube, Neutral] reports that asked

about the intelligence on NBC's "TODAY" show, Secretary of Defense Mark Esper said, "This is something we've been watching closely now for some time," adding that the results of the investigation are thus far "inconclusive." Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Mark Milley told reporters this week that U.S. intelligence agencies are taking "a hard look" at whether the coronavirus originated in a Wuhan lab. "We don't know for certain," Milley told reporters Tuesday. President Donald Trump declined to answer a question about the intelligence during a televised briefing Wednesday. China disputes that the virus could have originated in a Wuhan lab. Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said Thursday that the head of the World Health Organization has "repeatedly said there's no evidence" the virus was made in a lab and that "well-known medical experts" believe there is "no scientific basis" for claims of "so-called laboratory leaks."

[China] China's Export Restrictions Strand Medical Goods U.S. Needs to Fight Coronavirus, State Department Says

The Wall Street Journal [4/16/2020 6:00 AM, Kate O'Keeffe, Liza Lin and Eva Xiao, Neutral] reports that new Chinese export restrictions have left American companies' U.S.-bound face masks, test kits and other medical equipment urgently needed to fight the coronavirus stranded, according to businesses and U.S. diplomatic memos. Large quantities of critical protective gear and other medical goods are sitting in warehouses across China unable to receive necessary official clearances, said some suppliers and brokers. Health-care equipment maker PerkinElmer Inc., based in Massachusetts, is unable to ship 1.4 million test kits for Covid-19, the disease caused by the new coronavirus, from its Suzhou factory because it lacks a certification required by the new rules, according to a State Department memo reviewed by The Wall Street Journal. A Shanghai vice mayor told Minnesota-based conglomerate 3M Co. that the city "relies on 3M's locally produced N-95 respirators for its Covid-19 prevention efforts and lacks viable alternatives," a second memo said. The official "signaled that lifting restrictions on distribution of the company's masks would require instructions from Beijing," the memo said. PerkinElmer said it is working with the Chinese government to clear the test kits. 3M said it has received shipments from China and is working to coordinate more, though fewer planes are available than usual.

[China] China Rebuffs New U.S. Accusation on Nuclear Test-Site Activity

Bloomberg [4/16/2020 4:17 AM, Staff, Neutral] reports that China rebuffed a U.S. accusation that it had maintained activity at a nuclear weapons test site, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying the country was upholding its commitment to the international testing ban. In a summary of an annual report assessing global arms-control agreements, the U.S. State Department said Wednesday that China "maintained a high level of activity" at its Lop Nur test site in the western region of Xinjiang. The report noted "possible preparations" to operate the site year-round and "concerns" that China wasn't complying standards adhered to by the U.S., France and the U.K. "The U.S. neglects all the facts and makes wanton accusations against China," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian told a briefing Thursday in Beijing. "This is irresponsible and ill-intentioned." The Trump administration has expressed concerns about China's nuclear stockpile, with Defense Secretary Mark Esper saying last year that the U.S. should consider "multi-lateralizing" the New START treaty with Russia. The last major arms-control accord between the world's two nuclear superpowers is set to expire in 2021.

[China] Chinese ship seen moving south near Malaysia amid rising South China Sea tensions

Reuters [4/16/2020 1:18 AM, Rozanna Latiff and James Pearson, Neutral] reports that a Chinese government survey ship embroiled in a standoff with Vietnamese vessels moved south near Malaysia, shipping data showed Thursday, amid accusations that China is using the pandemic to assert its presence in the South China Sea. The Haiyang Dizhi 8 was spotted off Vietnam this week, returning after being closely tracked last year in the resource-rich waters, a potential global flashpoint as the United States challenges China's sweeping maritime claims. The ship appeared to have started a survey in waters 352 kilometres (218 miles) off the coasts of Brunei and Malaysia on Thursday, according to data from Marine Traffic, a website that tracks shipping. That appeared to be just north of Malaysia's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), near waters claimed by both Vietnam and Malaysia. A Malaysian coastguard vessel, the KM Pekan, is shadowing the Chinese ship, a Malaysian maritime source said, declining to be identified because of the sensitivity of the matter. The Haiyang Dizhi 8 had been flanked by as many as seven Chinese coastguard vessels that have since moved away, two sources familiar with the matter said. The Malaysian navy was monitoring the situation, one of the sources said. On Wednesday, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman had said the ship was conducting normal activities and accused U.S. officials of using the South China Sea issue to smear Beijing. The presence of the Haiyang Dizhi 8 in the South China Sea comes amid movement curbs imposed by Southeast Asian countries to slow the spread of the coronavirus. The U.S. State Department had urged Beijing to focus on combating the pandemic and "stop exploiting the distraction or vulnerability of other states to expand its unlawful claims in the South China Sea."

{End of Report}**Sender:** "Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)

Davidson, Philip S ADM USN INDOPACOM J00 (USA)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

Recipient:

(b)(6)

Keshap, Atul (b)(6)

Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine
Date: Tue, 12 Jun 2018 05:35:22 -0400

I never heard back from (b)(6). Should we send this on?

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 2:43 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Here's a draft night note. (b)(6) if you can clear, we can send it on. (b)(6) please send any needed corrections. Thanks, craig

(b)(5)

Official - ~~SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:52 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

We know Dong Xiaoping well so can always follow up.

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:47 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

In case it's useful for the night note, I talked with XU Zhen, chief of the Branch for Strategic Planning and Capacity Building at the CCDC's Public Health Emergency Center, at the public health conference this morning. She confirmed that a CCDC team took the Chinese vaccine to the DRC on Friday June 8 and stated that it would be used for Chinese living there, including workers at Chinese SOEs. When I asked her about the vaccine clinical trial process, she said that it had been tested on humans (as referenced in the story sent this morning) but didn't have details. She suggested talking with Dong Xiaoping, the head of the CCDC's Global Health Center.

Best, (b)(6)

Official -SBU
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 1:15 PM
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]; (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Hi (b)(6)

Do you mind if we turn this into a night note? This is very useful information that we should share more broadly.

(b)(6)

SBU
This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] [mailto:(b)(6)]
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2018 11:54 AM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (Beijing);
(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6) (Beijing | NIH) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NSF)
Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH) (b)(6) (Beijing)
Subject: Re: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

#55 An Jia Lou Road, Beijing 100600

Office: (b)(6)

Mobile: (b)(6)

US Mobile: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)

Date: Monday, June 11, 2018 at 7:34 PM

To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)

(Beijing) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP) (b)(6)

(b)(6) (NIH/NCI) [E] (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6) (PPL/DC) (b)(6) (RDMA/OPH)"

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

Subject: RE: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Thanks (b)(6) An interesting but not entirely surprising development with possibly profound consequences. I wonder if closer cooperation is called for, or if measures aimed at countering Chinese activities abroad would be more effective?

(b)(6)

Agency for International Development
United States Embassy, Beijing, China

Official - ~~SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, June 11, 2018 11:55 PM
To: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (b)(6) (Beijing)
(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) (CDC/CGH/DGHP)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NIH) (b)(6)
(b)(6) (Beijing | NSF) (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

fyi.

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] (b)(6)
Date: June 11, 2018 at 11:43:49 AM EDT
To: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E] <chenpi@niaid.nih.gov>
Subject: FW: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

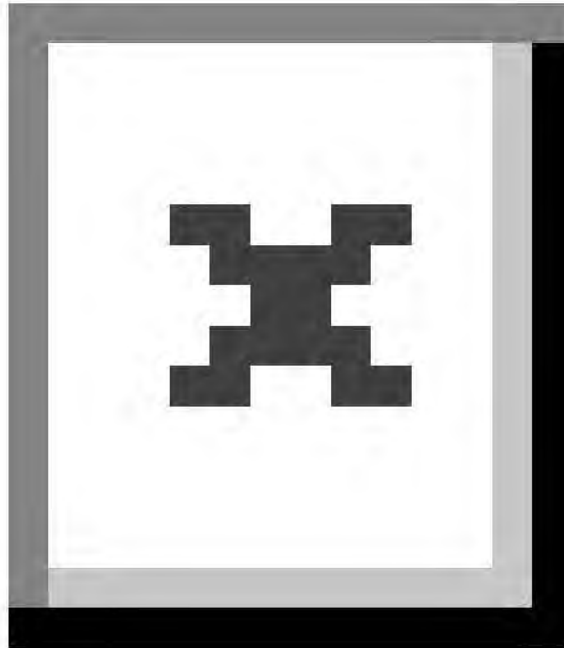
FYI

From: (b)(6) (NIH/NIAID) [E]
Sent: Friday, June 08, 2018 9:24 AM
Subject: STAT: China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

Health

China may compete with the West for limited opportunities to test Ebola vaccine

By Helen Branswell (b)(6)
June 8, 2018



Health workers operate within an Ebola safety zone in the health center in Iyonda, near Mbandaka, Democratic Republic of the Congo, on June 1. *JUNIOR D. KANNAH/AFP/Getty Images*

China is making a bid to use its Ebola vaccine in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It's a move that could further complicate efforts to test a crowded field of vaccines and therapies in the context of a waning outbreak.

The head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Gao Fu, is reported to have said that a team of experts will travel to the DRC on Friday, bringing with them an unspecified number of doses of vaccine.

"We will seek to use the Chinese developed vaccine there to help with control and prevention of the disease, but for the present the vaccines will likely only cover Chinese living in Congo," Gao is reported as saying in China Daily.

The DRC health ministry's daily Ebola update on Thursday noted that only one Ebola vaccine has been approved for use in the country at this time, and that is the vaccine being developed by Merck.

Related: Excitement over use of Ebola vaccine in outbreak tempered by real-world challenges

Jessica Ilunga, a spokesperson for Health Minister Dr. Oly Ilunga, said there has not been an official request by the Chinese to use the vaccine. Any decisions on approving additional vaccines would have to be made by two government advisory committees, she said. One committee studies the science behind the products while the other looks at the ethics of using them.

The World Health Organization's vaccines advisory committee has recommended that until there is a fully licensed Ebola vaccine, Merck's experimental vaccine should be used in outbreaks. That vaccine is given in one dose and it triggers a rapid immune response – characteristics that are needed against such a deadly disease.

But the WHO only advises. It is up to individual countries whether they want to follow its recommendations.

Michael Osterholm, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Diseases Research and Policy, said the move by the Chinese is "a harbinger of things to come."

Related: Ebola outbreak opens way to chaotic jockeying to test experimental drugs

Osterholm said that global health aid and assistance is a form of diplomacy. If the current U.S. administration is looking to cut back on what it spends to help developing countries with their health problems, it should expect to see China step in to gain more influence.

"This is the beginning of what I think is a very consequential change in international public health response, with impact on overall global health security," Osterholm said. "By beginning to turn our back on global health security ... we have not understood that those that provide the emergency response and those that provide the vaccines and those that provide the care and treatment are often those who also have access at the table of the highest levels of government for every other thing, including trade, resources and all aspects of regional security."

The news may also cause concern among American and European companies that have long been working on Ebola vaccines and drugs and have struggled to find opportunities to test them during sporadic outbreaks. Janssen, the vaccines division of Johnson & Johnson, has been developing an Ebola vaccine for years and has also been interested in trying to test the product in this outbreak.

Little is known about the Chinese vaccine, which was licensed without a Phase 3 trial — meaning there is no human efficacy data to prove that it is protective. Its approval was based on animal studies and small trials that showed it was safe and induced antibody production in healthy people who received it.

The Merck vaccine was shown to be effective during the West African outbreak, but has still not made its way through the licensure process.

"What makes it difficult is that if the Chinese license a product and bring it to a low- or middle-income country ... and we're still trying to evaluate those vaccines and drugs that we believe are important, it may actually create a real challenge," Osterholm said. "The country may well be motivated to use the licensed [Chinese] product, even without potentially the same rigor of evaluation that we're putting our vaccines through."

The Merck vaccine is being used in a ring vaccination approach, where contacts of cases, and contacts of the contacts, are offered vaccination in an effort to protect all those who may have been exposed.

Health care workers, too, have been vaccinated. As of Wednesday, 1,826 people have been vaccinated with the Merck vaccine in the current outbreak.

The outbreak, which was declared a month ago, has slowed markedly, although the DRC health ministry reported a new confirmed case on Thursday, the first in about 10 days. The patient, who is in Iboko, was in contact with someone who earlier died of Ebola.

Daily case counts — a combination of confirmed, probable, and suspect cases — have fluctuated up and down over the past week or two. That's because the government has been reporting suspect cases without waiting for confirmatory tests. It is not unusual to see seven suspect cases reported one day and discarded the next.

On Thursday, the government reported 62 cases, 10 of which are suspect cases.

The combination of confirmed and probable cases — people who died before testing began — provides a clearer picture of the trajectory of the outbreak. That number now stands at 52, with 27 deaths.

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

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

From: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)
To: Forden, Robert W (Beijing) (b)(6)
Subject: Fw: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking on PRC Destroying COVID-19 samples
Date: Tue, 19 May 2020 15:50:49 +0000

further notes on this thread. FYI

(b)(6)

Coronavirus Global Response Coordination Unit

[SharePoint](#) | [State.gov](#) | [InfoCentral](#)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:57 AM

To: (b)(6) CGRCUPress; OES-IHB-DG; ISN-BPS-DL; Legal-EAP-DL; (b)(6) (P);

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-CM-ECON-DL; EAP-Press

Subject: Re: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking on PRC (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Colleagues,

Here is my take on (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Policy Planning Staff
Office of the Secretary
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(mobile)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:46 AM

To: (b)(6) CGRCUPress; OES-IHB-DG; ISN-BPS-DL;
Legal-EAP-DL; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-CM-ECON-DL; EAP-Press

Subject: RE: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking on PRC Destroying COVID-19 samples

This needs to be reviewed in a smaller group which I have spoken with. Will get back.

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:42 AM

To: (b)(6)

CGRCUPress <CGRCUPress@state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; ISN-BPS-DL <ISN-BPS-DL@STATE.GOV>; Legal-EAP-DL <Legal-EAP-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-CM-ECON-DL <EAP-CM-ECON-DL@state.gov>; EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: Re: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking on PRC Destroying COVID-19 samples

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:33 AM

To: (b)(6) CGRCUPress <CGRCUPress@state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; ISN-BPS-DL <ISN-BPS-DL@STATE.GOV>; Legal-EAP-DL <Legal-EAP-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-CM-ECON-DL <EAP-CM-ECON-DL@state.gov>; EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: Re: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking on PRC Destroying COVID-19 samples

(b)(5)

(b)(6)

Attorney Adviser, L/EAP

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Tuesday, May 19, 2020 10:11 AM

To: CGRCUPress <CGRCUPress@state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; ISN-BPS-DL <ISN-BPS-DL@STATE.GOV>; Legal-EAP-DL <Legal-EAP-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Cc: EAP-CM-ECON-DL <EAP-CM-ECON-DL@state.gov>; EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: SHORT FUSE CLEAR BY 1PM: Press Guidance Tasking (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Hi all,

Thank you all for clearing on the draft PG yesterday. (b)(5) I am now requesting that you re-clear the PG by 1PM. [Image removed by sender.] 20200518_PRC COVID-19

Destroyed Samples MK.docx<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/w-59584c83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fusdos.sharepoint.com%2F%3Aw%3A%2Fs%2FEAP_ChinaDeskSharedDrive%2FER2a2463njZFvn8bR4On0OsBHx1wAyrV1H8WMMOYq62neA%3Fe%3DfyGRVe&data=02%7C01%7CDubrayMR%40state.gov%7C24546f5f3b3a440e1bb608d7fc04f583%7C66cf50745afc48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637254970538382058&data=sArA11EJN2IDV5cR2Ljou9a3VtVFPO8UHB1hGAJY9BM%3D&reserved=0>

Best,

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Monday, May 18, 2020 1:01 PM

To: CGRCUPress <CGRCUPress@state.gov>; OES-IHB-DG <OES-IHB-DG@state.gov>; ISN-BPS-DL <ISN-BPS-DL@STATE.GOV>; Legal-EAP-DL <Legal-EAP-DL@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

Subject: NO FUSE CLEARANCE BY 1:30PM: Press Guidance Tasking (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Hello all,

Please clear the linked PG by 1:30PM [Image removed by sender.] 20200518_PRC COVID-19 Destroyed Samples .docx<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/ap/w-59584e83/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fusdos.sharepoint.com%2F%3Aw%3A%2Fs%2FEAP_ChinaDeskSharedDrive%2FERXEnwYP-65NnZqXW0SG4GUBi4nxcPPydd2t75yBtzQ6w&data=02%7C01%7CDubrayMR%40state.gov%7C24546f5f3b3a440e1bb608d7fc04f583%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637254970538382058&data=19%2B%2BiBEbmm61BbHeFEuZOttXuB5xhH%2FChgFWlbFlsxl%3D&reserved=0>. The tasking and relevant WSJ article are below. ISN and OES, you have seen similar language by e-mail already.

Thank you,

(b)(6)

(b)(5)

CHINA

China Told Labs to Destroy Coronavirus Samples to Reduce Biosafety Risks

A Chinese senior official says domestic law has clear rules for the handling of highly pathogenic samples

By Josh Chin

May 16, 2020 10:58 pm ET

A senior Chinese official appeared to confirm Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's allegation that Beijing had told labs in the country to destroy coronavirus samples in early January but slammed his characterization as misleading.

In a May 6 press briefing, Mr. Pompeo accused China of covering up the Covid-19 outbreak as it emerged in the central city of Wuhan, saying China's National Health Commission had ordered destruction of samples of the virus on Jan. 3.

Asked about those comments at a press briefing in Beijing on Friday, NHC official Liu Dengfeng confirmed that the commission had issued these guidelines at that time "for pandemic prevention and control, which also played an important role in preventing biosafety risks."

"If the laboratory conditions cannot meet the requirements for the safe preservation of samples, the samples should be destroyed on the spot or transferred to a professional institution for safekeeping," said Mr. Liu, supervisor of the commission's Department of Health Science, Technology and Education.

Chinese law has clear rules for the handling of highly pathogenic samples, he said.

Mr. Pompeo's allegation that the samples were destroyed as part of a coverup "takes facts out of context with the aim of intentionally misleading people," he said.

China's early handling of the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan has become the subject of intense scrutiny. Beijing and Washington both seek to deflect blame for a pandemic that has infected more than 4.6 million people and killed more than 310,000 world-wide.

Many governments, including the U.S., have regulations that require labs with lower biosafety ratings to destroy or transfer samples of particularly dangerous pathogens. Still, China's government has taken other actions that suggest it wants to stall an investigation into the origins of the virus.

Local authorities in Wuhan collected extensive samples at the end of December from a market where the virus is believed to have first begun spreading widely, enlisting professional disinfection crews to help

with the effort, The Wall Street Journal reported. Four months later, officials have yet to share any data from those samples with any labs outside of China.

Some Chinese and foreign researchers told The Journal they had been informed by Chinese officials that animals taken from the market were destroyed.

At Friday's briefing, Mr. Liu said China had always been active in sharing microbial samples with other countries.

He said Chinese officials "also have an active and open attitude" when it comes to the new coronavirus "and are willing to share novel coronavirus strains in an orderly manner" within the framework of the World Health Organization.

Public health experts say it is likely too late to investigate the role of the market in Covid-19's spread and that proving its origin might now be impossible.

Write to Josh Chin at (b)(6)

Sender: (b)(6) (Wuhan) (b)(6)

Recipient: Forden, Robert W (Beijing) (b)(6)

Circumstantial Evidence against Wuhan Institute of Virology

Compiled by

(b)(6)

Policy Planning Staff

April 26, 2020

BLUF: There is no direct, smoking gun evidence to prove that a leak from Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) caused the pandemic, but there is circumstantial evidence to suggest such may be the case. The following is descriptive and not meant to promote the lab leak theory.

Xi Jinping thinks China has a bio safety problem.

On February 14, 2020, Xi Jinping delivered an important speech devoted to the "lessons learned" from the Wuhan outbreak. In the speech, he personally admitted the outbreak had exposed "shortcomings" (短板) and "leaking holes" (漏洞) in China's biological material management and biological security system. Also in the speech, Xi Jinping mandated the government quickly revise and strengthen existing infectious disease prevention and wildlife protection laws, and "immediately enact a new biological security law, 生物安全法" in order to "make biological security law a part of the national security system."¹

WIV Director thinks WIV and other high BSL level labs have a bio safety problem.

Dr. Yuan Zhiming, WIV's own laboratory director and president of Wuhan branch of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, published an article in 2016, along with four co-authors, entitled "Thoughts on Strengthening Systemic Planning for Our Nation's High BSL-level Labs" in China's most authoritative science journal "Bulletin of Chinese Academy of Sciences 中国科学院院刊. In this article, Yuan admitted China's high BSL-level bio labs, including the 40+ BSL3 labs and the BSL4 WIV, had serious safety and virus sample management issues that need to be "strengthened." Areas that must be urgently improved included standards and procedures for virus samples' transportation, storage and tests, emergency contingency plans, lab procedure review and assessment, certification for protective gears, and complete quality control and monitor over lab biological security.²

International scientist community thinks WIV and China have a bio safety problem.

The international science community has long worried about deadly viruses escaping from China's high BSL-level bio labs, especially WIV. Notably, the leading science journal Nature featured WIV in a February 22, 2017 report entitled "Inside the Chinese Lab Poised to Study World's Most Dangerous Pathogens" sounds the alarm on bio safety at WIV and other Chinese high BSL level bio labs., The journal quotes a leading American medical scientist who stresses the challenges for China to have an "open culture (that) is important to keeping BSL-4 labs safe" because China stresses hierarchy and lacks a

¹ <http://news.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2020/2/435765.shtml>

² http://www.bulletin.cas.cn/publish_article/2016/10/20161016.htm

"diversity of viewpoints. flat structures where everyone feels free to speak and openness of information." ³

The French who built WIV think WIV has a safety problem.

WIV was created with French support and technology. After the French helped build it, French scientists were essentially shut out. From the beginning, senior French government officials and many French scientists were deeply concerned about the craftiness and hastiness with which the Chinese displayed toward the French with regard to WIV and the potential safety and danger WIV posed. These concerns are recently were exposed in great detail by Radio France⁴ and Radio France International (Mandarin)⁵.

US State Department thinks WIV has a bio safety problem.

State Department cables in 2018 warned of WIV safety problems which were recently reported by Josh Rogin⁶ and Tobias Hoonhout.⁷

China has a record of deadly viruses escaping labs which have caused major crises.

The most infamous lab escape of virus took place in 2004 when the SARS virus escaped from labs in Beijing. The escape was entirely due to procedural negligence that caused at least one death, eight infections, and 862 quarantine cases. The Feb. 22, 2017 Nature feature article on WIV entitled "Inside the Chinese Lab Poised to Study World's Most Dangerous Pathogens" cites an authoritative American scientist who had extensive exchanges with Chinese virologists, as saying that "The SARS virus has escaped from high-level containment facilities in Beijing MULTIPLE TIMES."⁸

The Chinese government acts like WIV has a bio safety problem.

WIV has been lauded by China as an example of China's transparency and international cooperation. In fact, WIV's scientists have extensive international cooperation projects, including in the United States. On January 1, 2020, WIV was gagged⁹ by the Chinese government and has been essentially taken over by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) since mid-January¹⁰. WIV is the most prominent medical virus research institute in all of China that hosts a number of world-class virologists who should have been present in the media and other public forums during the outbreak to educate the public on the dangers of the virus. Yet from the very beginning, the opposite has happened. As a result of the gag order and

³ <https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s-most-dangerous-pathogens-1.21487>

⁴ <https://www.francebleu.fr/infos/societe/enquete-radio-france-le-p4-de-wuhan-ce-laboratoire-qui-suscite-tant-de-fantasmes-et-speculations-1587126690>

⁵ http://www.rfi.fr/cn/中国/20200423-武汉_p4_实验室-法国帮助建成后被-踢-开始末

⁶ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/14/state-department-cables-warned-safety-issues-wuhan-lab-studying-bat-coronaviruses/>

⁷ <https://www.nationalreview.com/news/u-s-diplomats-warned-about-safety-risks-in-wuhan-labs-studying-bats-two-years-before-coronavirus-outbreak/>

⁸ <https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s-most-dangerous-pathogens-1.21487>

⁹ <https://www.ntdtv.com/gb/2020/02/16/a102778617.html>

¹⁰ <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3064677/meet-major-general-chinas-coronavirus-scientific-front-line>

PLA takeover of WIV, speculation began to grow that the Chinese government was shielding the possibility of a major safety lapse from the facility.

Knowledgeable Chinese bloggers think WIV has a bio safety problem.

A number of Chinese bloggers have charged WIV's leading coronavirus expert Dr. Shi Zhengli of mismanagement and negligence (some of them have disappeared). One such blogger, under the name Dr. Wu Xiahoua, charged tha WIV lab's virus-carrying animals are often sold as pets, dead lab animals were not properly cremated but placed randomly around, and even lab workers boil and eat lab-used eggs.¹¹ Wu's charges of WIV management negligence are specific, indicating intimate knowledge of WIV's operation and procedures. It was Wu's allegation that prompted Dr. Shi Zhengli to "swear with her life" in vehemently denying any possibility of WIV leaks. This denial has since outraged many in China for not being specific and unconvincing.

Another charge of negligence is that WIV, as the nation's only and highest BSL level virus lab, with several hundred staff,¹² is run by a 39-year-old woman named Wang Yanyi who does not have an advanced doctoral degree from the West (she earned an MA from U. of Colorado). Rather, she received her PhD quickly from Wuhan University nearby whose vice president, Prof. Shu Hongbing, is her current (and much older) husband.

WIV acts like it has a bio safety problem.

WIV has failed to convince the world of the whereabouts of its former employee Huang Yanling, rumored to be Patient Zero. Huang worked at WIV but is the only WIV employee whose bio, profile and picture have been deleted by WIV on its website, that has fueled speculations of foul-play. WIV issued a vigorous denial¹³ about Huang being infected, claiming she has left WIV for another unnamed province to work and is currently alive and healthy. But Huang herself has never appeared in public and she has since been "disappeared."

On February 19, 2020 WIV published an open letter to its entire staff in an attempt to refute the global allegations against WIV since the outbreak. The allegations include: 1. WIV is involved in genetically engineered coronavirus; 2. WIV lab leaked the virus; 3. PLA took over WIV; and 4. a former employee died as Patient Zero. Curiously, the letter only uses one word, "rumor," to counter these allegations without offering ANY specific rebuttal. Instead, the letter urged all WIV staff to "rally around the CCP Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at its core" to perform the duty of WIV's role as the "National Team" of science and technology.¹⁴

Many Western scientists defend WIV and Dr. Shi Zhengli, but the world still thinks WIV has a biosafety problem.

Many western scientists have rallied around WIV's Shi Zhengli to defend her and WIV but act mostly as Dr. Shi's character witnesses and not always as scientific judges. Her defenders overwhelmingly focus on the question of the lab engineering of viruses rather than its bio safety negligence.

¹¹ <https://justrun.thisistap.com/2020/02/10/武小华博士%ef%bc%9a 我知道的和你该知道的一切/>

¹² http://www.whiov.cas.cn/jggk_105204/jgjj/201312/t20131206_3992513.html

¹³ http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-02/16/c_1125582064.htm

¹⁴ <http://news.sciencenet.cn/htmlnews/2020/2/435951.shtm>

Suspicion lingers that Shi, as WIV's deputy director and China's foremost expert on bat coronavirus research, has had extensive cooperation with many international virologists who might be doing her a favor. Many Western research universities and research institutes have had partnerships with WIV on major research projects. There are at least six U.S. universities, private foundations and government health institutes that have research partnerships with WIV.¹⁵

Western scientists' defense of Shi and WIV are also likely motivated by two other reasons. First, the extreme attractiveness of China's loosely regulated, often reckless and ethically challenged research environment provides international researchers opportunities unavailable in the West. For example, western researchers are drawn to China that readily allows for experiments on primates, especially monkeys, as examined in a February 2017 Nature article.¹⁶ Secondly, political partisanship not professional coolheadedness may also play a role. For example, Nature has issued a series of apologies to China for allegedly inadvertently facilitating racist notions in its publications, which has been easily used by the CCP propagandists. Nature seems to have prioritize political correctness over facts—in Jan. 2020, the British science journal bought the Chinese government narrative by stating that "Scientists believe the most likely source of the coronavirus to be an animal market." while this CCP theory was being challenged by other medical journals and it soon collapsed.¹⁷

WIV's defenders insist that the virus was not engineered in a Chinese lab, but China's own leading bat coronavirus expert admits otherwise.

Dr. Shi Zhengli is a world-renown BatWoman of China who has dedicated her research to specifically focusing on bat viruses. In 2015, Shi and nine other Chinese scientists admitted in an article in Nature Medicine entitled "A SARS-like Cluster [25] of Circulating Bat Coronaviruses Shows Potential for Human Emergence" that she and her team did indeed genetically engineer "chimeric" and "hybrid" virus in her lab. In part, it says "We built a chimeric virus encoding a novel, zoonotic CoV spike protein ... isolated from Chinese horseshoe bats." "The hybrid virus allowed us to evaluate the ability of the novel spike protein to cause disease independently of other necessary adaptive mutations in its natural backbone."¹⁸

Additionally, in a March 2, 2019 article titled "Bat Coronavirus in China" published in the Switzerland-based medical journal Viruses - just nine months before the Wuhan outbreak - Shi Zhengli and her co-authors warned that "it is highly likely that future SARS- or MERS-like coronavirus outbreaks will originate from bats, and there is an increased probability that this will occur in China."¹⁹

The Indians think the Novel Coronavirus that originated in Wuhan may be lab altered by humans.

On January 31, 2020, a group of Indian scientists published a bombshell article²⁰ suggesting that the

¹⁵ They are University of Alabama, University of North Texas, EcoHealth Alliance, Harvard University, The National Institutes of Health, and National Wildlife Federation. The WIV webpage listing these partnerships and their specific joint projects has been deleted recently, but the compiler of this document copied the entire WIV website back in January 2020.

¹⁶ <https://www.nature.com/news/monkey-kingdom-1.19762>

¹⁷ <https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s-most-dangerous-pathogens-1.21487>

¹⁸ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4797993/>

¹⁹ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331492838_Bat_Coronaviruses_in_China

²⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338957445_Uncanny_similarity_of_unique_inserts_in_the_2019-nCoV_spike_protein_to_HIV-1_gp120_and_Gag

Wuhan virus was very likely genetically engineered in a lab. The only lab that was considered capable of doing such a deed in all of China would be WIV. China immediately launched a fierce rebuttal²¹ forcing the Indian medical journal to withdraw the article from its website, but the Indians still keep on its original website the abstract of the article²² affirming its key findings. The original article in its entirety has been reprinted by other research publications.²³

It may seem likely that WIV has been researching a vaccine BEFORE the outbreak.

WIV's likely legal battle with the American pharmaceutical company GILEAD over a potential patent may give credence to the following possibility: prior to the surprise outbreak in its close vicinity, WIV had possessed the novel coronavirus in its lab and had known of its lethality and pathogenicity for a while. It had been actively researching a vaccine before anyone else could succeed, thus giving China the sole patent right.

According to the Johns Hopkins University's latest assessment, likely the most promising treatment for the novel coronavirus is Remdesivir²⁴ developed by the U.S. biopharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences. In mid-January, at the height of the Wuhan outbreak, Gilead donated free Remdesivir samples to China for an experimental clinical trial to save Chinese lives. Yet days later, on January 19th, even before the Chinese government admitted the virus could be transmitted from human-to-human and before Beijing locked down Wuhan, WIV finished compiling a "user patent" application for Gilead's Remdesivir and filed it on January 21st to the Chinese patent authorities in Beijing.

This WIV act fits a pattern of China "abusing its regulatory system to pressure foreign companies to hand over valuable technology"²⁵ and prompted an outrage and legal challenge in the U.S.²⁶ But far more importantly, it raises the possibility that WIV has been researching a COVID19 vaccine of its own all along and would like to prevent Gilead's Remdesivir from entering the Chinese market because filing a patent requires lengthy documentation, clinical statistics and international and national legal opinions. It normally would take months, or even years to prepare and compile the application, rather than a few days.

With the CCP-ordered systemic destruction of virus samples collected from the earliest infected patients in Wuhan, it has become much more difficult to determine the true origin of the novel coronavirus that had its first outbreak in China. With the staggering losses of lives and livelihoods for the entire world, it is imperative for the Chinese government to be open and candid about its flawed bio safety and reckless ambition to dominate global bio-medical research. Transparency saves lives, and the future of mankind.

²¹ <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1178363.shtml>

²² <https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.01.30.927871v1>

²³ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338957445_Uncanny_similarity_of_unique_inserts_in_the_2019-nCoV_spike_protein_to_HIV-1_gp120_and_Gag

²⁴ https://www.hopkinsguides.com/hopkins/view/Johns_Hopkins_ABX_Guide/540747/all/Coronavirus_COVID_19__SARS_CoV_2_

²⁵ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200329040520/https://www.marketwatch.com/story/china-scientists-want-to-patent-gilead-drug-to-treat-coronavirus-patients-2020-02-06>

²⁶ <https://web.archive.org/web/20200326060714/https://sfist.com/2020/02/06/bay-area-based-gilead-donates-experimental-anti-viral-drug-to-china/>