



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 24, 2024

Case No. FL-2021-00033

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

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

We refer you to our letter dated May 14, 2024, regarding the release of certain U.S. Department of State (“Department”) material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. Upon further review, we have determined that additional information may be released in 11 records previously 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.

If you have any questions, your attorney may contact M Andrew Zee, Trial Attorney, at m.andrew.zee@usdoj.gov or (415) 436 6646. 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 that reads "Terry Gordon". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Terry Gordon
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:	"SMART Archive" <>
To:	SMART Core <>
Subject:	PRC Narratives of COVID-19
Date:	Fri, 06 Mar 2020 06:53:16 GMT

UNCLASSIFIED

~~SBU~~



MRN: 20 BEIJING 454
Date/DTG: Mar 06, 2020 / 060650Z MAR 20
From: AMEMBASSY BEIJING
Action: WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*
E.O.: 13526
TAGS: PROP, PGOV, PREL, ECON, KPAO, KMDR, KFLU, CN
Captions: SENSITIVE
Reference: A) 20 Beijing 286
B) 20 Beijing 442
C) 20 Beijing 235
Subject: PRC Narratives of COVID-19

1. ~~(SBU)~~ **Summary:** The PRC propaganda authorities have used several different narrative approaches to news coverage, commentary, and descriptions of China's response to COVID-19. Ensuring that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and PRC government are seen as responsive, in control, and winning against this fight are paramount in positive messages. These positive messages are mixed with neutral and negative messages as well. Neutral stories are more factual, sometimes feature World Health Organization (WHO) information, or describe action China has taken to address the epidemic. The negative stories and attribution of the blame outside of China is a shift as China seeks to rebrand itself as a global leader in the fight against COVID-19, rather than the country where it originated and spread. The COVID-19 virus continues to be intensely monitored and avidly discussed by China's active social media users. By countering negative and neutral PRC narratives with factual, transparent, and authentic information the U.S. Mission in China has successfully reached millions of Chinese netizens seeking information on COVID-19. **End Summary.**

Positive Narratives: China is in a Battle Against the Virus – and Will Win

2. ~~(SBU)~~ Chinese state-run media pushed out many positive narratives and messages about the PRC government and CCP response to COVID-19. These positive narratives continued from earlier in the month to focus on the PRC response to the crisis and how the CCP will win the battle against the epidemic. (Ref A). These positive narratives focused on how the CCP and PRC were responding, Xi's direct role in leading the response, how the PRC is working closely with the international community

and with the WHO, and more broadly narratives that supported trust in the PRC response.

Xi Leads the Fight

3. (U) In February media outlets covered Xi's personal and direct engagement in combatting COVID-19 with photos of visits, *CCTV* coverage of Xi chairing leadership meetings on COVID-19 and focus on scientific research. By early March Chinese news outlets were widely amplifying Xi's direct engagement in combatting the epidemic. For example, on March 2, *Xinhua* covered Xi's visit to the Academy of Military Medical Sciences and the School of Medicine at Tsinghua University in Beijing. *Xinhua* reported that Xi stressed coordination in advancing scientific research on COVID-19, and his interest in vaccines, anti-bodies, medicines and fast testing kits. The PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) issued a statement on March 2 titled, "Xi Jinping Urged Greater Efforts in Scientific Research on Novel Coronavirus Outbreak."

The CCP Cares – Leading Group for COVID 19 Response

4. (U) Media outlets have all widely amplified Premier Li Keqiang presiding over the leading group of China's COVID-19 response with multiple positive stories demonstrating how the PRC government and CCP are improving prevention and control, measures to care for staff working at the frontlines and how the central government and CCP have reacted at the most crucial moments to curb the spread of the epidemic. State-run media also pushed out daily updates with information on infection rates and new cases, with many outlets developing special landing pages or resources in online platforms to push out real-time updates. Good news stories about the PRC response in sending medical teams, building hospitals and stable food supplies were continued.

Working Closely with International Community and Sharing Vital Information

5. ~~(SBU)~~ *CCTV* and other Chinese media outlets widely repeated praise from the WHO on China's "pragmatic and flexible anti-epidemic measures." *The Paper* reported on February 26, "After completing their nine-day inspection in China, WHO experts hailed China's unprecedented responses to COVID-19 and acknowledged China's role in protecting the international community and buying time for other countries to prepare for the outbreak. On the same day, UN General Secretary Guterres also recognized China's efforts to alleviate the negative impact of COVID-19 and its contributions to mankind. Chinese media said, these remarks from WHO and the United Nations truthfully reflect the aggressiveness, speed, and transparency with which China responded to the outbreak. *Guangming Daily* commented on February 26, "It is no exaggeration to say that China's resolute and powerful preventive and control measures, and its outstanding capabilities to lead, respond, organize, mobilize, and implement could not be achieved by other countries. The effectiveness of China's prevention and control work has once again demonstrated the significant advantages of the CPC's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics."

China's Response Gave the Rest of the World Time

6. (U) *People's Daily* cited China's sense of responsibility in a February 22 op-ed saying, "the Chinese speed on the technical, resource, and infrastructure fronts saved precious time for the world to address the virus while limiting the number of countries affected to just 20. The Chinese practice established new benchmarks in global epidemic control, sharing information and working closely with the WHO and countries in an open, transparent, and responsible manner, inviting international experts and

facilitating their visits to Wuhan and elsewhere.” *Guangming Daily* opined on February 28, “the battle against COVID-19 is also a war to defend the world” and that China's response “demonstrates our major power's sense of responsibility.” Many media outlets described China’s response as “shrewd and courageous” and *Guangming Daily* said the lockdown of Wuhan minimized the spread of the virus to other countries. The op-ed claims China’s “timely information sharing saved the world precious time to rise to the epidemic.”

Neutral Narratives Still Promote PRC Goals

7. (SBU) More neutral narratives focused on the epidemic situation in Hubei and around China, as well as the complex issues surrounding the epidemic. Other topics including actions the PRC is taking on wild animals and markets, innovative and new responses to help combat COVID-19, stories about front line responders, and about other cities such as Beijing. Many of these neutral stories focused on actions that the PRC took to control the epidemic and commentary from official state-run outlets noted China’s reaction and response can serve as a model for other countries.

New Innovations Help with Response

8. (SBU) Several Chinese outlets claimed the outbreak “unleashed innovation capacity.” Articles cited AI, drones, big data platforms, and other new technologies as playing an important role in medical diagnosis, delivery of supplies, and meeting people's needs in maintaining a normal life during the crisis. (Ref B and C).

Beijing is Special

9. (U) The *Global Times* reported on February 27 that Beijing is facing mounting pressure in efforts to contain COVID-19 as new confirmed infections surged due to imported cases of infection and cluster outbreaks. Media reports said officials from the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) confirmed that authorities made the capital the top priority of its epidemic prevention and control work, with measures matching those adopted in Hubei. A WeChat post from the CCP Party School on February 17 featured an article titled, “We Would Never Let Beijing Fail” and discussed the strict measures implemented in Beijing.

Trust PRC Information, Response, and Treatment

10. (SBU) The Chinese public has actively followed COVID-19 news, with special interest in stories from traditional and social media on what they can do to stay healthy, help their families, and learn from “trusted medical experts.” The CCP leveraged medical experts with established credibility, such as Zhong Nanshan, the doctor to first publicly acknowledge SARS, to convey these messages and push official narratives (**Note:** However, many netizens continue to source information beyond the Firewall and compare statements from Chinese experts with the international community, including from U.S. CDC. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

End Note.)

Negative Narratives – Move the Blame

11. (SBU) Negative narratives ranged from disinformation and conspiracy theories to questioning U.S. data and information on cases and transmission in the United States. Even in the midst of the crisis the

official propaganda authorities, MFA spokesperson, and various state-run media organizations continued to critique the United States. Early stories talked about the U.S. "overreaction" and sending diplomats out of Wuhan, while more recent stories claimed the stock market changes in the United States were due to a panic over COVID-19 in the U.S. Other negative narratives compared COVID-19 to the flu, reacted angrily over naming conventions that linked COVID-19 to China or Wuhan, and claimed other international reactions were racist and unfair. As the epidemic spreads to more countries, these negative stories push the blame outside of China as the PRC seeks to rebrand itself as a global leader in the fight against COVID-19, rather than the country where it originated and spread.

U.S. Overreacts – Diplomatic Staff Are Safe, No Need for Bans

12. ~~(SBU)~~ The PRC response echoed in official media, social media, and from the MFA briefing podium negatively portrayed the closure of the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, the evacuation of U.S. citizens from the city, and the departure of Mission China family members due to health concerns. China portrayed U.S. screening and travel restrictions as a "ban" on Chinese from traveling to the United States, calling the U.S. response "excessive." In a key editorial on February 21 *People's Daily* said, "Since the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pneumonia, the WHO has repeatedly stated it does not recommend countries take any travel or trading restrictions and has called on countries to take convincing measures based on evidence. However, some countries still choose to ignore WHO's professional recommendations by taking excessive restrictive measures." *People's Daily* continued, "Such egoistic acts taken at the expense of others are not conducive to epidemic prevention and control. Rather, they have created panic, disrupted normal international exchanges and cooperation, and negatively affected global air transport market and the world economy."

13. (U) *The Paper* on March 4 opined, "it's worth noting that at the onset of the outbreak, the Trump administration was the first to evacuate expats from China and moved quickly to announce travel bans. As other countries followed suit, China was left hamstrung by what was effectively isolation, and its economy suffered. Had China decided to retaliate by banning all travel from and to the United States and imposing export controls on medical supplies such as masks and medicines, America would have been plunged into the hell of coronavirus." *The Paper* concluded, "Despite the rhetoric of gloating U.S. politicians and attacks by racist U.S. media outlets, China chose not to take advantage of America's plight. It's ridiculous to demand an apology from China given the huge sacrifices the country has made. Instead, the United States should apologize to China for its wrong deeds, and the world is indebted to China for singlehandedly slowing the spread of the virus."

14. ~~(SBU)~~ Later when other countries added restrictions, *Xinhua* opined, "recently some countries have taken necessary border restrictive measures aimed at protecting the health and security of their citizens and foreigners as well as safeguarding regional and global public health security. As long as those measures are science-based, professional and appropriate, they can be understood and accepted."

Show us the Money

15. ~~(SBU)~~ The *People's Daily* in commentary on February 27 commented that while the U.S. Department of State announced it will provide \$100 million in aid to help China and other countries in their epidemic prevention efforts China has "yet to see actual actions." The commentary said, compared to the U.S. government, U.S. businesses, friendly groups, and civil society organizations are much more active. CASS statistics show that the total aid from U.S. companies ranks first, far more than those from

other countries. On Embassy accounts, many netizens continue to ask about the U.S. response to COVID-19, U.S. donations, and specifics on aid to China and to other countries to combat COVID-19.

Americans and Those that Doubt China are Doomed to Fail

16. (U) In early March, the CCP and official media outlets directly responded to critiques of China's ability to weather the COVID-19 production impacts. American politicians that want companies to leave China are doomed to fail was one topline. While the PRC representative to the UN framed the story as "confident Beijing will meet economic goals despite virus." The PRC argued, there is no replacement of China's "highly refined, specialized, high-quality, and efficient supply chain." Media outlets also linked the response to COVID-19 as another reason to trust China's production saying China's achievements in epidemic prevention provide confidence to resume production." The *21st Century Business Herald* in an editorial on February 2 said, "While it is natural for businesses to feel concerned, some American politicians and Western media that always want companies to leave China have taken this opportunity to promote a decoupling policy. But their move is doomed to fail."

Is the U.S. Lying about COVID-19 Numbers in the United States.?

17. (SBU) Chinese media actively pushed questions about the accuracy in U.S. cases and reports of COVID-19 and the speed of the U.S. response. On March 2, the *Beijing News* featured a commentary opining the United States does not know the extent of the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S. The fact that the U.S. stock market crashed indicates the market's misgivings about epidemic control outside of China, and lack of trust in the U.S. claimed Chinese media. In addition to official media coverage, Chinese netizens actively debated and discussed information on cases and response in the United States in late February and early March. On March 2, popular comments on *Weitianxia*, a prominent international news Weibo account operated by Sina discussed the CDC release of a COVID-19 patient and testing in the U.S. for COVID-19. The *Global Times* reported on February 27 that Chinese experts said the U.S. might not be able to effectively contain the outbreak of COVID-19, as the White House and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have different perspectives on the situation, and President Trump's priority is still the economic data and the presidential election.

18. (SBU) On March 4 *People's Daily* issued a commentary titled, "The spread of coronavirus in the United States raises concern." In the commentary *People's Daily* highlights concerns over the nursing center in Washington State, public health officials' reactions in the U.S., and claims the U.S. administration acted slowing in testing potential COVID-19 cases. Active debate and discussion on Weibo in February closely tracked and monitored news announcements in the U.S. on COVID-19 response and cases. On social media Chinese netizens criticized the U.S. CDC's measures, debating whether the U.S. system is up to the task of addressing the novel coronavirus outbreak, while also opining that Europe's decision to increase refugee admissions will further help the virus spread. As one Chinese netizen put it, "the 'glorified' countries, without exception, are caught in a panic."

Stock Market Decline Shows U.S. May Not Have Control

19. (U) The *Global Times* opined on February 27 that "panic driven by the possible spread of COVID-19 in the United States has sent the country's stock market plummeting for days." The *Global Times* said, "only actions to combat the virus, rather than words, can save the U.S. stock market from a meltdown and stop it from once again becoming the center of a global financial crisis." The *Global Times* claimed, the market selloff "revealed investor concerns over whether or not the U.S. can bring the situation

under control, particularly as the U.S. CDC confirmed the country's first possible case of community transmission."

Debunking Conspiracy Theories with Rumors

20. ~~(SBU)~~ A key editorial published in *People's Daily* on February 28 claims although the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic first appeared in China, it did not necessarily originate in China. The editorial says in contrast to cautious scientists, some Western politicians and media have made rash assertions and even conjectured a so-called biochemical war to stigmatize China. *People's Daily* continues the drumbeat of "viruses know no borders" and says it is "everyone's duty to defeat ignorance with science, smash rumors with truth, resist prejudice with cooperation, and stop 'political viruses' such as conspiracy theories from causing chaos." Also in late February, Chinese media outlets all widely amplified well-known Chinese epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan saying the epidemic first appeared in China, but it may not have originated from China. This led to active discussions by netizens guessing that Zhong implied it came from the U.S. *Global Times* highlighted the origin story as well by amplifying a joint China-WHO report on February 29. Another popular online rumor that was widely circulated on Weibo and other social media platforms was that the U.S. was responsible for making the virus as either a bioweapon or a way to limit China's rise. While Chinese official media outlets debunked many of these rumors including that the CIA creating the virus, the conversations online were not quickly censored or limited which allowed many different conspiracy theories to circulate.

21. ~~(SBU)~~ **Comment:** Despite anger online and questions about who knew what when, and how the CCP and PRC central government responded, as well as what will be covered-up, the propaganda authorities have managed to maintain a decent level of control. Positive messages on China's response, neutral factual discussion, and negative rumors have all mixed together in official media and online discussions. The CCP central story line that there is a battle and the nation must mobilize to combat COVID-19 seems to continue to have wide popular support. As the virus spreads outside of China, the CCP will continue to paint a rosy picture of the PRC response and how PRC actions helped the world and are a model for China's authoritarian rule and controlled media environment. Anti-American sentiment stirred up by the CCP about U.S. actions were met with mixed results in China. Negative stories and seeking to reframe the COVID-19 story may be part of a global power competition where China is seeking to show that their model of response is effective while actively casting doubts on the U.S. and other open, democratic countries' response.

22. ~~(SBU)~~ In February, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing has posted nearly 75 times on Chinese social media platforms Weibo and WeChat about the COVID-19 virus reaching more than 34.5 million Chinese and generating more than 748,000 engagements, showing that some Chinese audiences are ready and willing to listen to fact-based, transparent reporting provided by the United States. The top post by engagement across Department of State properties the past month was the Embassy's February 8 post on Weibo about how the Department of State assisted in shipping nearly 17.8 tons of medical supplies to China.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Signature: Branstad

Drafted By: BEIJING (b)(6)

Cleared By: ECON (b)(6)

ESTH (b)(6)

CONS (b)(6)

PD (b)(6)

PD (b)(6)

Approved By: POL (b)(6)

Released By: PD: (b)(6)

Info: BEIJING: (b)(6)

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Dissemination Rule: Archive Copy

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~~SBU~~

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

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

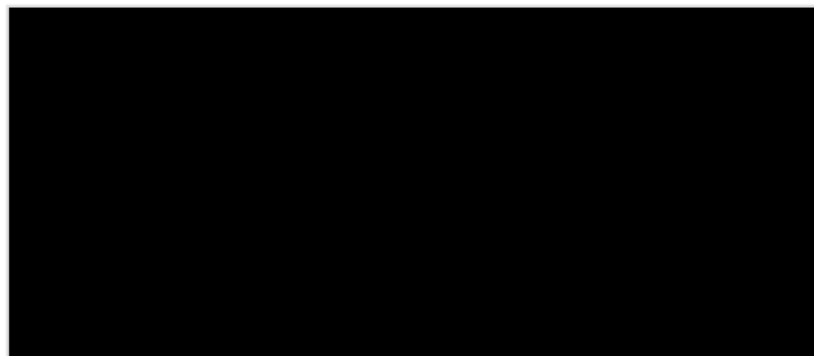
From: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, April 30, 2020 10:01 AM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
Cc: Stilwell, David R (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: RE: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Hi (b)(6)

I wanted to flag this journal article I ran across the other day, 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. **This scenario puts laboratory biosafety at risk since the implementation efficiency and timely operations are relatively compromised.**

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, **the maintenance cost is generally neglected; several high-level BSLs have insufficient operational funds for routine yet vital processes. Due to the limited resources, some BSL-3 laboratories run on extremely minimal operational costs or in some cases none at all.**

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. **Currently, most laboratories lack specialized biosafety managers and engineers. In such facilities, some of the skilled staff is composed by part-time researchers. This makes it difficult to identify and mitigate potential safety hazards in facility and equipment operation early enough. Nonetheless, biosafety awareness, professional knowledge, and operational skill training still need to be improved among laboratory personnel.**

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 this 2004 incident.

(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. Trying to get more details from NIAID.

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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)(6)'s brilliant contributions to this project.

(b)(6) truly appreciate your input. Please do not hesitate to keep sending it. Until Stilly showed me your piece this morning, I had not been aware of P4 labs for the PLA. 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)(6) foresaw this disaster long ago. . . To me this is the key point: But Chinese microbiologists are celebrating their entrance to the elite cadre empowered to wrestle with the world's greatest biological threats.

(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); Fritz, Jonathan D (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); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6) (b)(6)
Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

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

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?

In the early 1980s, the Chinese Academy of Military Medical Sciences built the first modern BSL-3 laboratory for studying the transmission mechanisms of epidemic hemorrhagic fever viruses. Subsequently, several other laboratories were built for working on Hantavirus, HIV, arboviruses, and human bacterial pathogens in national institutions.

After the SARS epidemic (2002-2003) biosafety became a major priority for Chinese central and local governments and a series of 'biosafety-motivated' policies were enacted to promote legislative processes and the subsequent construction of more biosafety laboratories.

In 2004, China's central government launched a national BSL program that aimed at building a national BSL network comprising high-level BSLs as the nodes. High-level BSLs were then constructed and successfully operated. As of December 31st 2013, 53 BSLs, including 42 BSL-3s, had been fully accredited in China and more laboratories have completed the accreditation in recent years. In addition, more than 1000 BSL-2 labs are currently being operated in universities, research institutions, hospitals and R&D entrepreneurship centers. In addition, four mobile BSL-3 laboratories were imported from Labover (Montpellier, France) and distributed to institutes in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangdong for the nation-wide surveillance of pathogens and the emergency response of post-disaster and global public health events.

On January 31st 2015, the first Chinese BSL-4 laboratory (National Biosafety Laboratory, Wuhan) constructed by the Chinese Academy of Sciences was physically completed. After several years of commissioning and validation by relevant local and international authorities, the facility was finally accredited by the Chinese National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (CNAS) and fully certified by the National Health Commission for manipulating the Ebola, Nipah, and CrimeanCongo hemorrhagic fever viruses, and the laboratory became operational in early 2018.

BSL 4 Labs:

Wuhan Institute of Virology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences -- Wuhan, Hubei, China 2015. Wuhan Institute of Virology has existed since 1956 and already hosted BSL3 laboratories. A BSL4 facility was completed in 2015, and became the first BSL-4 laboratory in China.

(b)(5)

Harbin Veterinary Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences -- Harbin, Heilongjiang, China 2018. Harbin Veterinary Research Institute researches prevention and control of major infectious diseases. China's second, and the first for large animals, BSL-4 lab.

(b)(5)

2. Last time they were inspected by outside world.

(b)(5)

3. How many did Americans help create?

(b)(5)

4. Previous known lab shortcomings and failures.

(b)(5)

From: (b)(6)

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

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

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

Subject: Re: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

Sir,

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

Best,

(b)(6)

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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

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

To: (b)(6)

Cc: (b)(6)

Subject: HOT: Virology Labs Breakdown

(b)(6)

Working a question from the 7th floor on China's broader virus research efforts. 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 (I have a request out to INR as well) but maybe you can point us to those who do.

Thanks

Dave

David R. Stilwell

Ass't Secretary East Asia Pacific

(b)(6)

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

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



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)
 (h)(6)
 (b)(6)
 (h)(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 SEGRETOANDDEIGIN 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 the Andersen argument that CoV-2 was not ideal for the receptor binding and so should have come from nature. The facts show the exact opposite.

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

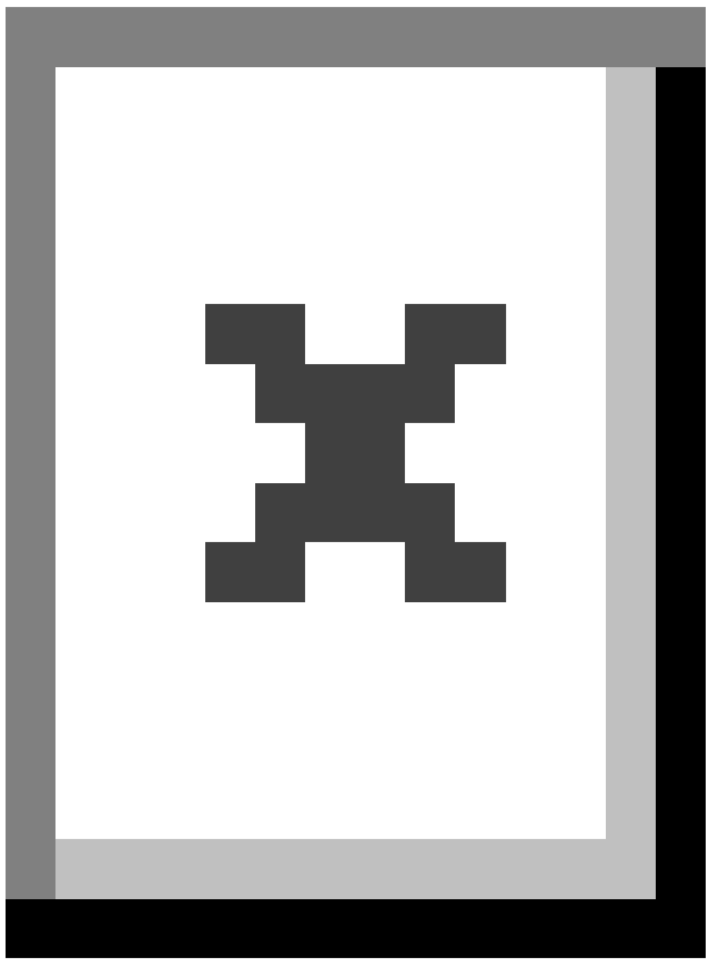
Trust is undermined when scientists make overblown promises about disease prevention, warn Edward C. Holmes, Andrew Rambaut and Kristian G. Andersen.

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 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 Global Virome Project — 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.

*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)

Thank 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 some specific potential courses of actions against WIV and PRC.

Please let me know if Dr. Lai has offered follow on introductions to other AS scientists with experience working on Coronaviruses, including with WIV. Also, if Dr. Baric responds please

confidentially fill us in. Do Taiwanese researchers have any direct samples obtained from Wuhan—if so, from when? We also are interested in any lab notebooks or other info on what was going on internally, including staff that may have fallen ill in Nov-Dec.

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:

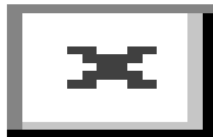
Steve,

Please let us know your thoughts. Are there other alternative pathways you have found beyond RaTG13?

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

When WIV said in January/February 2020 that RaTG13 was the closest sample they could find to SARS-CoV-2, what history of their RaTG13 research did WIV provide?

WIV said that RaTG13 was found in the Yunnan cave in 2013, but did WIV say they had done experiments with it in the years after 2013? Or did WIV say/suggest that RaTG13 had effectively stayed in the freezer until December 2019/January 2020, after the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak?

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). Does that suggest WIV didn't do any research involving RaTG13 before the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak?

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

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

From:	"Fouss, B. Jamison (Wuhan)"(b)(6)
To:	(b)(6) (Frankfurt) (b)(6)
Subject:	RE: EAP Press Guidance August 30, 2018
Date:	Fri, 31 Aug 2018 07:46:58 +0000

Hi (b)(6)

Great to hear from you and thanks for thinking of us. (b)(6) having a great time here. Wuhan is nice but really what makes the difference are the Consulate staff. You all hired some amazing ones – smart, dedicated, perfect English, enthusiastic. We're so fortunate. (b)(6) mentioned he met you (b)(6) He's also a great addition to the team. New Consular Chief (b)(6) arrives tonight. (b)(6) is amazing as well.

(b)(6) I went to the Virology Institute in March. We weren't actually able to visit the lab. For your interest, here's the blurb from our monthly report:

(U) Virology Institute Highlights US Cooperation During Visit: CG Fouss visited the Wuhan Institute of Virology with visiting Embassy ESTH Counselor (b)(6) The Institute operates China's first "P4", or biosafety level 4 lab, which became fully operational earlier this year. Institute officials gave an overview of their SARS research, supported by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, discussed their exchange projects with the U.S. National Science Foundation, and expressed support for the Global Virome Project, which aims to launch this year as an international collaboration to identify all viruses which have the potential to jump from animal to human populations and cause pandemics. USAID is leading a precursor project called PREDICT, which has the Wuhan Institute's participation.

Regards,

Jamie Fouss

傅杰明

From: (b)(6) (Frankfurt)
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2018 3:07 PM
To: Fouss, B. Jamison (Wuhan) (b)(6)
Subject: FW: EAP Press Guidance August 30, 2018

Hi Jamie

Congrats on your Wuhan anniversary. Seems like you're enjoying your tour.

I saw this article earlier this week and it reminded me of the French-built Wuhan Bio lab that opened soon after I arrived. With CDC we tried multiple times to visit but it never happened. Have you been able to visit?

Please give everyone my best. Looking forward to seeing (b)(6) next month when she's here for training.

Enjoy the long weekend.

--Joe

Joseph Zadrozny
U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt
office: (b)(6)
IVG: (b)(6)

~~Official SBU~~
UNCLASSIFIED

From: Eapguidance
Sent: Thursday, August 30, 2018 11:56 PM
To: Eapguidance <Eapguidance@state.gov>
Subject: EAP Press Guidance August 30, 2018

-

CHINA

EAP Return Lines

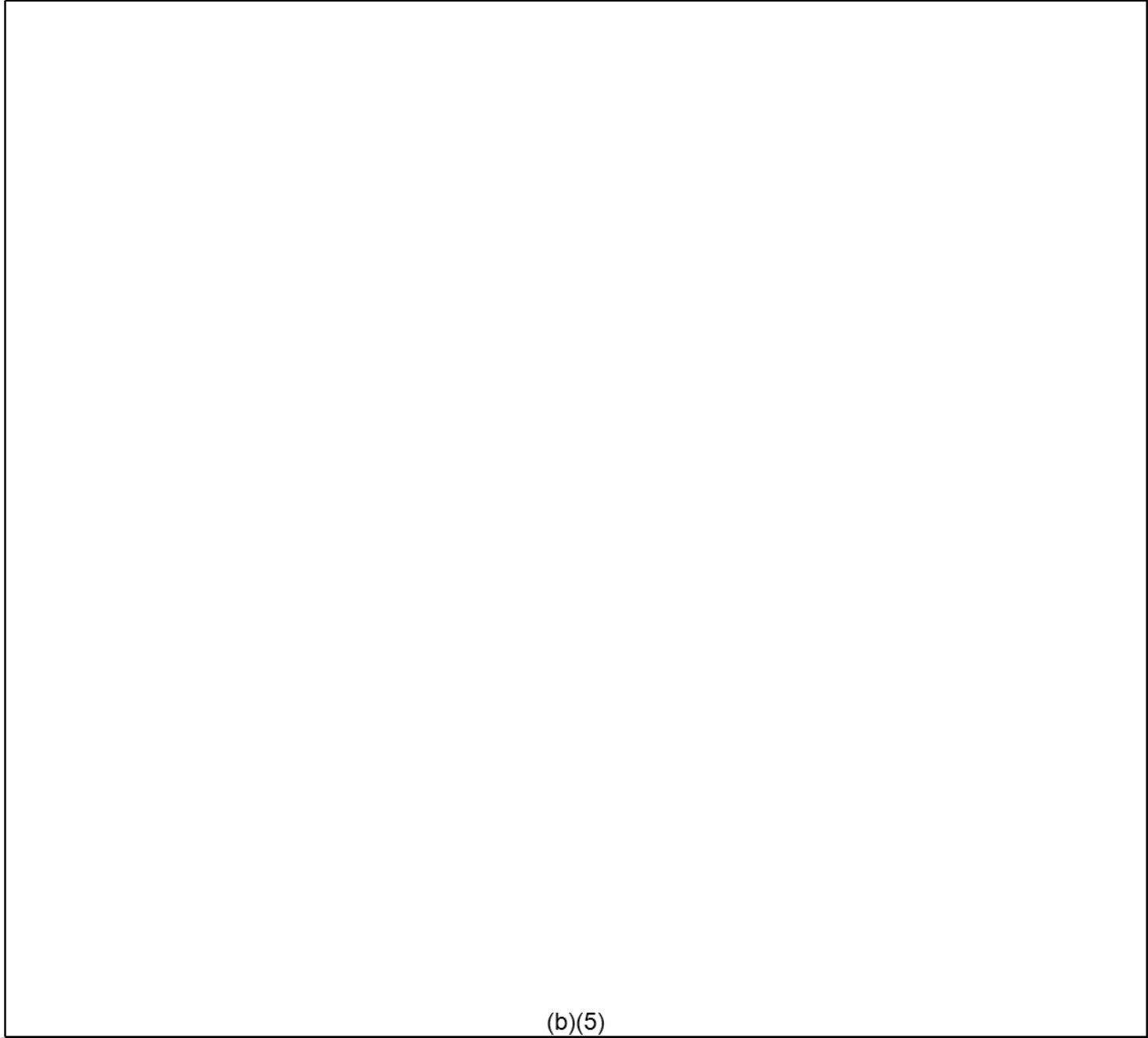
August 30, 2018

China: Letter from the Hill concerning Xinjiang

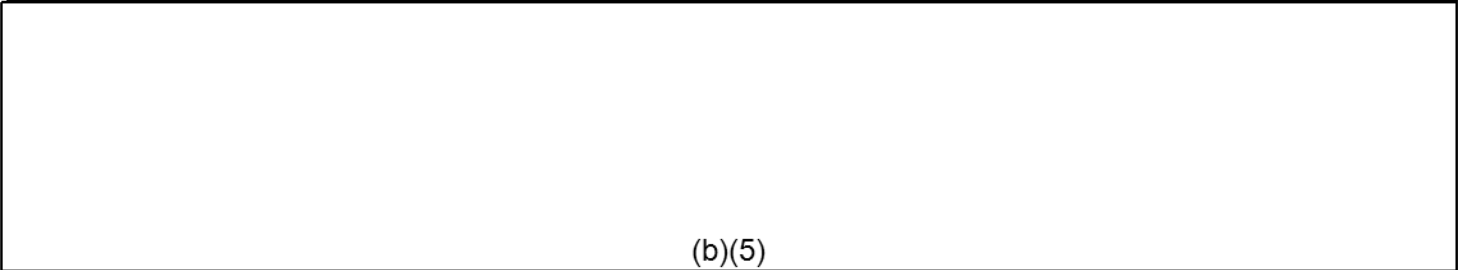
- We can confirm we did receive the letter and will respond in due course.
- We are deeply troubled by the Chinese government's worsening crackdown on Uighurs, Kazakhs, and other Muslims in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Credible reports indicate that individuals sent by Chinese authorities to detention centers since April 2017 numbers at least in the hundreds of thousands, and possibly millions.
- China has the right to protect its security and to counter violent extremism. However, indiscriminate and disproportionate controls on ethnic minorities' expressions of their cultural and religious identities have the potential to incite radicalization and recruitment to violence.
- The State Department does not forecast potential sanctions.

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EAP Press Guidance
August 28, 2018



(b)(5)



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Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

Withheld pursuant to exemption

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Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(5)

Sender:	"Fouss, B. Jamison (Wuhan)(b)(6)
Recipient:	(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

Have they requested access to specific sites in Wuhan? (b)(5)

(b)(5) When PRC AMB to the US Cui was asked that question on a news show last week, he bridged.

Get Outlook for iOS

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? WHO only if they're prone to report factually.

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 "duplicitous." 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: 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. It has the unique potential of being a huge win for U.S.-China cooperation on issues of global concern or if we refuse to engage being a complete disaster for U.S. national security.

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

Good cable which should garner some attention and hopefully action by the USG. 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. 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)~~ By continuing to work with other nations, including China, and playing a leading role in the Global Virome Project, the United States would benefit from the advances in health science, intellectual property, and commerce that will come from it. U.S.-China collaboration on the Global Virome Project is an opportunity to lead innovation in science, collaborate with China, and potentially contribute to scientific breakthroughs. **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. 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.

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 leader, Yang Huanming, 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 Yang's 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)~~ Shi Zhengli, a senior scientist at 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. Wang Zhengwu, 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, it will be important for the USG to remain engaged in significant ways with the GVP, to ensure that U.S. interests are adequately reflected in this effort, which will facilitate the development of countermeasures against future threats (pandemic preparedness), and enable rapid detection of viral threats and increase the capacity to handle them.

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:	"Stilwell, David R"
To:	Daniel Tobin (b)(6)
CC:	(b)(6) INDOPACOM PCJ0 (USA) (b)(6) @pacom.mil>; (b)(6) USINDOPACOM J0 (b)(6) @pacom.mil>
Subject:	FW: Latest timeline
Date:	Sun, 12 Apr 2020 18:40:08 +0000

We could use a review of official Chinese language statements related to XJP claim that he personally handled the Corona response (the story changed in early Feb I believe). For some reason, the CCP was eager to show that XJP was on top of the virus outbreak much earlier than originally stated (3 Jan?). Why would he claim he was in charge from the very beginning of the cover-up? You'd think he would want to hang that on the Mayor of Wuhan.

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

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

Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 2:24 PM

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

Subject: Latest timeline

Want to review before I circulate? Below/attached. Thanks.

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."

--2020--

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

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

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

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

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

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

Communist Party of China and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics.”

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

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

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

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

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

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Sender:	"Stilwell, David R"
Recipient:	Daniel Tobin (b)(6) (b)(6)]INDOPACOM PCJ0 (USA) (b)(6) @pacom.mil>; (b)(6) USINDOPACOM J0 (b)(6) @pacom.mil>

From:	"Stilwell, David R" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	FW: Latest timeline
Date:	Tue, 14 Apr 2020 01:31:12 +0000

Another CCP timeline. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

From: (b)(6)@pacom.mil>
Sent: Sunday, April 12, 2020 5:47 PM
To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; Daniel Tobin (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)@pacom.mil>
Subject: Re: Latest timeline

We can pass that on to CNA.

Also, here is a recent "official" COVID timeline according to Xinhua:
<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/E5HSjhlDnHeq6msItkI4LQ>

(b)(6)

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

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

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To: Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; Keshap, Atul (b)(6)@state.gov>
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Sender:	"Stilwell, David R" (b)(6) @state.gov>
Recipient:	Buangan, Richard L (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>

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

He's got personal background and network on ties between Galveston and Wuhan Institute. He could shed light on what happened Jan. 24 when Beijing prevented Wuhan Institute from sharing some info with Galveston. And possibly other such things. But certainly his political analysis on the call wasn't compelling.

--

(b)(6)

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

(b)(6) (o)

(b)(6) (c)

(b)(6)

On April 14, 2020 at 5:26:38 PM EDT, Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Do we want to talk to LeDuc? I think not, given his performance. He insisted all was well.

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

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

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

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

Dave,

Below were the speakers.

Kristian Andersen, Associate Professor, Department of Immunology and Microbiology, Scripps Research

James LeDuc, Director of the Galveston National Laboratory, The University of Texas Medical Branch

Jay Schnitzer, VP and CTO, MITRE Corporation.

Best, (b)(6)

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

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

(b)(6)

What was the name of the researcher from Texas who spoke about his personal involvement with the Wuhan Institute of Virology? We're taking questions on this article.

Thanks

Dave

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.

From: Buangan, Richard L (b)(6)@state.gov>

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

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

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

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

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

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

(b)(6)@state.gov>

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

Rogin's piece is out.

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

From:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6) @state.gov>
To:	Beijing ESTH Unit Chiefs <BeijingESTHUnitChiefs@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject:	FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute
Date:	Tue, 10 Mar 2020 16:14:35 +0000

ESTH,

See below and attached. It strikes me that a number of the individuals (i.e, their positions) and programs mentioned in the attached have since been cancelled/defunded, thus reducing our access in China and potentially our own ability to be prepared for health emergency arising in China – e.g., no NSF rep at post; no USAID at post; Predict was ended; is the NIAID position being filled following (b)(6) departure this past December?

If you can go through this cable with HHS and come up with an accurate list of what no longer exists (and if there's anything else on the cutting block), that would be helpful I think for EAP and others in the building to know.

(Additionally (b)(6) shared your "PRC COVID-19 Response Shows Progress and Cracks in China's Emergency Preparedness" cable with the EAP FO as a balanced look at China's response. More reporting along these lines would be read with great interest. Particularly important would be to understand if COVID-19 has fundamentally changed anything in the E, S&T, or H space; with an assessment of whether those changes are helpful or pose a challenge from the perspective of USG interests.)

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:13 AM
To: EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

(b)(6) thanks for digging this up. Flagging for others on the desk as well.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:10 AM
To: (b)(6); Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6) @state.gov (b)(6)
 <(b)(6) @state.gov> (b)(6) @state.gov>

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

Subject: FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

I actually forgot about this cable until very recently and just tracked down a copy.

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, the United States should prioritize expanding our already significant cooperation with this institute. This should include partnering with the institute on basic science research and the Global Virome Project (Ref B), and possibly trilateral U.S.-China-EU projects, building on the institute's strong ties with France. **End Summary with Comment.**

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

Sender:	(b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	Beijing ESTH Unit Chiefs <BeijingESTHUnitChiefs@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

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To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov>; OES-STC-China <OES-STC-China@state.gov>
CC:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	RE: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute
Date:	Tue, 10 Mar 2020 18:50:12 +0000

Sorry, should've also included IHB.

--

(b)(6) Ph.D.
Office of Science and Technology Cooperation (OES/STC)
U.S. Department of State
Phone: (b)(6)

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From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 2:38 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov>; OES-STC-China <OES-STC-China@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

This is great. I've been thinking about this a lot: how much of our inability to contain SARS-CoV2 may be related to reduced/impaired S&T engagement? Are there any other aspects that could help us understand this in addition to the details you mention below (b)(6)

--

(b)(6) Ph.D.
Office of Science and Technology Cooperation (OES/STC)
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From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 2:35 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; OES-STC-China <OES-STC-China@state.gov>
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Subject: RE: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

Thanks (b)(6)

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From: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 12:34 PM
To: OES-STC-China <OES-STC-China@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) (Beijing) (b)(6)@state.gov
Subject: FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

All,

See the attached 2018 cable out of Wuhan. (b)(6) has noted that all of the programs mentioned in the cable have since been canceled or defunded: NSF and USAID are gone; Predict was ended; and the NIAID position appears to have gone unfilled. One could argue – hypothetically, of course – that as a result we were less prepared than we could have been to address COVID-19.

Regards,

(b)(6)

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From: (b)(6)@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:13 AM
To: EAP-CM-Office-DL <EAP-CM-Office-DL@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov
Subject: FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

(b)(6) thanks for digging this up. Flagging for others on the desk as well.

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From: (b)(6)@state.gov
Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2020 8:10 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov; Fritz, Jonathan D (b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.gov (b)(6)@state.gov
Cc: EAP-J-Office-DL <EAP-J-Office-DL@state.gov>
Subject: FW: 2018 Cable on Visit to the Wuhan Virology Institute

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