



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

June 5, 2023

Case No. FL-2022-00062

Mr. Gary Ruskin
U.S. Right to Know
4096 Piedmont Avenue, #963
Oakland, CA 94611

Dear Mr. Ruskin:

As we noted in our letter dated April 24, 2023, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State (“Department”) has identified an additional 53 responsive records subject to the FOIA. We have determined 47 records may be released in part and 6 records must be withheld in their entirety.

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. The records withheld in full are exempt from release pursuant to FOIA Exemption 5, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(5). The document identification numbers for the records withheld in full are A-0000565000, A-0000564994, A-0000565043, A-0000564999, A-0000565189, and A-0000564953. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Assistant United States Attorney Stephanie Johnson at stephanie.johnson5@usdoj.gov or (202) 252-7874. Please refer to the case number, FL-2022-00062, and the civil action number, 22-cv-01130, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Diamonece Hickson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Diamonece Hickson
Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Programs and Services

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

- (b)(1) Information specifically authorized by an executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy. Executive Order 13526 includes the following classification categories:
- 1.4(a) Military plans, systems, or operations
 - 1.4(b) Foreign government information
 - 1.4(c) Intelligence activities, sources or methods, or cryptology
 - 1.4(d) Foreign relations or foreign activities of the US, including confidential sources
 - 1.4(e) Scientific, technological, or economic matters relating to national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(f) U.S. Government programs for safeguarding nuclear materials or facilities
 - 1.4(g) Vulnerabilities or capabilities of systems, installations, infrastructures, projects, plans, or protection services relating to US national security, including defense against transnational terrorism
 - 1.4(h) Weapons of mass destruction
- (b)(2) Related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency
- (b)(3) Specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 USC 552), for example:
- | | |
|----------------|---|
| ARMSEXP | Arms Export Control Act, 50a USC 2411(c) |
| CIA PERS/ORG | Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949, 50 USC 403(g) |
| EXPORT CONTROL | Export Administration Act of 1979, 50 USC App. Sec. 2411(c) |
| FS ACT | Foreign Service Act of 1980, 22 USC 4004 |
| INA | Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 USC 1202(f), Sec. 222(f) |
| IRAN | Iran Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 99-99, Sec. 505 |
- (b)(4) Trade secrets and confidential commercial or financial information
- (b)(5) Interagency or intra-agency communications forming part of the deliberative process, attorney-client privilege, or attorney work product
- (b)(6) Personal privacy information
- (b)(7) Law enforcement information whose disclosure would:
- (A) interfere with enforcement proceedings
 - (B) deprive a person of a fair trial
 - (C) constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
 - (D) disclose confidential sources
 - (E) disclose investigation techniques
 - (F) endanger life or physical safety of an individual
- (b)(8) Prepared by or for a government agency regulating or supervising financial institutions
- (b)(9) Geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells

Other Grounds for Withholding

- NR Material not responsive to a FOIA request excised with the agreement of the requester

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565210

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Asher, David" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
 Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>;
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>

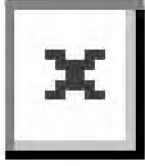
Subject: Re: Gain of function—from Ford—grounds for precision guided action, not being
 diplomatic warts about our credibility (which is about zero since we have done
 nothing more than express indignation)

Date: Sat, 5 Dec 2020 01:37:29 +0000

Grave concern under Article V is warranted. We can state what we believe based on the facts. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

<https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/08/chinas-military-pursuing-biotech/159167/>



Weaponizing Biotech: How China's Military Is Preparing for a 'New Domain of Warfare' - Defense One

Under Beijing's civil-military fusion strategy, the PLA is sponsoring research on gene editing, human performance enhancement, and more.

www.defenseone.com

6/2/2023

Weaponizing Biotech: How China's Military Is Preparing for a 'New Domain of Warfare'

Under Beijing's civil-military fusion strategy, the PLA is sponsoring research on gene editing, human performance enhancement, and more.

ELSA B. KANIA and WILSON VORNDICK | AUGUST 14, 2019

We may be on the verge of a brave new world indeed. Today's advances in biotechnology and genetic engineering have exciting applications in medicine — yet also alarming implications, including for military affairs. China's national strategy of military-civil fusion (军民融合) has highlighted biology as a priority, and the People's Liberation Army could be at the forefront of expanding and exploiting this knowledge.

The PLA's keen interest is reflected in strategic writings and research that argue that advances in biology are contributing to changing the form or character (形态) of conflict. For example:

- In 2010's War for Biological Dominance (制生权战争), Guo Jiwei (郭继卫), a professor with the Third Military Medical University, emphasizes the impact of biology on future warfare.
- In 2015, then-president of the Academy of Military Medical Sciences He Fuchu (贺福初) argued that biotechnology will

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become the new “strategic commanding heights” of national defense, from biomaterials to “brain control” weapons. Maj. Gen. He has since become the vice president of the Academy of Military Sciences, which leads China’s military science enterprise.

- Biology is among seven “new domains of warfare” discussed in a 2017 book by Zhang Shibo (张仕波), a retired general and former president of the National Defense University, who concludes: “Modern biotechnology development is gradually showing strong signs characteristic of an offensive capability,” including the possibility that “specific ethnic genetic attacks” (特定种族基因攻击) could be employed.
- The 2017 edition of Science of Military Strategy (战略学), a textbook published by the PLA’s National Defense University that is considered to be relatively authoritative, debuted a section about biology as a domain of military struggle, similarly mentioning the potential for new kinds of biological warfare to include “specific ethnic genetic attacks.”

These are just a few examples of an extensive and evolving literature by Chinese military scholars and scientists who are exploring new directions in military innovation.

Following these lines of thinking, the PLA is pursuing military applications for biology and looking into promising intersections with other disciplines, including brain science, supercomputing, and artificial intelligence. Since 2016, the Central Military Commission has funded projects on military brain science, advanced biomimetic systems, biological and biomimetic materials, human performance enhancement, and “new concept” biotechnology.

Gene Editing

Meanwhile, China has been leading the world in the number of trials of the CRISPR gene-editing technology in humans. Over a

dozen clinical trials are known to have been undertaken, and some of these activities have provoked global controversy. It's not clear whether Chinese scientist He Jiankui, may have received approval or even funding from the government for editing embryos that became the world's first genetically modified humans. The news provoked serious concerns and backlash around the world and in China, where new legislation has been introduced to increase oversight over such research. However, there are reasons to be skeptical that China will overcome its history and track record of activities that are at best ethically questionable, or at worst cruel and unusual, in healthcare and medical sciences.

But it is striking how many of China's CRISPR trials are taking place at the PLA General Hospital, including to fight cancer. Indeed, the PLA's medical institutions have emerged as major centers for research in gene editing and other new frontiers of military medicine and biotechnology. The PLA's Academy of Military Medical Sciences, or AMMS, which China touts as its "cradle of training for military medical talent," was recently placed directly under the purview of the Academy of Military Science, which itself has been transformed to concentrate on scientific and technological innovation. This change could indicate a closer integration of medical science with military research.

In 2016, an AMMS doctoral researcher published a dissertation, "Research on the Evaluation of Human Performance Enhancement Technology," which characterized CRISPR-Cas as one of three primary technologies that might boost troops' combat effectiveness. The supporting research looked at the effectiveness of the drug Modafinil, which has applications in cognitive enhancement; and at transcranial magnetic stimulation, a type of brain stimulation, while also contending that the "great potential" of CRISPR-Cas as a "military deterrence technology in which China should "grasp the initiative" in development.

AI + Biotech

The intersection of biotechnology and artificial intelligence promises unique synergies. The vastness of the human genome — among the biggest of big data — all but requires AI and machine learning to point the way for CRISPR-related advances in therapeutics or enhancement.

In 2016, the potential strategic value of genetic information led the Chinese government to launch the National Genebank (国家基因库), which intends to become the world's largest repository of such data. It aims to “develop and utilize China's valuable genetic resources, safeguard national security in bioinformatics (生物信息学), and enhance China's capability to seize the strategic commanding heights” in the domain of biotechnology.

The effort is administered by BGI, formerly known as Beijing Genomics Inc., which is Beijing's de facto national champion in the field. BGI has established an edge in cheap gene sequencing, concentrating on amassing massive amounts of data from a diverse array of sources. The company has a global presence, including laboratories in California and Australia.

U.S. policymakers have been concerned, if not troubled, by the company's access to the genetic information of Americans. BGI has been pursuing a range of partnerships, including with the University of California and with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia on human genome sequencing. BGI's research and partnerships in Xinjiang also raise questions about its linkage to human rights abuses, including the forced collection of genetic information from Uighurs in Xinjiang.

There also appear to be links between BGI's research and military research activities, particularly with the PLA's National University of Defense Technology. BGI's bioinformatics research has used Tianhe supercomputers to process genetic information for biomedical

applications, while BGI and NUDT researchers have collaborated on several publications, including the design of tools for the use of CRISPR.

Biotech's Expansive Frontier

It will be increasingly important to keep tabs on the Chinese military's interest in biology as an emerging domain of warfare, guided by strategists who talk about potential "genetic weapons" and the possibility of a "bloodless victory." Although the use of CRISPR to edit genes remains novel and nascent, these tools and techniques are rapidly advancing, and what is within the realm of the possible for military applications may continue to shift as well. In the process, the lack of transparency and uncertainty of ethical considerations in China's research initiatives raise the risks of technological surprise.

From: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>

Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 7:21 PM

To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>

Cc: Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>

Subject: Re: Gain of function—from Ford

Gibbs and I are meeting Sunday to build the case for BWC violation /concern - its not easy and we've been pouring it over revcon reports since the late 80s - the problem is with the treaty itself — let's discuss

On December 4, 2020 at 7:11:32 PM EST, Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

Chris will get a polite but stern retort from me....any thoughts on this, please let me know—all to be treated in confidence. Again, there is an almost impossible line to determine between syn-bio offense and defense but when you see huge gain of function attempts involved and no attempt to protect a likely spillover you must address intentions and causation. We urgently need (b)(6) analysis of the Defense One article on bio-war as well as any high side corroboration.

From: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>

Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 12:27 PM

To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>

Cc: Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>

(b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Gain of function—from Ford

This sounds like "we need prove beyond any doubt, reasonable or not."

Jeff Gibbs

Senior Adviser AVC

SSD/AVC

c (b)(6)
From: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 11:25 AM
To: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: Gain of function—from Ford

From: Ford, Christopher A (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, December 4, 2020 10:36 AM
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Gain of function

Dear David:

Sorry for being slow in replying, but I'm out of town and wanted to do your comment justice. I appreciate the message, and for taking the time to put together yesterday's briefing (though I was a little surprised to hear that AVC had been working for so long on this project without them telling me anything about it). As I told Tom in an earlier message, I was impressed by the depth and detail of the presentation, and very much want to make sure we get this issue right. Anyway, I look forward to continuing the conversation to assess the strength of the argument and especially to engaging others whose technical knowledge exceeds my own. On the points you raised, however — and after sniffing around at least a bit — let me offer some tentative thoughts in response to the points you raised:

I wonder whether you misremember or misunderstood Chris' comment. As I understand it, Dr. Andersen did not see a natural origin for SARS-COV-2 as "obvious." In fact, I'm told that in a briefing organized by INR earlier this year, he said that several features that had initially raised questions in his mind were subsequently put to rest by more detailed analysis. Notably, it was *that* subsequent follow-on analysis, referred to by Anderson in the INR discussion, about which Chris was asking yesterday. (Citing only Anderson's initial concerns, therefore, doesn't answer the question.)

I should also point out that, as I understand it, Dr. Andersen's 2018 *Nature* article does not exactly trash (or even directly address) so-called GOF research *writ large*. His criticism was aimed specifically at efforts to predict future zoonotic disease emergence — a subset of which includes such research, I guess — which he characterized as an ineffective use of resources that could be better spent strengthening human disease surveillance. That doesn't sound like a *per se* rejection of GOF research.

You inquired whether GOF research into pathogens is common. I don't myself know this field, but I am advised that experiments that alter the host range, pathogenicity, infectivity, and

other traits of pathogens does occur with some regularity in laboratories having suitable biosafety levels and oversight, including research into potential vaccine escape and the development of animal models needed for countermeasure development. Numerous papers based on such research have been published in major scientific journals.

As you point out, the potential risks of such research are very real, and also widely recognized.

I'm told they were first examined in 2004 by the National Academies in a document commonly referred to as the "Fink Report" and have been a recurrent focus of work by the National Science Advisory Board on Biosecurity (NSABB) — which is itself a recommendation from the report. I'm told the NSABB reports on this work are quite interesting. (Not sure if you've seen them.) I believe the key point the ISN staffers at our meeting wanted to raise is that the mere fact that such research took place is not in itself an indicator of nefarious activity, nor evidence that this particular virus was generated at WIV. (None of this means that GOF isn't risky, of course, that it doesn't deserve careful oversight, or that it cannot be used for malign purposes. All those things seem to be true, and I frankly find the the topic deeply unsettling. But it certainly doesn't follow that simply engaging in GOF is evidence of BW — for which I'm very thankful, since such research seems to be quite common.)

The Department of State advocates systems of national oversight over, and careful risk-benefit analysis of, dual-use research of concern and work with what are sometimes referred to as Potentially Pandemic Pathogens. (We also raise these issues on an ongoing basis in BWC meetings.) If by "support" you mean "fund," then the answer is that the Department of State does *not* fund any such research, although the United States government is on the whole, a significant funder of GOF research.

Anyway, I've asked Tom to task a "next steps" paper on how we should move forward in evaluating the argument and taking any appropriate follow-on steps, and I look forward to engaging on it again soon. If you're right about this issue, of course, the implications are huge.

But it's precisely because of those huge implications that we need to make very sure we understand whether that's the case.

(I also want to talk about the Article V issue, which is a topic more in my usual swim lane as a lawyer and former Verification and Compliance Bureau PDAS. I regret we didn't get the chance to address that topic in my office.)

So let's continue this when I'm back next week. (I return Tuesday morning.)

Thanks again,

— Chris

From: David Asher (b)(6)@hudson.org>

Sent: Thursday, December 3, 2020 5:10 AM

To: Ford, Christopher A

Subject: Gain of function

Chris,

It is interesting that Chris Park quoted Dr. Andersen regarding the natural and apparently "obvious" zoonotic origin or COVID-19—an increasingly debatable conclusion, including based on the presentation I provided. His colleague then defended the proposition that gain of function research is commonplace—included into pathogens? It is precisely this gain of function

research that of all people, Dr. Andersen personally trashed in Nature in 2018 (see below). Does this everyday GOF research include work on super biological pathogens like COV 19—several generations ahead of what nature could produce, based on history? What is State's official policy on supporting gain of function research into pathogens with super spreader characteristics like COV 19? Did we actually help support the WIV? I doubt it but recommend that you take steps to separate from funding any such activities or exchanges for the foreseeable future.

Sorry to drop names and places yesterday but I actually have a bit of on the ground experience with several of the most suspect entities in China and elsewhere. Current suspicions of BW are hardly new, as you know full well.

Best regards,

David

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S1473-3099%2818%2930006-9>

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 Kri(stian 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, arescrambling 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>

David L. Asher, Ph.D

Senior Fellow

Hudson Institute

1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Fourth Floor

Washington, DC 20004

o. | c | (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

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6/2/2023

"/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP
From: (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=6590D1989FD64F0D806DE38233952140
 -FEITH, DAVI"
To: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin;
 Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Tue, 19 Jan 2021 17:18:06 +0000

What's your cell? Day slipping away from me a bit but maybe at least a call could be useful.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Tuesday, January 19, 2021 9:46 AM
To: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the
 Wuhan Institute of Virology

It looks like Foggy Bottom station is still open, so I could Metro over later this afternoon if it would be helpful to talk in a classified space, or if you have additional materials I should see. Otherwise, we can wait until after Wednesday when things calm down. There's no rush on my end.

(b)(5)

----- Original message -----

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6) @state.gov>
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the
 Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Monday, January 18, 2021 6:58 PM

How easy/difficult for you to come to HST? Would be happy to huddle tomorrow if so. If not, let's do it soon after I time out on Wednesday. Hope Congress takes a strong interest in the origin question...

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565211

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

On January 16, 2021 at 9:24:40 AM EST, (b)(6) wrote:
Thank you! I'm delighted to see this getting out into the public domain. If there is still utility in talking a bit before you depart, please let me know. I am happy to drop by your office.

----- Original message -----

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

To: (b)(6)

Subject: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:50 PM

Making sure this gets to your current email address...

From: Feith, David

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42 PM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

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The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

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The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

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- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

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- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China’s past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
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FL-2022-00062

A-00000565211

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

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

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(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565187

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From:	"Robert Zarate" (b)(6)
To:	David Feith (b)(6) Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
CC:	robert_zarate (b)(6)
Subject:	Re: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Fri, 15 Jan 2021 19:44:49 -0500

Can you add my personal and new work e-mail address to your distro?

On Fri, Jan 15, 2021 at 19:43 Zarate, Robert (Rubio) (b)(6) wrote:

From: Feith, David

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42:20 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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U.S. Department of State

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(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565157

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6) @state.gov>
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 00:50:28 +0000

Thanks. Would be good to speak, though don't know if it has to be before Wednesday. (I'll be in the office Monday/Tuesday.) Huge role for Congress here going forward.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

On January 16, 2021 at 9:24:40 AM EST, (b)(6) wrote:
 Thank you! I'm delighted to see this getting out into the public domain. If there is still utility in talking a bit before you depart, please let me know. I am happy to drop by your office.

----- Original message -----

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

To: (b)(6)

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Date: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:50 PM

Making sure this gets to your current email address...

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A-00000565157

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565083

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Pease, Michael" (b)(6) @state.gov>
 (b)(6) @state.gov>;
To: (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)
 Shapiro, Joshua S (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: RE: Fox News - investigates origins of COVID-19, links to US commissioned research
Date: Mon, 25 Jan 2021 18:06:34 +0000

Machine transcript of the video:

Time	Voice to Text Machine Transcript
0:01	welcome back let's get straight to
0:02	tonight's special investigation
0:04	the coronavirus pandemic is one of the
0:06	most destructive events in the history
0:08	of the world
0:08	the virus itself of course but also the
0:10	lockdowns championed here
0:12	by dr anthony fauci who's now been given
0:15	even more power by president biden
0:17	He[re] was fouchy last week
0:20	i am honored to announce that the united
0:23	states
0:25	will remain a member of the world health
0:28	organization
0:30	yesterday president biden signed
0:33	letters retracting the previous
0:36	administration's announcement
0:38	to withdraw from the organization
0:41	and those letters have been transmitted
0:45	to the secretary general of the united
0:47	nations
0:48	and to you dr tedros my dear friend
0:54	seems to us that after the facts we're
0:56	about to lay out for you dr fauci is
0:57	going to need
0:58	dear friends in high places in the next

1:00	few minutes you'll see the evidence that
1:02	points to the most likely cause of the
1:04	pandemic and it is worse
1:05	than anything you've heard so far the
1:08	story starts with one of the pandemics
1:10	more surprising
1:11	side effects you may have heard late
1:13	last year that denmark
1:14	decided to cull its entire population of
1:17	mink here in america a mink in utah was
1:20	the first wild animal found to have the
1:22	virus so
1:23	what is it with the mink well it turns
1:25	out that mink and related animals have
1:27	respiratory systems that operate
1:28	similarly to humans
1:30	that's why about 10 years ago
1:32	researchers at erasmus medical center in
1:34	the netherlands embarked on a series of
1:35	experiments
1:36	involving ferrets they were trying to
1:39	see if a virus that starts off without
1:41	the ability
1:42	to be transmitted through the air can
1:44	eventually gain
1:45	that ability the answer was yes they
1:49	discovered that by injecting
1:50	an influenza virus from one ferret to
1:53	another until the virus mutated enough
1:55	to be transmitted through the air
1:57	by aerosol droplets this led to the
2:00	creation of an
2:01	entirely new type of scientific research
2:03	made possible by advances in gene
2:05	technology or genomics it was called
2:07	gain of function virus research the idea
2:10	was to replicate in a lab
2:12	what had been done with those ferrets to
2:14	take a virus and then manipulate its

2:16	genetic code to make it stronger and
2:18	more powerful the virus would
2:19	gain new functions hence the name gain
2:22	of function virus research for some
2:24	showed huge promise if we could engineer
2:27	the most contagious deadly viruses
2:29	ourselves in lab conditions
2:30	we could learn about potential
2:31	treatments and vaccines without the
2:33	calamity
2:34	of an actual outbreak the driving
2:36	principle of gain of function research
2:37	was a noble one
2:38	know your enemy so you can better
2:40	prepare to fight it
2:42	over the years gain of function virus
2:44	research has been carried out all over
2:45	the world with funding
2:47	from our own national institute of
2:49	allergy and infectious disease
2:51	and one of the leading laboratories in
2:53	gainer function research was based
2:55	in china it's a place the world has come
2:57	to know well the
2:58	wuhan institute of virology but as well
3:02	as having great potential
3:03	to help mankind gain of function
3:05	research could also hurt us
3:07	imagine if a deadly virus engineered in
3:09	the lab to be incredibly contagious
3:11	somehow escaped from the lab it could
3:13	wreak havoc precisely because it was
3:15	designed
3:16	to do that not by nature but by us
3:19	for this reason gain of function
3:21	research has always been highly
3:22	controversial
3:23	in fact in 2014 the obama administration
3:26	went so far as to place a complete

3:29	moratorium on this kind of research
3:31	quote following recent
3:32	bio safety incidents at federal research
3:35	facilities
3:36	here's what they said at the time the
3:39	funding pause will apply to gain of
3:41	function research projects that may be
3:42	reasonably anticipated
3:44	to confer attributes to influenza mers
3:47	or sars
3:47	viruses such that the virus would have
3:50	enhanced
3:51	pathogenicity and or transmissibility in
3:54	mammals
3:55	via the respiratory root now
3:59	despite the controversy surrounding this
4:00	type of research it always had one
4:02	steadfast champion a leading figure in
4:05	the world of infectious diseases
4:07	anthony fauci his institute
4:11	funded that first ferret study at the
4:14	time he co-wrote an op-ed in the
4:15	washington post describing this research
4:17	as
4:18	quote a risk worth taking important
4:21	information and insights can come from
4:22	generating a potentially dangerous virus
4:25	in the laboratory and shortly before the
4:28	obama administration's
4:30	ban on gain of function research in 2014
4:33	fauci commissioned this it was a project
4:37	to assess the risk of new coronaviruses
4:40	emerging from wild animals
4:42	like bats one of its stated aims was to
4:45	see what viruses can infect both animals
4:48	and humans now pay close attention to
4:51	these words right
4:52	at the end of the project summary
4:54	predictive models of host range i.e

4:57	emergence potential will be tested
4:59	experimentally using
5:01	reverse genetics pseudo virus and
5:04	receptor binding assays
5:05	and virus infection experiments across a
5:08	range of cell cultures from different
5:09	species
5:10	and humanized mice that
5:14	is a description of viral gain of
5:16	function research the exact type of
5:18	research
5:19	that the obama administration stopped
5:22	but found she didn't stop it
5:24	he continued on by subcontracting it to
5:26	this group
5:28	eco health alliance based in new york
5:31	it's run by a big name in the field of
5:33	virus research peter dassack
5:35	he's a zoologist who specializes in
5:37	wildlife diseases
5:38	his claim to fame and it's a big one is
5:40	that he was the person who first
5:41	discovered the bat
5:42	origin of the sars pandemic just over a
5:45	decade ago
5:46	dazzak established that the virus came
5:48	from bats via a civet cat in a chinese
5:51	market ever since then dasak developed a
5:53	reputation as the batman
5:54	he and his team would literally go to
5:56	remote jungle caves
5:58	to collect bat samples for scientific
5:59	research
6:01	the project that fauchi commissioned
6:03	gave ecohealth alliance more than three
6:05	million
6:06	dollars over the course of six years
6:07	despite the obama administration's ban
6:11	and here we come to the crucial step

6:13	which has never before been reported
6:16	peter dassack himself subcontracted a
6:18	key piece of the fountain project
6:20	the gain of function piece he gave that
6:22	to a well-known center of expertise in
6:24	gain of function virus research which
6:26	specialized
6:27	in bat coronaviruses yep he gave it
6:30	to the wuhan institute of virology the
6:33	question is
6:34	did they give it to us let's see what
6:37	they did
6:38	with the fouchy money in the project's
6:41	results page
6:42	there are 13 papers co-authored by xi
6:46	jiang li
6:46	who is head of the wuhan institute's
6:48	infectious disease unit
6:50	one of the papers was published in 2017
6:54	roughly halfway through the project
6:55	peter dasak is listed as a co-author
6:57	it's a kind of progress report inside
7:00	the funding section of
7:02	that paper is the id of the fouchy
7:05	commission
7:05	project that's the money trail until now
7:08	the only reporting on fouchy's role in
7:10	all this
7:11	has been on his funding of the wuhan lab
7:14	in general
7:15	but tonight we can go further thanks to
7:17	this paper
7:19	we can see the specific activity that
7:22	fauchy funded
7:23	and it's terrifying so terrifying in
7:26	fact that after we reached out to the
7:27	nih and
7:28	peter dassac's group for comment this
7:29	paper was mysteriously taken offline on

7:31	friday for a while
7:33	but we downloaded it weeks ago here are
7:35	the details
7:36	we're putting the actual scientific
7:38	language on screen now but this is what
7:40	it means in plain english
7:42	they collected samples of bat feces from
7:44	a cave near kunming in yunnan province
7:46	china
7:46	they found many novel back coronaviruses
7:49	in the feces they analyzed them
7:50	and sequenced their genetic information
7:52	they then built
7:53	various chimeras genetically engineered
7:56	new viruses man-made in the lab
8:00	they infected human cells with them in
8:03	the lab
8:04	and they then showed that their man-made
8:07	viruses
8:08	could replicate as a functional virus
8:11	here's the most important part the
8:14	genetic changes they made in the lab
8:16	unlocked a highly specific doorway into
8:19	the human body
8:21	the virus that causes covet 19 uses that
8:24	same exact doorway to be clear
8:28	none of the genetically engineered
8:29	viruses created back in 2017
8:32	and reported in this paper were the
8:33	exact ones we're dealing with now
8:35	but what they confirm is that it was
8:38	possible
8:38	to make the covid19 virus using the
8:41	techniques developed
8:42	in the fauchi project and that project
8:45	continued for three
8:46	more years three more years of
8:48	experimentation three more years of
8:50	man-made

8:52	mutation now let's look at the actual
8:54	covid19 virus
8:56	how does it compare to the ones we know
8:58	were made earlier
8:59	in the wuhan lab the actual pandemic
9:02	virus was found to stick to human cells
9:04	10 to 20 times tighter than the original
9:08	sars virus which is why it's much more
9:10	infectious
9:12	scientists would expect increases in
9:14	infectiousness to happen
9:15	through cycles of mutation but with this
9:18	virus
9:18	it was there from the start in a paper
9:21	published in february 2020
9:23	xi jiang li confirms that the backbone
9:25	of the pandemic virus matches one
9:28	from the wuhan institute's library of
9:30	collected samples
9:31	their 2017 paper describes how they
9:34	swapped
9:35	parts of coronavirus found in other
9:37	animals into back coronavirus strains
9:40	in order to make more infectious
9:41	man-made versions and sure enough
9:44	the pandemic virus looks like a
9:46	combination of two very different bat
9:48	viruses mixed with parts of a virus
9:50	from a completely different species
9:53	could something like that occur in
9:55	nature
9:56	that's what peter dasak is saying quote
9:59	maybe a farmer got infected or a
10:01	farmer's animals and they were shipped
10:03	into their markets
10:04	if a person brings it in or an animal
10:05	that virus will spread and it looks like
10:07	that's what happened here
10:10	if we're to believe that natural origin

10:12	story here are the coincidences that
10:14	would have had to happen
10:16	multiple different species of bats in
10:18	south china
10:19	would have to infect each other and some
10:21	other unknown animal
10:23	then either these animals or an infected
10:25	human would need to have traveled a
10:27	thousand miles without infecting anyone
10:30	until they got to wuhan
10:32	in its first incarnation before any
10:34	mutations it would have been 10 to 20
10:37	times more infectious
10:38	than any previously observed virus
10:41	and most incredibly of all the infected
10:44	animal or human
10:45	would have somehow chosen to make their
10:48	thousand-mile trek
10:50	to the only place in all of china with a
10:52	lab
10:53	that had the world's most extensive
10:55	collection of the viruses it was already
10:57	infected with
10:58	and the one place in the entire world
11:00	that carried out genetic research
11:03	which matched that virus we're not
11:06	suggesting for a second that the
11:07	coronavirus was created or released as a
11:09	bio weapon
11:10	but lab accidents happen that is
11:12	literally the reason the obama
11:13	administration
11:14	stopped this kind of research during the
11:16	sars epidemic two researchers studying
11:18	that virus in a lab
11:19	in china became infected and sparked an
11:21	outbreak another researcher in singapore
11:23	was infected with sars and he wasn't
11:25	even studying it other people in his lab

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11:26	were even with the proper precautions
11:29	these leaks can happen
11:30	the researcher in singapore was working
11:32	in a lab with a bio safety level three
11:34	rating
11:35	the second highest possible a lab with a
11:37	bio safety rating of four
11:39	was built in the wuhan institute in 2015
11:41	but they'd been doing back coronavirus
11:43	research years before then
11:45	in less safe settings and even after the
11:47	higher safety rating
11:49	there were concerns about it in 2018 the
11:51	u.s embassy in china repeatedly sent
11:53	diplomats to the lab
11:54	who after touring it warned that it had
11:57	serious safety and management weaknesses
11:59	and just last week the state department
12:01	said that several researchers
12:03	at the lab became sick in the fall of
12:06	2019 with covert symptoms
12:08	it was also reported in january that
12:10	matt pottinger president trump's deputy
12:12	national security adviser
12:13	privately told a group of british
12:15	officials that a quote growing body of
12:17	evidence
12:18	supported the idea that the virus leaked
12:20	from the wuhan lab
12:21	here on the record it's sir richard
12:24	dearlove
12:24	former head of mi6 the uk's cia
12:28	quote it's an engineered escapee from
12:31	the wuhan institute
12:33	i'm not saying anything other than the
12:35	fact that it was the result of an
12:36	accident
12:37	these obvious lab risks are why the
12:39	obama administration tried to stop this

12:41	research back in 2014
12:43	when you modify a bat virus to the point
12:45	where it can spread
12:46	from human to human through the air
12:47	you're playing with fire
12:49	the trump administration cut funding for
12:51	this research last year
12:53	why on earth didn't fouchy stop it as
12:55	soon as the obama moratorium was
12:57	announced back in 2014
13:00	for nearly a year scientists and
13:02	reporters have been digging into the lab
13:04	origin theory most notably alina chan
13:06	from the broad institute ian birrell and
13:08	the daily mail and
13:09	nicholson baker in new york magazine the
13:12	response from the medical establishment
13:14	has been shocking
13:15	instead of trying to find out what
13:16	actually happened they've been pushing
13:19	a cover-up in february 2020 peter
13:22	dassack organized an open letter in the
13:24	lancet
13:25	trashing the lab origin theory in
13:27	february how could they possibly know
13:29	there'd be no investigation nothing
13:32	then in november last year he was made
13:34	the chief
13:35	of an international task force
13:37	investigating
13:38	the virus's origins it's a laughable
13:40	conflict of interest
13:41	he's even on the who investigation team
13:44	that arrived in china on the 13th an
13:46	investigation which
13:47	unbelievably has no plans to investigate
13:50	the lab leak
13:51	theory this establishment cover-up tells
13:55	us something

13:56	why are they so desperate to rule out
14:00	the most likely explanation without even
14:03	investigating it
14:05	because that would embarrass the two
14:07	most powerful governments in the world
14:10	the chinese government whose lab in
14:12	wuhan may have allowed the virus to leak
14:15	and worse still our own government
14:18	which based on the evidence we have laid
14:21	out tonight
14:22	in 2014 commissioned the research
14:25	that produced this virus in the first
14:28	place
14:30	this week president biden made fouchy
14:32	his chief medical advisor with an
14:33	enhanced role in the light of the
14:36	documents and the evidence we've
14:37	presented tonight that role is
14:39	completely untenable
14:41	fauci must step aside until we get to
14:43	the bottom of his
14:44	role in creating unintentionally of
14:47	course
14:48	this catastrophic global pandemic we
14:50	need to know
14:51	why he didn't stop funding this research
14:55	after the obama administration's ban and
14:58	most important of all
15:00	are we still funding this research which
15:02	could potentially lead
15:04	to another pandemic
15:08	here's dr fauci talking to rachel maddow
15:11	this week
15:12	i think you're going to see a lot of
15:14	transparency you know you might not see
15:16	everybody as often as you want
15:18	but you're not going to see deliberate
15:21	holding back
15:22	of good people when the press asks for

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15:24	them
15:27	well we did ask for him seems he only
15:30	likes to talk to people who fought all
15:32	over him we reached out to fauci the nih
15:34	and peter dassak's ecohealth alliance
15:36	for comment and got back nothing in
15:39	return
15:40	if you want to see the documents for
15:41	yourself you can we'll share all the
15:44	links

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2021 12:57 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Fox News - investigates origins of COVID-19, links to US commissioned research

Also on https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XdCaCe_xLt8

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 25, 2021 12:48 PM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: Fox News - investigates origins of COVID-19, links to US commissioned research

Just came from a fellow S&T staff. I am watching it.

<https://video.foxnews.com/v/6225847837001#sp=show-clips>

(b)(7)(E)

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6/2/2023

From: "David Feith" (b)(6) @state.gov>
To: Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVI D-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 08:09:43 +0000

Mike, thanks for your very generous note. It's extremely gratifying, especially given my admiration for your wizardly research skills and ever-careful, measured analytical work.

It has been a pleasure and an education to work with you over the last several months, and I hope we get the chance to keep it up, one way or another, after I leave State this week. (CC'ing my personal email here.)

(b)(5)

Thanks again for your kind words. They truly mean a lot from someone who has performed such long faithful service to country.

Warmly,
David

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

On January 16, 2021 at 11:18:00 AM EST, Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:
Thanks to your expertise, focus, and inspiring tenacity, the West now has a much greater chance of eventually understanding and appreciating two of the most important threats to our civilization -- i.e., pathogenic gain of function research and authoritarian regimes. For this I am profoundly grateful.

(b)(5)

You have inspired me to investigate the term 'mensch'. Having done so, I can think of no higher nor more apt complement. You are a mensch. Thank you sir, very much.

All the very best to you and yours,

Mike

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

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42 PM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
2. **WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. **Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's

military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet,

combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.

- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

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6/2/2023

From:	(b)(6)
To:	Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of CO VID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Vi rology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 00:51:18 +0000

Good work getting it out! Did you see the WSJ article today? It calls for access to the labs.

Get Outlook for iOS

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

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42:20 PM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo

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FL-2022-00062

A-00000565147

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565156

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From:	(b)(6)
To:	Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Tue, 19 Jan 2021 21:53:31 +1100

Thanks sir. A fitting parting shot.

It has been great joining forces with you. I'm sure there will be further opportunities. Well done on your service and please keep me posted.

On Sat, Jan 16, 2021 at 11:42 AM Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

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

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(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565160

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Feith, David"
To: Abrams, Elliott (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 07:47:51 +0000

Tuesday is the last day (b)(6)
 (b)(6)

Would love to hear your reflections on the last few years when convenient.

On January 16, 2021 at 2:54:15 PM EST, Abrams, Elliott (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
 Thanks. Tuesday is my last day, and I then return to CFR. What about you?

On January 15, 2021 at 7:42:22 PM EST, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
 Michael R. Pompeo
 January 15, 2021

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

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--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Feith, David"
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 00:01:12 +0000

Yep. (b)(5)
 (b)(5) Happy to talk if helpful.

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On January 15, 2021 at 10:12:52 PM EST, (b)(6) wrote:
 Wow. Quite a Friday night statement!

(b)(6)
 Foreign Affairs and Defense Correspondent, PBS NewsHour
 Mobile/WhatsApp/Signal: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42:20 PM
Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

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U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

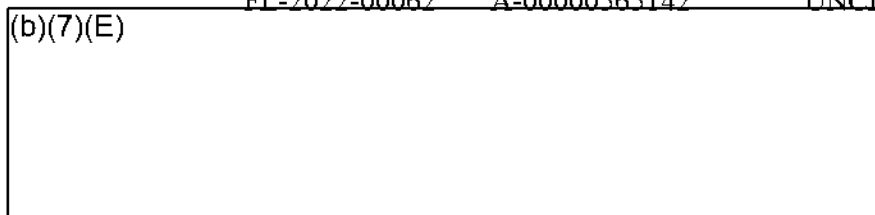
FL-2022-00062

A-00000565142

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

(b)(7)(E)



FL-2022-00062

A-00000565114

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6) @state.gov>
To: (b)(6)
CC:
Subject: RE: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 00:52:00 +0000

Finished on Wednesday. CC'ing my personal email here. Look forward to remaining a loyal reader of yours.

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:49 PM
To: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Are you staying in State?

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Jan 2021, at 08:42, Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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 Michael R. Pompeo
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Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

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

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(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565111

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From:	(b)(6)
To:	Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 15:50:49 +0000

Thanks fir our leadership here. Hugely important.

(b)(6)

Senior Vice President

Foundation for Defense of Democracies

(b)(6)

On Jan 15, 2021, at 7:42 PM, Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know that the content is safe.

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

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

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(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Abrams, Elliott" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 13:15:42 +0000

This does call for a good lunch. What will be your contact info?

Mine is (b)(6)

On January 17, 2021 at 2:47:53 AM EST, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Tuesday is the last day, (b)(6)
 (b)(6)

Would love to hear your reflections on the last few years when convenient.

On January 16, 2021 at 2:54:15 PM EST, Abrams, Elliott (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Thanks. Tuesday is my last day, and I then return to CFR. what about you?

On January 15, 2021 at 7:42:22 PM EST, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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Office of the Spokesperson
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U.S. Department of State

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FL-2022-00062

A-00000565240

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From:	"Waters, John R (Rick)" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 01:04:30 +0000

Nicely done.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 15, 2021, at 7:42 PM, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo

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FL-2022-00062

A-00000565240

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

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

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(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565117

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From:	"Erik Bethel" (b)(6)
To:	Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 12:52:18 +0000

You guys rock

Erik Bethel

Sent from my iPhone

(b)(6)

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2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 07:57:02 +0000

Thanks much (b)(6)
 (b)(6)

Would love to connect with you and (b)(6) wherever possible. And to get the kids together once weather/COVID allow.

On January 16, 2021 at 4:29:22 PM EST (b)(6) wrote:
 Thanks for keeping me on the distro list. What's next for you? Can I (b)(6) be helpful?

On Fri, Jan 15, 2021 at 7:42 PM Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
 Michael R. Pompeo
 January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV): The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.

2. WIV Research on “RaTG13” and “gain of function”: Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible “gain of function” experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. Secret WIV Links to Military Research: Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China’s military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO’s final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic’s origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble

a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

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--

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

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(b)(6)

Executive Director
The Alexander Hamilton Society

(b)(6)

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565250

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Asher, David" (b)(6) @state.gov>
 Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>;
To: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: Articles on COVID origins
Date: Thu, 17 Dec 2020 01:18:52 +0000

Attached NAS report is key. See the media coverage and congressional hearings as well. The dangers of GOF with virology were well discussed and observed. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

https://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/PGA_160392

Media Coverage: Gain of Function Research

Media Coverage Potential Risks and Benefits of Gain-of-Function Research: Summary of a Workshop (April 2015) Read Online Free Buy the book or Download the Free PDF June 3, 2016 Gain-of-Function Oversight

sites.nationalacademies.org

From: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 16, 2020 4:26 PM
To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>;
 Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Articles on COVID origins

Team – what are your quick favorite open-source references on COVID origins? Looking for a collection of 5-6 to have on hand to share with others.

Initial ideas:

1. Boston Magazine: "Could COVID-19 Have Escaped from a Lab? The world's preeminent scientists say a theory from the Broad Institute's Alina Chan is too wild to be believed. But when the theory is about the possibility of COVID being man-made, is this science or censorship?" (<https://www.bostonmagazine.com/news/2020/09/09/alina-chan-broad-institute-coronavirus/>)
2. BioEssays Wiley (attached): The genetic structure of SARS-CoV-2 does not rule out a laboratory origin: SARS-COV-2 chimeric structure and furin cleavage site might be the result of genetic manipulation.

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3. NYT: "As it praised Beijing, the World Health Organization concealed concessions to China and may have sacrificed the best chance to unravel the virus's origins. Now it's a favorite Trump attack line." (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/02/world/who-china-coronavirus.html>)

But otherwise I'm drawing blanks. There must be other good reporting out there on basics of WIV suspicions, gain of function risks, etc...

Thanks.

--

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

(b)(6)

(D)(6) @state.gov

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Feith, David"
To: ivan.j.kanapath(b)(6)@nsc.eop.gov>
Subject: FW: your input.....one last time
Date: Fri, 4 Dec 2020 21:39:11 +0000

Fysa.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Feith, David
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 9:49 AM
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(7)(A)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Keshap, Atul (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: your input.....one last time

Team, thanks on all. I'd be happy to join a 1pm meeting. A/S Stilwell (cc'ed) will be out of town.

I would say though, reiterating our discussion from last week (b)(5)
(b)(5)

(b)(5) Best to share facts and push further for transparency.

(b)(5)

Sorry for the quick take here. Keen to speak further.

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

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

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 8:43 AM
To: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; Stilwell, David R (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Keshap, Atul (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: your input.....one last time
Importance: High

Team,

Matt, apparently. Read both Jeff and my "essays" with interest (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

David

From: Pottinger, Matthew F. EOP/WHO (b)(6)@who.eop.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 2, 2020 5:43 AM
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: your input.....one last time

David, thanks for this.
Sent from my iPhone

On Dec 1, 2020, at 8:46 PM, Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Matt, Won't bother you again (b)(5)

(b)(5)

David (b)(6)

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6/2/2023

Here are my thoughts on the matter. Dave & Mike, please feel free to embellish and confirm my draft of the first answer.

(b)(5)



measures would be most effective. Repressive regime can then minimize the impact on their own societies by engaging in draconian measures that would be unavailable to representative, democratic governments.

In the recent outbreak, the PRC has engaged in an active disinformation campaign, advancing false theories about the outbreak to divert attention from their own activities, used the weakening of vulnerable economies to engage in predatory "aid" practices, portrayed the PRC as a benefactor for the donation of sub-standard protective equipment, and benefited from a relative shift in comparative economic positions with respect to other competitors. The PRC will undoubtedly utilize the limited availability of vaccines in the near future to derive further political and economic advantages.

Finally, cumbersome international attempts at deterring or controlling illegitimate activities involving nuclear, chemical, biological or cyber weapons have failed. Compliance has been the rule for representative governments and violations or questionable activities have been the rule for suspect regimes. The United States, in concert with like-minded democracies, needs to take independent action to cripple, economically and technically, the ability of authoritarian regimes to undertake prohibited activities and to impose punitive measures when such attempts are discovered.

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

Sent: Tuesday, December 1, 2020 4:41 PM

To: Yu, Miles (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Kissel, Mary E (S) (b)(6) @state.gov>

Cc: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; Stilwell, David R (b)(6) @state.gov>; Keshap, Atul (b)(6) @state.gov>; Matthew Pottinger (b)(6) @who.eop.gov>; Kanapathy, Ivan (b)(6) @nsc.eop.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>

Subject: Re: your input

Colleagues,

Objectively, as people in the the future undoubtedly will look at errors of deliberate omission versus commission involving the PRC government's role and responsibility for unleashing COVID on the world, in my opinion ultimately judgement will come down to the meaning/definition of what is a "bio-weapon" as well as what constitutes "proliferation." We need to understand that the only difference between offense and defense in an era of synthetic biology with gain of function research on dangerous bio pathogens is intent, level of gain of function, and, if released accidentally, the tangible/viable actions designed to de-escalate and mitigate the release of a syn-bio vector. Let's be truthful, There was

NO attempt by the PRC to de-escalate or mitigate what we all hope was a screw up. Moreover, unless anyone truly believes a 3-4 generation leap in zoonotic evolution is possible without hacking Darwin in an unprecedented manner, then by definition the gain of function research that produced COVID19 was so extreme that one can only conclude that it was for bio-offense. In my opinion, the effect was offensive even if accidental and warrants retaliation under E.O. 13382 — our economic retaliatory method for offensive bio attacks. Of course, because I have NO current relationship to those in charge of this sanctioning authority that in some ways I helped pioneer under Bush, I am speaking personally since I am sure those in charge would shoot me on sight for suggesting, implicitly, that they have failed this administration and the American people for not suggesting this level of responsive action.

In case any of you find this idea radical, recall the last minutes of Dr. Strangelove —the famous “I’m so sorry sequence.” <https://youtu.be/SFhyqGTgFH8>. Screw ups involving mass casualties and trillions of dollars are unforgivable, even if accidental, and should have severe consequences for the responsible government. If Moderna or Pfizer accidentally released a Gain of function syn bio vector such as those being used to reverse engineer COVID19 for a synthetic vaccine to save our skin and the USG did nothing to mitigate and forwarn other nations, and it then killed hundreds of thousands of Chinese as a result, I’m quite confident that the USG would be held responsible and we might even be at war currently as a result.

It will be ironic if the PRC government receives NO significant consequences for the COVID 19 attack under the Trump administration. Unfortunately, that appears to be where things are steadily heading— even in the face of our sensitive analysis that illuminates certain disturbing events before and after the release that should worry anyone concerned about this administration’s legacy and international relations

response to what, at best, is “mere” global Chernobyl. We are in a National emergency that more than warrants IEEPA imposition. I’m in shock that there is such trepidation to impose this just and warranted penalty. The Wuhan Institute of Virology and other elements of China’s biological warfare program have done more damage than ANY WMD release, deliberate or accidental, in world history. End of story.

Asher

Executive Order 13382 of June 28, 2005

Blocking Property of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferators and Their Supporters

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code,

I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in order to take additional steps with respect to the national emergency described and declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994, regarding the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of delivering them, and the measures imposed by that order, as expanded by Executive Order 13094 of July 28, 1998, hereby order:

Section 1. (a) Except to the extent provided in section 203(b)(1), (3), and (4) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(1), (3), and (4)), or in regulations, orders, directives, or licenses that may be issued pursuant to this order, and notwithstanding any contract entered into or any license or permit granted prior to the effective date of this order, all property and interests in property of the following persons, that are in the United States, that hereafter come within the United States, or that are or hereafter come within the possession or control of United States persons, are blocked and may not be transferred, paid, exported, withdrawn, or otherwise dealt in:

- (i) the persons listed in the Annex to this order;
- (ii) any foreign person determined by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General, and other relevant agencies, to have engaged, or attempted to engage, in activities or transactions that have materially

contributed to, or pose a risk of materially contributing to, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery (including missiles capable of delivering such weapons), including any efforts to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer or use such items, by any person or foreign country of proliferation concern;

(iii) any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and other relevant agencies, to have provided, or attempted to provide, financial, material, technological or other support for, or goods or services in support of, any activity or transaction described in paragraph (a)(ii) of this section, or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order; and

(iv) any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and other relevant agencies, to be owned or controlled by, or acting or purporting to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order.

(b) Any transaction or dealing by a United States person or within the United States in property or interests in property blocked pursuant to this order is prohibited, including, but not limited to, (i) the making of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services by, to, or for the benefit of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order, and (ii) the receipt of any contribution or provision of funds, goods, or services from any such person.

(c) Any transaction by a United States person or within the United States that evades or avoids, has the purpose of evading or avoiding, or attempts to violate any of the prohibitions set forth in this order is prohibited.

(d) Any conspiracy formed to violate the prohibitions set forth in this order is prohibited.

Sec. 2. For purposes of this order:

(a) the term "person" means an individual or entity;

(b) the term "entity" means a partnership, association, trust, joint venture, corporation, group, subgroup, or other organization; and

(c) the term "United States person" means any United States citizen, permanent resident alien, entity organized under the laws of the United States or any jurisdiction within the United States (including foreign branches), or any person in the United States.

Sec. 3. I hereby determine that the making of donations of the type of articles specified in section 203(b)(2) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(2)) by, to, or for the benefit of, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to this order would seriously impair my ability to deal with the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938, and I hereby prohibit such donations as provided by section 1 of this order.

Sec. 4. Section 4(a) of Executive Order 12938, as amended, is further amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 4. Measures Against Foreign Persons.

(a) Determination by Secretary of State; Imposition of Measures. Except to the extent provided in section 203(b) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)), where applicable, if the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury, determines that a foreign person, on or after November 16, 1990, the effective date of Executive Order 12735, the predecessor order to Executive Order 12938, has engaged, or attempted to engage, in activities or transactions that have materially contributed to, or pose a risk of materially contributing to, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction or their means of delivery (including missiles capable of delivering such weapons), including any efforts to manufacture, acquire, possess, develop, transport, transfer, or use such items, by any person or foreign country of proliferation concern, the measures set forth in subsections (b), (c), and (d) of this section shall be imposed on that foreign person to the extent determined by the Secretary of State, in consultation with the implementing agency and other relevant agencies. Nothing in this section is intended to preclude the imposition on that foreign person of other measures or sanctions available under this order or under other authorities.”

Sec. 5. For those persons whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to section 1 of this order who might have a constitutional presence in the United States, I find that because of the ability to transfer funds or other assets instantaneously, prior notice to such persons of measures to be taken pursuant to this order would render these measures ineffectual. I therefore determine that for these measures to be effective in addressing the national emergency declared in Executive Order 12938, as amended, there need be no prior notice of a listing or determination made pursuant to section 1 of this order.

Sec. 6. The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is hereby authorized to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this order. The Secretary of the Treasury may redelegate any of these functions to other officers and agencies of the United States Government, consistent with applicable law. All agencies of the United States Government are hereby directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of this order and, where appropriate, to advise the Secretary of the Treasury in a timely manner of the measures taken.

Sec. 7. The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is hereby authorized to determine, subsequent to the issuance of this order, that circumstances no longer warrant the inclusion of a person in the Annex to this order and that the property and interests in property of that person are therefore no longer blocked pursuant to section 1 of this order.

Sec. 8. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities, or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

Sec. 9. (a) This order is effective at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time on June 29, 2005.

(b) This order shall be transmitted to the Congress and published in the Federal Register.

[signed:] George W. Bush

THE WHITE HOUSE,

June 28, 2005.

ANNEX

Korea Mining Development Trading Corporation
Tanchon Commercial Bank
Korea Ryonbong General Corporation
Aerospace Industries Organization
Shahid Hemmat Industrial Group
Shahid Bakeri Industrial Group
Atomic Energy Organization of Iran
Scientific Studies and Research Center

(b)(7)(E)

FL-2022-00062

A-00000565099

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of CO VID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 00:54:07 +0000

(b)(6) great WSJ oped tonight. Thanks for brave work.

All best,
 David

--

David Feith
 Deputy Assistant Secretary
 Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
 U.S. Department of State
 202.647.4612 (o)

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

From: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42 PM
Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
 Michael R. Pompeo
 January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

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A-00000565099

"UNCLASSIFIED"

6/2/2023

Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.

2. WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function": Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. Secret WIV Links to Military Research: Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

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- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

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6/2/2023

From:	"Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6)@state.gov>
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Subject:	FW: AVC Daily Press Clips - Feb 6-8, 2021/ We're still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers.
Date:	Mon, 8 Feb 2021 18:50:46 +0000

Wondering who is behind this piece that contains familiar arguments.

OPINION/ANALYSIS

We're still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers. (The Washington Post, 2/5)

WHAT IS China trying to hide about the origins of the pandemic — and why? In Wuhan, a World Health Organization team has launched its investigation into the origins of the virus that has infected 105 million people worldwide and cost 2.2 million lives over the past year.

The terms of reference for the investigation say it will be “open-minded” and “not excluding any hypothesis” about the origins of the virus. Many scientists have speculated that the virus leaped from animals, such as bats, to humans, perhaps with an intermediate stop in another animal. This kind of zoonotic spillover has occurred before, such as in the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014. But there is another pathway, also plausible, that must be investigated. That is the possibility of a laboratory accident or leak. It could have involved a virus that was improperly disposed of or perhaps infected a laboratory worker who then passed it to others. Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, is a major transportation hub and a center of virus studies in China, with at least six facilities with BSL-3 laboratories for handling infectious agents. Published papers show that some of these institutions have been very active in coronavirus research. The most active is the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where Shi Zhengli leads a research team that has extensively studied and experimented on bat coronaviruses that are very similar to the one that ignited the global pandemic. Dr. Shi said that when news of the outbreak first became known, she checked her laboratory records to see whether there had been any mishandling of experimental materials. She also asserted that the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus did not match viruses that her team had sampled from bat caves in China. “That really took a load off my mind,” she told Scientific American. “I had not slept a wink for days.” But that must not be the end of the story. China actively covered up the early stages of the pandemic, concealed the transmissibility of the virus from its own people and the world, and punished Wuhan doctors who expressed worry about it in late December 2019. President Xi Jinping did not warn the public in China or abroad until mid-January. Since then, Chinese officials and scientists have advanced a host of dubious theories to suggest the origin of the virus was beyond China’s borders: perhaps brought to China by contaminated packaging of frozen food from abroad or from the U.S. military biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md., or from mink farms. The disinformation only heightens suspicions that China is trying to distract from or conceal something.

‘Gain of function’ research

To find out if there was a leak or laboratory accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) or another lab, investigators would want to carefully examine research done there, including archived lab notes, records of experiments and data, intra-laboratory communications such as

email, as well as bat samples, viral strains and all sequences from the WIV collection to compare them with known genetic blueprints from the pandemic virus. This would require transparency and verification of data and sample provenance. But it has not been forthcoming. It is known from public documents that Dr. Shi was conducting “gain of function” research on bat coronaviruses, which involves modifying their genomes to give the viruses new properties, such as the ability to infect a new host species or transmit from one host to another more easily. Such research is controversial — a gain of function experiment can create a danger that did not exist before. But the research might also help predict how a virus might evolve toward spillover, enabling the development of effective countermeasures such as a broad coronavirus vaccine. The research carried out by Dr. Shi was financed in part over the years by the United States, China and Europe. Grant documents show the work was aimed at determining the potential for spillover of bat coronaviruses from one species to another. The research involved constructing a series of novel chimeric viruses that would use different spike proteins from some unpublished natural coronaviruses. The ability of the resulting novel viruses to infect human cells in culture, and to infect laboratory animals, was to be tested. This included experiments on mice with cells that are genetically modified to respond as human respiratory cells would. The WIV also collected thousands of samples from bat caves in China. The work under Dr. Shi was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health through EcoHealth Alliance, a New York-based nongovernmental organization whose president, Peter Daszak, is a member of the WHO virus origin investigating team, and is leading a separate investigation by the Lancet.

A critical database went offline

At the core of Dr. Shi’s work is a database at the institute. According to research by DRASTIC, a network of researchers and scientists, this is the most important bat coronavirus database in China. Overall, it holds records of some 22,000 samples and some of their genetic sequences, including for WIV virus sampling trips going back many years. The institute collected more than 15,000 samples from bats, covering over 1,400 bat viruses. The database holds more than 100 unpublished sequences of bat coronaviruses that could significantly help the probe into the origins of the pandemic. Of particular interest are the full sequences of eight viruses sampled in 2015 in an unidentified location in Yunnan province, which was only recently disclosed. In 2012, six people who were clearing bat feces from an abandoned mine in Yunnan developed an illness with symptoms very similar to covid-19. Three eventually died. The results of the investigation into the cause of their illness have not been fully disclosed. A bat-virus sampling trip by WIV-EcoHealth was underway in nearby locations while these six people were infected. A virus designated RaTG13 was sampled from the mine in 2013 and has been described as the closest known relative of SARS-CoV-2. Based on limited information about their sequences, the other eight viruses are very similar to RaTG13 and may hold evolutionary clues. A section of the database was password-protected and not accessible. This may well have been to protect the materials so that scientists from WIV could be first in writing scientific papers about the viruses and sequences. But except for that private section, the database was accessible until Sept. 12, 2019, when it became unreachable from outside the institute, according to DRASTIC, which has studied the database usage records. Why then? Dr. Shi has said it was taken offline for security reasons. “We have nothing to hide,” she told the BBC. In his final days in office, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had been harshly critical of China, issued a fact sheet and statement claiming: “The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses.” If the U.S. government possesses

information to corroborate that statement, it should release it, including declassifying any intelligence. A second portal of virus databases in China, created by the National Virus Resource Center, affiliated with the WIV, has also gone offline, with the result that all the key virus databases managed by the WIV are now offline. On Feb. 3, the WHO team investigating the origins of the virus visited the WIV. We do not know what was said. But the goal must be to open the closed doors at the institute. If the WIV had no role in sparking the outbreak, it should be relatively straightforward for Dr. Shi to safely open up the databases to scientists so they can properly understand the evolutionary origins of SARS-CoV-2. The institute should provide all records regarding bat samples, viruses and sequences, with verified information provenance, and eventually, it should be disclosed to all. The origin of the pandemic is of interest to every person on the globe. We do not know where the pandemic began. But a major step toward finding the answer is to examine all the relevant databases and laboratory records, including those at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and elsewhere, and the clues they may hold.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Raymond, Venol (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:20 PM
To: AVC-Press Guidance-DL <AVC-PressGuidance-DL@state.gov>
Cc: AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: RE: AVC Daily Press Clips - Feb 6-8, 2021



AVC Daily Press Clips
 February 8, 2021

NEWS

George P. Shultz, Influential Cabinet Official Under Nixon and Reagan, Dies at 100 (The NYtimes, 2/7)

He carried one of Washington's weightiest résumés — labor secretary, treasury secretary and budget director for Nixon and secretary of state under Reagan as the Cold War waned. George P. Shultz, who presided with a steady hand over the beginning of the end of the Cold War as President Ronald Reagan's often embattled secretary of state, died on Saturday at his home in Stanford, Calif. He was 100. His death was announced by the Hoover Institution, where he was a distinguished fellow. He was also professor emeritus at Stanford's Graduate School of Business. Mr. Shultz, who had served Republican presidents since Dwight D. Eisenhower, moved to California after leaving Washington in January 1989. He continued writing and speaking on issues ranging from nuclear weapons to climate change into his late 90s, expressing concern about America's direction. "Right now we're not leading the world," he told an interviewer in

March 2020. "We're withdrawing from it." He carried a weighty résumé into the Reagan White House, with stints as secretary of labor, budget director and secretary of the Treasury under President Richard M. Nixon. He had emerged from the wars of Watergate with his reputation unscathed, having shown a respect for the rule of law all too rare in that era. At the helm of the Treasury, he had drawn Nixon's wrath for resisting the president's demands to use the Internal Revenue Service as a weapon against the president's political enemies. As secretary of state for six and a half years, Mr. Shultz was widely regarded as a voice of reason in the Reagan administration as it tore itself asunder over the conduct of American foreign policy. He described those struggles as "a kind of guerrilla warfare," a fierce and ceaseless combat among the leaders of national security. He fought "a battle royal" in his quest to get out the facts, as he later testified to Congress during the Iran-contra affair. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency, William J. Casey, followed his own foreign policy in secret, and the State Department and the Pentagon constantly clashed over the use of American military force. Estranged from the White House, Mr. Shultz threatened to resign three times. Mr. Shultz was summoned to Camp David and handed the wheel of American foreign policy in June 1982. Initially deemed too politically moderate by Reagan's advisers, he had been passed over for the post of secretary of state the previous year. (The position had gone to Alexander M. Haig Jr., the mercurial and combative general who lasted barely 18 months before he abruptly left office amid fierce disputes over the direction of diplomacy and the projection of American power). The Middle East was exploding, the United States was underwriting covert warfare in Central America, and relations with the Soviet Union were at rock bottom when Mr. Shultz became the 60th secretary of state. Moscow and Washington had not spoken for years; nuclear tensions escalated and hit a peak during his first months in office. The hard work of replacing fear and hatred with a measure of trust and confidence took place in more than 30 meetings with Mr. Shultz and the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, between 1985 and 1988. The Soviets saw Mr. Shultz as their key interlocutor; in private, they called him the prime minister of the United States. Continuous meetings between Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze helped ease the tensions between the superpowers and paved the way for the most sweeping arms control agreement of the Cold War, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Ratified in June 1988, it banned land-based ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and missile launchers with ranges of up to 3,420 miles. Within three years, the two nations had eliminated 2,692 missiles and started a decade of verification inspections. The treaty remained in force until August 2019, when President Donald J. Trump scrapped it, contending that Russia had broken the accord by developing a new cruise missile. Almost alone among the members of the Reagan team, Mr. Shultz had seen early on that the new Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, and his allies in Moscow were different from their predecessors. The rest of the national security team, and especially Reagan's defense secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger (known as Cap), had scoffed at the idea that the Kremlin could change its tune. "Many people in Washington said: 'There is nothing different, these are just personalities. Nothing can be changed,'" Mr. Shultz recounted in an oral history of the Reagan administration. "That was the C.I.A. view; that was Cap's view; that was the view of all the hard-liners." "They were terribly wrong," he added. The world seemed on the verge of a lasting peace when he left office; the Berlin Wall still stood, but not for long. "It is fair to say that the Cold War ended during the Reagan years," Mr. Shultz wrote in his 1993 memoir, "Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State." The easing of four decades of grinding tension changed the global landscape. There would be fewer nuclear weapons pointed at great cities, fewer proxy wars in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But a lethal force was rising in

Afghanistan, where American-supplied weapons in the hands of Afghan rebels killed Soviet occupying forces throughout the 1980s. Both Moscow and Washington had poured billions of dollars into the fight, and both sides continued to support rival Afghan factions after the Soviets pulled out in February 1989. "We assert confidently our right to supply our friends in Afghanistan as we see the need to do so," Mr. Shultz announced in April 1988. American arms had helped empower a generation of holy warriors who had bled the Red Army, but who would eventually shelter and support the Qaeda terrorists who struck the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

Strategies Against Terror

The United States was hit by terrorist attacks repeatedly in the Reagan years; the worst was the October 1983 suicide bombing of the Marine Corps headquarters at the Beirut International Airport that killed 241 Americans. They had been sent to Lebanon as peacekeepers while the United States tried and failed to broker a deal among the leaders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Mr. Shultz had proposed a new strategy of counterterrorism "preventive or pre-emptive actions against terrorists before they strike," as he said in a June 1984 speech. The idea won only muted support at the time, but it became a tenet of President George W. Bush's "war on terror." Mr. Shultz decisively lost the battle for control of foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. The White House, the National Security Council and the C.I.A. believed that the rise of a left-wing government in Nicaragua foreshadowed a chain reaction that could inflame all of Central America. They chose to fight back through covert action, secret paramilitary operations and support for a counterrevolutionary force, the contras. Congress cut off aid to the rebels, but secret operations to support them continued apace. Reagan's national security adviser, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, and Mr. Casey, the C.I.A. chief, oversaw the secret sale of arms to Iran as ransom for American hostages held in Lebanon. Both men knew that millions of dollars in profits from the arms sales were being channeled covertly to the Nicaraguan rebels, in defiance of the congressional ban. Mr. Shultz had been kept in the dark about secret presidential directives authorizing the trading of arms for hostages. Chagrined and outraged, he denounced the secret dealings after they were revealed in November 1986, directly challenging Reagan. He came close to losing his job. But alone among the senior members of the Reagan team, he emerged untarnished after the Iran-contra affair unraveled. The arms-for-hostages deal was "totally outside the system of government that we live by," Mr. Shultz later told Congress. "I don't think desirable ends justify means of lying, deceiving, of doing things that are outside our constitutional processes." Mr. Shultz knew the consequences of criminal acts and cover-ups. He had lived through Watergate. On the secretly recorded White House tapes, Nixon railed about Mr. Shultz's reluctance to use the I.R.S. to investigate and intimidate hundreds of people on the president's so-called enemies list. "He didn't get secretary of the Treasury because he has nice blue eyes," Nixon said. "It was a goddamn favor to get him that job." Nixon named Mr. Shultz labor secretary in January 1969, a post he held for 18 months until he took over the newly formed White House Office of Management and Budget in July 1970. His deputy there was Mr. Weinberger, whose zeal to carry out the president's demands to cut federal spending earned him the nickname "Cap the Knife." "Caspar Weinberger was noted as a big budget cutter," Mr. Shultz said in an oral history of the Nixon administration. "Nixon railed against the C.I.A. and their lousy intelligence, and said, 'Cap, I want you to cut the C.I.A.'s budget to one-third its present size.' Cap would light up like a Christmas tree. Then Nixon said: 'No. Make it one-half its present size.' Then we'd leave the meeting, and Cap would be very excited, and I would say: 'Cap, relax. He's just

showboating.’ After two years at the budget office, Mr. Shultz became Treasury secretary in June 1972. The previous year, Nixon unilaterally made the dollar inconvertible to gold. That forced the rest of the world to move from a system of fixed rates of exchange for national currencies to a flexible system. Exchange rates ceased to be the way in which governments made monetary policy. Mr. Shultz traveled the world trying to make sure the dollar remained almighty. He quit the Nixon administration in May 1974, three months before the president resigned in disgrace, the last of Nixon’s original cabinet members to depart. Before his death, he was the oldest surviving member of Nixon’s inner circle and, along with former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, among the last. After 25 years in academia and government, Mr. Shultz joined the Bechtel Corporation (now Bechtel Group), one of the world’s biggest engineering and construction companies, serving as its president from 1974 to 1982. He was paid nearly \$600,000 a year (about \$2 million in today’s money) to run its global and domestic operations, which included the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the Washington Metro subway, King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and much of the infrastructure of the Saudi government. Throughout his years in power in Washington, Mr. Shultz tried to keep one secret out of print: that he had a tiger tattoo on his posterior, a legacy of his undergraduate days at Princeton University. When queried about the tattoo, Phyllis Oakley, a State Department spokeswoman at the time, replied, “I am not in a position to comment.”

Princeton, Then the Pacific

George Pratt Shultz was born in Manhattan on Dec. 13, 1920, the only child of the former Margaret Lennox Pratt and Birl E. Shultz, an official with the New York Stock Exchange. He grew up in Englewood, N.J., and entered Princeton in the fall of 1938. In his senior year in 1941, he was majoring in economics when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7. He joined the Marines after graduation and saw combat in the Pacific. He joined the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology after earning his doctorate in industrial relations there in 1949. His field was labor economics. In 1955, he took a year’s leave to serve as a senior staff member of President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Council of Economic Advisers, under its chairman, Arthur F. Burns, who later led the Federal Reserve Board. Starting in 1957, Mr. Shultz taught at the University of Chicago, where he was dean of its business school from 1962 to 1968. That year he took a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, a wooded retreat for academics in Stanford. He returned to Stanford after leaving public office and receiving in 1989 the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. Over the next three decades, he wrote for academic journals and op-ed pages. His most recent book, published in the fall, was “A Hinge of History,” written with James Timbie, a longtime State Department adviser. In the book, Mr. Shultz argued that the world is at a pivot point in history, much like the one it reached at the end of World War II, requiring international cooperation in grappling with an era that will bring fundamental changes in education, migration, national security, technology, economics and democratization. Mr. Shultz was a Marine when he met his future wife of nearly 50 years, Helena M. O’Brien, known as Obie. He was on a rest-and-recreation trip to Kauai, Hawaii, where she was an Army nurse. She died in 1995. In 1997, he married Charlotte Smith Mailliard Swig, San Francisco’s chief of protocol. The high-society ceremony was held in the city’s Grace Cathedral. He wore black tie with red, white and blue studs of rubies, diamonds and sapphire, and sported a tiger orchid boutonniere. His survivors include his wife; three daughters from his first marriage, Margaret Ann Shylt Tilsworth, Kathleen Pratt Shultz Jorgensen and Barbara Lennox Shultz White; two sons from his first marriage, Peter and Alexander; 11 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. The only scandal

that touched Mr. Shultz's personal life began to erupt in 2015. For four years, he had been a member of the board of directors of Theranos, a Silicon Valley start-up founded by Elizabeth Holmes, a young college dropout who claimed to have invented a revolutionary new blood-testing system. His enthusiastic support drew power brokers to the board, including Mr. Kissinger and James Mattis, the retired Marine general who would become President Trump's defense secretary. Theranos was valued at \$9 billion before whistle-blowers inside the company began talking to a Wall Street Journal reporter, saying the technology did not work as promised. The insiders included Mr. Shultz's grandson, Tyler Shultz, and the elder statesman pressured him to stay silent. It was not until Theranos collapsed in 2018 and its founders faced indictment on fraud charges that Mr. Shultz finally acknowledged the "troubling practices" at Theranos, saying in a public statement that his grandson had "felt personally threatened" by their confrontation "and believed that I had placed allegiance to the company over allegiance to higher values and our family." A lifelong Republican, Mr. Shultz largely stayed out of the political fray after leaving Washington. But he refused to publicly endorse Mr. Trump in 2016 and in 2020, adding that he did not back his Democratic opponents, either. In an interview with The New York Times in October, however, he offered no criticism of Joseph R. Biden Jr., Mr. Trump's Democratic challenger at the time. The two had worked together collegially when Mr. Shultz was secretary of state and Mr. Biden was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Shultz said he had recently teased Mr. Biden, who was 77 at the time, telling him, "From my standpoint, you're a promising young man."

A Legacy Undone

Mr. Shultz lived long enough to see his most lasting legacy from the Reagan years come largely undone. The arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union were bristling with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons when he became secretary of state. Fears of Armageddon approached an all-time high. In June 1983, General Secretary Yuri Andropov warned a former American ambassador to Moscow, Averell Harriman, that the two nations were nearing "the dangerous 'red line'" of nuclear war. "I don't think the Soviets were crying wolf," Robert M. Gates, the C.I.A.'s top Soviet analyst at the time and later the secretary of defense, observed a quarter of a century later. "They may not have believed a NATO attack was imminent in November 1983, but they did seem to believe that the situation was very dangerous." Washington and Moscow had been preparing for World War III since the dawn of the nuclear age. They also had been negotiating a strategic arms limitation treaty since 1969. An agreement signed in 1979 would have reduced both sides' nuclear arsenals substantially. But after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan that year, the Senate never ratified it. Mr. Shultz's crowning arms-control achievement was the 1988 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and he was dismayed when President Trump scrapped it in 2019. "Withdrawing from the I.N.F. treaty was a giant mistake," Mr. Shultz said in the October interview with The Times. "You lose not only the agreement itself, but you lose all those verification provisions that we worked so hard on." Mr. Shultz and Mr. Gorbachev had argued to no avail in a Washington Post op-ed article in 2018 that abandoning the treaty "would be a step toward a new arms race, undermining strategic stability and increasing the threat of miscalculation or technical failure leading to an immensely destructive war." Mr. Shultz agonized over that threat. "We desperately need to have a discussion with Russia about this," he told an interviewer in November 2019. "There is too much loose talk about not just having nuclear weapons, but using them," he said. "People have forgotten their power. In my day, I remember nuclear weapons. We knew what they could do. It was very vividly wrong."

Iran 'hides spyware in wallpaper, restaurant and games apps' (BBC News, 2/8)

Iran is running two surveillance operations in cyber-space, targeting more than 1,000 dissidents, according to a leading cyber-security company. The efforts were directed against individuals in Iran and 12 other countries, including the UK and US, Check Point said. It said the two groups involved were using new techniques to install spyware on targets' PCs and mobile devices. And this was then being used to steal call recordings and media files. One of the groups, known as Domestic Kitten or APT-50, is accused of tricking people into downloading malicious software on to mobile phones by a variety of means including:

- repackaging an existing version of an authentic video game found on the Google Play store
- mimicking an app for a restaurant in Tehran
- offering a fake mobile-security app
- providing a compromised app that publishes articles from a local news agency
- supplying an infected wallpaper app containing pro-Islamic State imagery
- masquerading as an Android application store to download further software

The American-Israeli company's researchers documented 1,200 victims being targeted by the campaign, living in seven countries. There had been more than 600 successful infections, it said. The second group, known as Infy or Prince Of Persia, is said to spy on the home and work PCs of dissidents in 12 countries, extracting sensitive data after tricking people into opening malicious email attachments. The Iranian government has not commented on the report.

Furball malware

Domestic Kitten's operation was first identified in 2018. And Check Point said there was evidence it had run at least 10 campaigns since 2017. Four of these were still active, with the most recent beginning in November 2020. And it was using an Iranian blog site, Telegram channels and text messages to lure people into installing its infected software, which the researchers have dubbed Furball, which could:

- record calls and other sounds
- track the device's location
- collect device identifiers,
- grab text messages and call logs
- steal media files, including videos and photos,
- obtain a list of other installed applications
- steal files from external storage

The 600 successful infections are said to have included dissidents, opposition forces and people belonging to the Kurdish ethnic minority in:

- Iran
- the US
- Great Britain
- Pakistan
- Afghanistan
- Turkey
- Uzbekistan

The other group, Infy, is said to have been operating as far back as 2007. Its most recent activity had targeted PCs, with fake emails with attractive content, usually with an attached document,

Check Point said. One example provided was of a document apparently about loans being offered to disabled veterans. Once the document was opened, a spying tool was installed and sensitive data stolen, the company said. Two documents recently used are said to have included a photo of an Iranian governor, with alleged contact details. The researchers said Infy's capabilities were "far superior" to most other known Iranian campaigns, thanks to its ability to be highly selective about its targets and to have generally have gone undetected. "It is clear that the Iranian government is investing significant resources into cyber-operations," Check Point cyber-research head Yaniv Balmas said. "The operators of these Iranian cyber-espionage campaigns seem to be completely unaffected by any counter-activities done by others, even though both campaigns had been revealed and even stopped in the past. "They have simply restarted."

Biden: US Won't Lift Iran Sanctions (VOA News, 2/7)

U.S. President Joe Biden says he will not lift economic sanctions against Iran unless Tehran first cuts its uranium enrichment back to the level it agreed to in the 2015 international treaty aimed at restraining its development of nuclear weapons. Biden has said he wants the U.S. to rejoin the nuclear treaty with Iran that former President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from. But when asked directly in a CBS News interview that aired Sunday whether the U.S. would lift sanctions first to get Iran to return to negotiations, Biden replied simply, "No." He nodded in agreement with CBS anchor Norah O'Donnell that Tehran must first stop enriching uranium at a higher level than allowed under the treaty. The pact had allowed Iran to enrich uranium at a 3.67% concentration level. But since mid-2019, it had pushed enrichment to a 4.5% level, and then last month to 20% — a level it had achieved before the accord. Experts say Tehran now has enough low-enriched uranium stockpiled for at least two nuclear weapons, if it chooses to pursue their manufacture. But Iranian officials, to the long skepticism of Western governments, have long maintained that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on state TV that if the United States wants "Iran to return to its commitments, the U.S. must lift all sanctions in practice, then we will do verification and see if the sanctions were lifted correctly, then we will return to our commitments." Khamenei's televised remarks were his first since Biden's January 20 inauguration. But in a CNN interview after Khamenei's remarks, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that there was no precondition that Iran receive compensation from the United States for the cost of sanctions imposed by Washington before restoring the nuclear pact. In the CBS interview, Biden also discussed U.S. relations with China, acknowledging that since taking office he had yet to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping, although Biden has talked with numerous other world leaders. Biden said, "There was no reason not to call him." He offered some praise of Xi but warned that relations between the countries would be different than they had been under Trump. "He's very bright. He's very tough," Biden said of Xi. "He doesn't have — and I don't mean it as a criticism, just the reality — he doesn't have a democratic, small D, bone in his body." "I've said to him all along that we need not have a conflict," the U.S. leader said, recalling discussions with Xi when Biden was the U.S. vice president from 2009 to 2017. "But there's going to be extreme competition. And I'm not going to do it the way that he knows. And that's because he's sending signals, as well. I'm not going to do it the way Trump did. We're going to focus on international rules of the road."

Iran Warns Nuclear Deal in Danger if US Does Not Ease Sanctions (VOA News, 2/6)

Iran's foreign minister warned that the Iran nuclear deal could be further jeopardized if the U.S. does not ease sanctions against the Middle Eastern power by Feb. 21. Mohammad Javad Zarif, in an interview published Saturday in the Iranian newspaper Hamshahri, said recently passed legislation compels the government to harden its position on the issue. He also noted the possible June election of a hardline president could further endanger the pact. "Time is running out for the Americans, both because of the parliament bill and the election atmosphere that will follow the Iranian New Year," Zarif said. Iran's New Year starts on March 21; three months after a parliament led by hardliners passed legislation establishing a two-month deadline for easing the sanctions. In 2018, former U.S. president Donald Trump withdrew from the deal signed in 2015 by Iran and several other world powers, alleging it failed to curb Iran's missile program and its growing influence in the Middle East. Iran announced last month it had resumed enriching uranium up to 20% purity at its Fordow enrichment plant, a level it attained before the agreement was reached. Iranian officials said last week enrichment capacity was increased at its Natanz facility. U.S. President Joe Biden, who has long criticized Trump's decision to withdraw from the pact, has vowed to re-enter the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, if Tehran resumes strict compliance. Under the deal, some sanctions against Iran were lifted in exchange for reducing its nuclear activities. Iran has demanded that the U.S. ease sanctions before it resumes compliance and rejected talks on broader security issues. Biden has said little publicly about Tehran since winning the presidency, but some U.S. media reports suggest his administration is quietly working to address Iran's nuclear and missile programs, as well as Tehran's regional activities, with the intent of determining whether and how to rejoin the agreement. According to CNN, Robert Malley, Biden's special envoy for Iran, is among several high-level officials seeking solutions to the dilemma. Malley is developing a team of experts with different perspectives on Iran, while reaching out to members of Congress.

US Urges Yemen's Houthis to Halt Attacks (VOA News, 2/8)

The United States is calling on Yemen's Houthi rebels to avoid any new military offensives inside Yemen, and to halt attacks affecting civilian areas in Saudi Arabia. In a statement late Sunday, State Department spokesman Ned Price said the United States is "deeply troubled by continued Houthi attacks." "We urge the Houthis to refrain from destabilizing actions and demonstrate their commitment to constructively engage in UN Special Envoy Griffiths' efforts to achieve peace," Price said. "The time is now to find an end to this conflict." U.N. envoy Martin Griffiths began two days of talks in Iran Sunday as he pushes for a negotiated political settlement to the conflict in Yemen, which began in late 2014 with the Houthis seizing the country's capital. Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign in defense of Yemen's internationally recognized government in early 2015. The U.S. call for the Houthis to cease attacks comes days after the Biden administration ordered an end to U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, which has come under criticism from rights groups for airstrikes that have struck civilian areas in Yemen. President Biden called Yemen's conflict a "humanitarian and strategic catastrophe." He also notified Congress last week that his administration would remove the Houthis from a list of foreign terror organizations, reversing the designation made in the final days of the administration of former President Donald Trump. Humanitarian organizations had warned that such a designation would harm efforts to get badly needed relief to Yemen. The United Nations calls the situation there the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Biden: China should expect 'extreme competition' from US (AP News, 2/7)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden says China is in for “extreme competition” from the U.S. under his administration, but that the new relationship he wants to forge need not be one of conflict. In an interview broadcast Sunday, Biden acknowledged that he has yet to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping since his inauguration Jan. 20, but noted that the two leaders had met many times when both men served their countries as vice president. “I know him pretty well,” Biden said in an excerpt of the interview aired Sunday by CBS’ “Face the Nation.” When they do speak, they will have “a whole lot to talk about,” Biden said. Biden appears to be concentrating his initial telephone diplomacy on U.S. allies. He so far has spoken with the leaders of Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the NATO secretary-general. He also worked in a conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the interview, Biden described Xi as “very bright” and “very tough” but without “a democratic, small D, bone in his body.” Shortly after Biden succeeded President Donald Trump in the White House, a spokesperson for China’s Foreign Ministry said that “after this very difficult and extraordinary time, both the Chinese and American people deserve a better future.” Beijing welcomed the Biden administration’s decision to remain in the World Health Organization and return to the Paris climate agreement. The new administration, however, is unlikely to significantly alter U.S. policies on trade, Taiwan, human rights and the South China Sea that have angered Xi’s increasingly assertive government. Biden, in the interview taped Friday, said he has said to Xi “all along, that we need not have a conflict.” But, Biden added, there will be “extreme competition. And I am not going to do it the way that he knows. And that’s because he’s sending signals as well.” Biden said he will not pursue U.S.-China relations in the way that Trump did but will focus on “international rules of the road.”

OPINION/ANALYSIS

We’re still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers. (The Washington Post, 2/5)

WHAT IS China trying to hide about the origins of the pandemic — and why? In Wuhan, a World Health Organization team has launched its investigation into the origins of the virus that has infected 105 million people worldwide and cost 2.2 million lives over the past year. The terms of reference for the investigation say it will be “open-minded” and “not excluding any hypothesis” about the origins of the virus. Many scientists have speculated that the virus leaped from animals, such as bats, to humans, perhaps with an intermediate stop in another animal. This kind of zoonotic spillover has occurred before, such as in the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014. But there is another pathway, also plausible, that must be investigated. That is the possibility of a laboratory accident or leak. It could have involved a virus that was improperly disposed of or perhaps infected a laboratory worker who then passed it to others. Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, is a major transportation hub and a center of virus studies in China, with at least six facilities with BSL-3 laboratories for handling infectious agents. Published papers show that some of these institutions have been very active in coronavirus research. The most active is the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where Shi Zhengli leads a research team that has extensively studied and experimented on bat coronaviruses that are very similar to the one that ignited the global pandemic. Dr. Shi said that when news of the outbreak first became known, she checked her laboratory records to see whether there had been any mishandling of experimental materials. She also asserted that the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus did not match viruses that her team had sampled from bat caves in China. “That really took a load off my mind,” she told Scientific American. “I had not slept a wink for days.” But that must not

be the end of the story. China actively covered up the early stages of the pandemic, concealed the transmissibility of the virus from its own people and the world, and punished Wuhan doctors who expressed worry about it in late December 2019. President Xi Jinping did not warn the public in China or abroad until mid-January. Since then, Chinese officials and scientists have advanced a host of dubious theories to suggest the origin of the virus was beyond China's borders: perhaps brought to China by contaminated packaging of frozen food from abroad or from the U.S. military biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md., or from mink farms. The disinformation only heightens suspicions that China is trying to distract from or conceal something.

'Gain of function' research

To find out if there was a leak or laboratory accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) or another lab, investigators would want to carefully examine research done there, including archived lab notes, records of experiments and data, intra-laboratory communications such as email, as well as bat samples, viral strains and all sequences from the WIV collection to compare them with known genetic blueprints from the pandemic virus. This would require transparency and verification of data and sample provenance. But it has not been forthcoming. It is known from public documents that Dr. Shi was conducting "gain of function" research on bat coronaviruses, which involves modifying their genomes to give the viruses new properties, such as the ability to infect a new host species or transmit from one host to another more easily. Such research is controversial — a gain of function experiment can create a danger that did not exist before. But the research might also help predict how a virus might evolve toward spillover, enabling the development of effective countermeasures such as a broad coronavirus vaccine. The research carried out by Dr. Shi was financed in part over the years by the United States, China and Europe. Grant documents show the work was aimed at determining the potential for spillover of bat coronaviruses from one species to another. The research involved constructing a series of novel chimeric viruses that would use different spike proteins from some unpublished natural coronaviruses. The ability of the resulting novel viruses to infect human cells in culture, and to infect laboratory animals, was to be tested. This included experiments on mice with cells that are genetically modified to respond as human respiratory cells would. The WIV also collected thousands of samples from bat caves in China. The work under Dr. Shi was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health through EcoHealth Alliance, a New York-based nongovernmental organization whose president, Peter Daszak, is a member of the WHO virus origin investigating team, and is leading a separate investigation by the Lancet.

A critical database went offline

At the core of Dr. Shi's work is a database at the institute. According to research by DRASTIC, a network of researchers and scientists, this is the most important bat coronavirus database in China. Overall, it holds records of some 22,000 samples and some of their genetic sequences, including for WIV virus sampling trips going back many years. The institute collected more than 15,000 samples from bats, covering over 1,400 bat viruses. The database holds more than 100 unpublished sequences of bat coronaviruses that could significantly help the probe into the origins of the pandemic. Of particular interest are the full sequences of eight viruses sampled in 2015 in an unidentified location in Yunnan province, which was only recently disclosed. In 2012, six people who were clearing bat feces from an abandoned mine in Yunnan developed an illness with symptoms very similar to covid-19. Three eventually died. The results of the investigation into the cause of their illness have not been fully disclosed. A bat-virus sampling trip by WIV-EcoHealth was underway in nearby locations while these six people were infected.

A virus designated RaTG13 was sampled from the mine in 2013 and has been described as the closest known relative of SARS-CoV-2. Based on limited information about their sequences, the other eight viruses are very similar to RaTG13 and may hold evolutionary clues. A section of the database was password-protected and not accessible. This may well have been to protect the materials so that scientists from WIV could be first in writing scientific papers about the viruses and sequences. But except for that private section, the database was accessible until Sept. 12, 2019, when it became unreachable from outside the institute, according to DRASTIC, which has studied the database usage records. Why then? Dr. Shi has said it was taken offline for security reasons. "We have nothing to hide," she told the BBC. In his final days in office, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had been harshly critical of China, issued a fact sheet and statement claiming: "The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses." If the U.S. government possesses information to corroborate that statement, it should release it, including declassifying any intelligence. A second portal of virus databases in China, created by the National Virus Resource Center, affiliated with the WIV, has also gone offline, with the result that all the key virus databases managed by the WIV are now offline. On Feb. 3, the WHO team investigating the origins of the virus visited the WIV. We do not know what was said. But the goal must be to open the closed doors at the institute. If the WIV had no role in sparking the outbreak, it should be relatively straightforward for Dr. Shi to safely open up the databases to scientists so they can properly understand the evolutionary origins of SARS-CoV-2. The institute should provide all records regarding bat samples, viruses and sequences, with verified information provenance, and eventually, it should be disclosed to all. The origin of the pandemic is of interest to every person on the globe. We do not know where the pandemic began. But a major step toward finding the answer is to examine all the relevant databases and laboratory records, including those at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and elsewhere, and the clues they may hold.

The Arrest And Trial Of An Iranian Terrorist Posing As A Diplomat (Eurasia review, 2/8)

On July 1, 2018, an Iranian diplomat and expert in explosives Assadollah Assadi was arrested while committing an act of terrorism. This type of arrest had never occurred in Europe prior to 2018, although there was evidence that Iran was using its embassies and diplomats as cover for its terrorist activities against Iranian dissidents throughout Europe. This attack, had it not been thwarted, could have been one of the largest terrorist attacks in Europe because over 100,000 people and political leaders from around the globe were gathered for the event. The decision to move forward with this attack was green-lighted by the highest levels of the Iranian regime, including the Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Rouhani, and several ministers. The back story behind this plot started with the nationwide protests in Iran during December 2017. The protests were held in over 142 cities throughout Iran. In January 2018, the Supreme Leader blamed the protests on the PMOI/MEK, a long-standing Iranian opposition group. Later that month, President Rouhani called his French counterpart to complain about the MEK and urge the French government to stop hosting the group. The MEK is the cornerstone group of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which is a coalition of opposition groups fighting for a pro-democratic Iran and the end of the oppressive rule of the regime. The regime sees the MEK as its enemy and the only alternative to the current rulership under the mullahs. After the protests, the regime intensified their efforts to eliminate the MEK, which is seen as a viable threat to their continued rulership. Key members of the Iranian intelligence and Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spoke of how the MEK will be targeted in a place where they do not expect. From 2017, the sanctioned bombing of the Iranian opposition was planned. Iranian embassies throughout Europe were used to cover up the movements of Iranian spies, including Assadi. He was documented as having made cash payments to Iranians throughout Europe, building an extensive network of spies and informants. Two of Assadi's accomplices, the Iranian-Belgian couple Nassimeh Naami and Amir Saadouni, had posed as supporters of the PMOI/MEK for years. They were tasked with planting and detonating the bomb at the rally's venue. The two were arrested in Belgium with the bomb in their possession. A fourth operative, Mehrdad Arefani, worked with Assadi for years and was positioned within the rally to provide information. Assadi had years of experience in planning and executing attacks against the MEK in Iraq before being assigned to the Iranian embassy in Vienna, where he gathered intelligence and built his network of spies and informants regarding the movements of the MEK and the NCRI's leadership and members. On June 20, Assadi was summoned to Iran and on June 22, he personally transported the bomb in his luggage onto European soil using his diplomatic immunity to avoid being searched. Assadi and his accomplices had been in contact for years, even being trained in Iran as necessary. The group was under police surveillance when the bomb drop was made from Assadi to his agents. These two agents were arrested with the bomb before reaching the gathering. Assadi was arrested in Germany on his return trip to Vienna. Their fourth accomplice was arrested in France at the Villepinte Hall, where the event was held. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Foreign Minister of the Iranian regime, attempted to frame the thwarted attack as a false flag, essentially created by their enemies, the MEK, against their own members to be a distraction from President Hassan Rouhani's European visit. Then he called Assadi a rogue agent, who was not taking orders from Tehran. However, in his remarks to the Iranian parliament in November 2018, he noted that nothing could be done without being reported in and that Iran did not have a system of acting in an arbitrary fashion. During the investigation by the Belgium authorities, it became clear that this was not a one-man job by Assadi but represented authorization from the regime itself. They pointed to the fact that Assadi worked for the Iranian MOIS (Ministry of Intelligence and Security) and as a diplomat. Both of his bosses report directly to the Supreme Leader. MOIS has been designated a terrorist organization in some countries. "Terrorism is their number one export," said Maryam Rajavi, president-elect of the NCRI. She also noted that they hide behind Islam, using religion to justify their terrorist actions. Rajavi noted that they took a great risk in using their diplomat so openly in executing this attack. The regime also fears the uprisings of the Iranian people. Their distraction tactics are no longer working and the regime fears that if the MEK and the opposition continue to grow their influence with the Iranian people, it will mean the end of the regime itself. She called for MOIS to be designated a terrorist organization by the EU and its agents to be prosecuted for their actions. Rajavi also called for Iranian embassies, religious, and cultural centers to be shut down to ensure the safety of Iranians as well as Europeans throughout Europe. Appeasement and negotiation efforts have not stopped these types of attacks by the Iranian regime. Instead, the regime is emboldened by little to no consequences for its actions from the international community. The arrest, trial and the given verdicts with 20 years of imprisonment for Assadi and 15 to 18 years for his agents marks a sharp turn for the Iranian regime, whose operatives are being held accountable by the European governments for the first time. The question is whether Europe will abandon the appeasement tactics, thus removing the sense of immunity the regime operates under and prosecute the regime's agents for their terrorist actions.

NUCLEAR & IAEA

Experts Assess Mali's Cancer Control Capacities (IAEA, 2/8)

Health authorities in Mali have been working to address the country's growing cancer burden, but despite the strong commitment of the government to fighting the various forms of this non-communicable disease, considerable difficulties remain for cancer patients in accessing diagnosis and treatment. Experts who, at the request of the government, recently assessed Mali's cancer control capacities as part of an "imPACT Review" proposed workable solutions to strengthen the country's ability to provide cancer services to those in need.

German, Canadian reactors set new world records (WNN, 2/8)

The single-unit Grohnde nuclear power plant in Germany has produced more than 400 terawatt hours of electricity since it started up in 1984 - the only reactor to have achieved this milestone. Meanwhile, unit 1 of Canada's Darlington nuclear power plant has set a new world record with 1106 consecutive days of continuous operation.

IRAN

Khamenei Says Iran To Return To JCPOA Commitments If All US Sanctions Lifted

(Eurasia review, 2/8)

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said Iran will resume honoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in full only after the US has removed all sanctions on Tehran in a practical and verifiable manner. Addressing a group of Iran's Air Force commanders on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear for the US and the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran's return to its JCPOA commitments will depend on the full and practical removal of the American sanctions. Afterwards, Iran will verify whether the sanctions have been terminated correctly or not, and then it will return to the JCPOA commitments, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed. This is the definite policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran that is agreed upon by all authorities, the Leader noted, emphasizing that Tehran will not back off from this policy. Ayatollah Khamenei argued that the US and the EU3, who violated all of their JCPOA commitments, have no right to set conditions for Iran. The party that has a right to set conditions is Iran, the Leader said, adding that the Islamic Republic honored all of its undertakings under the nuclear deal.

DPRK

N.K. paper calls for military role in advancing economy on army founding anniversary

(Yonhap, 2/8)

SEOUL, Feb. 8 (Yonhap) -- North Korea's official paper said Monday the country's military should play a leading role in major construction and other economic development projects as the country marked the 73rd anniversary of the army's founding. At the eighth congress of the ruling Workers' Party in January, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un unveiled its new five-year economic development plan focusing on self-reliance amid multiple challenges, including efforts to ward off the coronavirus and crippling sanctions. Kim called for a "do-or-die struggle" to fulfill the new five-year plan, stressing the importance of regional development.

Biden Needs a New Goal for North Korea. A high-profile defector once again reiterates what should be obvious: North Korea will not denuclearize. Time for a new goal. (The diplomat, 2/6)

Former North Korean diplomat Ryu Hyun-woo gave his first interview on January 31 since defecting to South Korea more than a year ago, and he spoke what should be obvious: North Korea will not denuclearize – at least, not any time soon. “North Korea’s nuclear power is directly linked to the stability of the regime,” Ryu told CNN. “I can’t imagine they abolish this. This is a message U.S. President Joe Biden needs to hear. After some promising sallies into diplomacy, the Trump administration squandered its chance with North Korea by demanding Pyongyang commit to full denuclearization before serious talks could even begin. Biden cannot improve on that dismal record if he begins with the same mistake. He must accept that denuclearization is not a realistic goal for U.S.-North Korea relations for the foreseeable future and negotiate instead for more achievable ends.

COVID-19

More than 462,000 people have died from coronavirus in the U.S. (The Washington, 2/8)

The disease caused by the novel coronavirus has killed at least 462,000 people in the United States since February 2020 and has enveloped nearly every part of the country. The seven-day average death toll routinely topped 3,000 in January, higher than the previous peak in April, despite improvements in treatment that make survival more likely. Six times in January, covid-19 killed more than 4,000 people in one day. But the number of hospitalizations and new cases began to fall in January, and the pace of vaccinations accelerated to more than a million shots a day just as new, more transmissible variants of the virus began to appear in parts of the country.

SPACE

Space race: UAE, US and Chinese missions prepare to explore Mars (Al Jazeera, 2/8)

The Red Planet is about to get a little crowded. Three separate missions to Mars launched by the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will all reach their destination this month after taking flight within just 11 days of each other in 2020. The uncrewed missions promise to yield new insights for Earth-bound scientists intent on unravelling the mysteries of the solar system and scanning Mars for signs of extraterrestrial life, as well as enhancing our collective understanding of the cosmos.

Lockheed Martin selects ABL rocket for Shetland launches (BBC News, 2/8)

Aerospace giant Lockheed Martin has selected the rocket it will use to kick-start space launches from the island of Unst in Shetland. The vehicle, called the RS1, will be provided by ABL Space Systems of El Segundo, California. If everything comes together, an inaugural flight could occur next year. Lockheed is looking to stimulate the launch business in the UK to take advantage of a rapidly expanding market for small satellites. These spacecraft, many no bigger than a shoebox, are all seeking more flexible and affordable ways of getting into orbit, and Lockheed believes it's putting together an attractive package.

Isotropic Systems raises \$42 million (Space News, 2/8)

WASHINGTON — Isotropic Systems raised \$42 million to continue development of broadband terminals for use by a wide range of satellite systems in a round led by satellite operator SES. Isotropic announced Feb. 8 the new round, including equity investment as well as grant funding from the British government. Besides SES, other investors include Orbital Ventures as well as existing investors Boeing HorizonX Global Ventures, Space Angels and Firmament Ventures.

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The company has now raised about \$70 million to date. The company will use the funding to continue development of flat-panel antenna systems capable of working with multiple satellite systems, with the goal of having its first commercial system ready next year. The company is opening a new technology and testing facility near its headquarters in Reading, England, and plans to grow its workforce from 70 to 110 people by the end of the year.

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From:	"Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6) @state.gov>
To:	Frisk, Megan L. EOP/NSC (b)(6) @nsc.eop.gov>
Subject:	FW: AVC Daily Press Clips - Feb 6-8, 2021/ We're still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers.
Date:	Mon, 8 Feb 2021 20:55:40 +0000

FYSA. Familiar arguments.

OPINION/ANALYSIS

We're still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers. (The Washington Post, 2/5)

WHAT IS China trying to hide about the origins of the pandemic — and why? In Wuhan, a World Health Organization team has launched its investigation into the origins of the virus that has infected 105 million people worldwide and cost 2.2 million lives over the past year.

The terms of reference for the investigation say it will be “open-minded” and “not excluding any hypothesis” about the origins of the virus. Many scientists have speculated that the virus leaped from animals, such as bats, to humans, perhaps with an intermediate stop in another animal. This kind of zoonotic spillover has occurred before, such as in the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014. But there is another pathway, also plausible, that must be investigated. That is the possibility of a laboratory accident or leak. It could have involved a virus that was improperly disposed of or perhaps infected a laboratory worker who then passed it to others. Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, is a major transportation hub and a center of virus studies in China, with at least six facilities with BSL-3 laboratories for handling infectious agents. Published papers show that some of these institutions have been very active in coronavirus research. The most active is the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where Shi Zhengli leads a research team that has extensively studied and experimented on bat coronaviruses that are very similar to the one that ignited the global pandemic. Dr. Shi said that when news of the outbreak first became known, she checked her laboratory records to see whether there had been any mishandling of experimental materials. She also asserted that the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus did not match viruses that her team had sampled from bat caves in China. “That really took a load off my mind,” she told Scientific American. “I had not slept a wink for days.” But that must not be the end of the story. China actively covered up the early stages of the pandemic, concealed the transmissibility of the virus from its own people and the world, and punished Wuhan doctors who expressed worry about it in late December 2019. President Xi Jinping did not warn the public in China or abroad until mid-January. Since then, Chinese officials and scientists have advanced a host of dubious theories to suggest the origin of the virus was beyond China’s borders: perhaps brought to China by contaminated packaging of frozen food from abroad or from the U.S. military biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md., or from mink farms. The disinformation only heightens suspicions that China is trying to distract from or conceal something.

‘Gain of function’ research

To find out if there was a leak or laboratory accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) or another lab, investigators would want to carefully examine research done there, including archived lab notes, records of experiments and data, intra-laboratory communications such as

email, as well as bat samples, viral strains and all sequences from the WIV collection to compare them with known genetic blueprints from the pandemic virus. This would require transparency and verification of data and sample provenance. But it has not been forthcoming. It is known from public documents that Dr. Shi was conducting “gain of function” research on bat coronaviruses, which involves modifying their genomes to give the viruses new properties, such as the ability to infect a new host species or transmit from one host to another more easily. Such research is controversial — a gain of function experiment can create a danger that did not exist before. But the research might also help predict how a virus might evolve toward spillover, enabling the development of effective countermeasures such as a broad coronavirus vaccine. The research carried out by Dr. Shi was financed in part over the years by the United States, China and Europe. Grant documents show the work was aimed at determining the potential for spillover of bat coronaviruses from one species to another. The research involved constructing a series of novel chimeric viruses that would use different spike proteins from some unpublished natural coronaviruses. The ability of the resulting novel viruses to infect human cells in culture, and to infect laboratory animals, was to be tested. This included experiments on mice with cells that are genetically modified to respond as human respiratory cells would. The WIV also collected thousands of samples from bat caves in China. The work under Dr. Shi was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health through EcoHealth Alliance, a New York-based nongovernmental organization whose president, Peter Daszak, is a member of the WHO virus origin investigating team, and is leading a separate investigation by the Lancet.

A critical database went offline

At the core of Dr. Shi’s work is a database at the institute. According to research by DRASTIC, a network of researchers and scientists, this is the most important bat coronavirus database in China. Overall, it holds records of some 22,000 samples and some of their genetic sequences, including for WIV virus sampling trips going back many years. The institute collected more than 15,000 samples from bats, covering over 1,400 bat viruses. The database holds more than 100 unpublished sequences of bat coronaviruses that could significantly help the probe into the origins of the pandemic. Of particular interest are the full sequences of eight viruses sampled in 2015 in an unidentified location in Yunnan province, which was only recently disclosed. In 2012, six people who were clearing bat feces from an abandoned mine in Yunnan developed an illness with symptoms very similar to covid-19. Three eventually died. The results of the investigation into the cause of their illness have not been fully disclosed. A bat-virus sampling trip by WIV-EcoHealth was underway in nearby locations while these six people were infected. A virus designated RaTG13 was sampled from the mine in 2013 and has been described as the closest known relative of SARS-CoV-2. Based on limited information about their sequences, the other eight viruses are very similar to RaTG13 and may hold evolutionary clues. A section of the database was password-protected and not accessible. This may well have been to protect the materials so that scientists from WIV could be first in writing scientific papers about the viruses and sequences. But except for that private section, the database was accessible until Sept. 12, 2019, when it became unreachable from outside the institute, according to DRASTIC, which has studied the database usage records. Why then? Dr. Shi has said it was taken offline for security reasons. “We have nothing to hide,” she told the BBC. In his final days in office, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had been harshly critical of China, issued a fact sheet and statement claiming: “The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses.” If the U.S. government possesses

information to corroborate that statement, it should release it, including declassifying any intelligence. A second portal of virus databases in China, created by the National Virus Resource Center, affiliated with the WIV, has also gone offline, with the result that all the key virus databases managed by the WIV are now offline. On Feb. 3, the WHO team investigating the origins of the virus visited the WIV. We do not know what was said. But the goal must be to open the closed doors at the institute. If the WIV had no role in sparking the outbreak, it should be relatively straightforward for Dr. Shi to safely open up the databases to scientists so they can properly understand the evolutionary origins of SARS-CoV-2. The institute should provide all records regarding bat samples, viruses and sequences, with verified information provenance, and eventually, it should be disclosed to all. The origin of the pandemic is of interest to every person on the globe. We do not know where the pandemic began. But a major step toward finding the answer is to examine all the relevant databases and laboratory records, including those at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and elsewhere, and the clues they may hold.

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Raymond, Venol (b)(6)@state.gov
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:20 PM
To: AVC-Press Guidance-DL <AVC-PressGuidance-DL@state.gov>
Cc: AVC-Press-DL <AVC-Press-DL@state.gov>
Subject: RE: AVC Daily Press Clips - Feb 6-8, 2021



AVC Daily Press Clips
 February 8, 2021

NEWS

George P. Shultz, Influential Cabinet Official Under Nixon and Reagan, Dies at 100 (The NYtimes, 2/7)

He carried one of Washington's weightiest résumés — labor secretary, treasury secretary and budget director for Nixon and secretary of state under Reagan as the Cold War waned. George P. Shultz, who presided with a steady hand over the beginning of the end of the Cold War as President Ronald Reagan's often embattled secretary of state, died on Saturday at his home in Stanford, Calif. He was 100. His death was announced by the Hoover Institution, where he was a distinguished fellow. He was also professor emeritus at Stanford's Graduate School of Business. Mr. Shultz, who had served Republican presidents since Dwight D. Eisenhower, moved to California after leaving Washington in January 1989. He continued writing and speaking on issues ranging from nuclear weapons to climate change into his late 90s, expressing concern about America's direction. "Right now we're not leading the world," he told an interviewer in

March 2020. "We're withdrawing from it." He carried a weighty résumé into the Reagan White House, with stints as secretary of labor, budget director and secretary of the Treasury under President Richard M. Nixon. He had emerged from the wars of Watergate with his reputation unscathed, having shown a respect for the rule of law all too rare in that era. At the helm of the Treasury, he had drawn Nixon's wrath for resisting the president's demands to use the Internal Revenue Service as a weapon against the president's political enemies. As secretary of state for six and a half years, Mr. Shultz was widely regarded as a voice of reason in the Reagan administration as it tore itself asunder over the conduct of American foreign policy. He described those struggles as "a kind of guerrilla warfare," a fierce and ceaseless combat among the leaders of national security. He fought "a battle royal" in his quest to get out the facts, as he later testified to Congress during the Iran-contra affair. The director of the Central Intelligence Agency, William J. Casey, followed his own foreign policy in secret, and the State Department and the Pentagon constantly clashed over the use of American military force. Estranged from the White House, Mr. Shultz threatened to resign three times. Mr. Shultz was summoned to Camp David and handed the wheel of American foreign policy in June 1982. Initially deemed too politically moderate by Reagan's advisers, he had been passed over for the post of secretary of state the previous year. (The position had gone to Alexander M. Haig Jr., the mercurial and combative general who lasted barely 18 months before he abruptly left office amid fierce disputes over the direction of diplomacy and the projection of American power). The Middle East was exploding, the United States was underwriting covert warfare in Central America, and relations with the Soviet Union were at rock bottom when Mr. Shultz became the 60th secretary of state. Moscow and Washington had not spoken for years; nuclear tensions escalated and hit a peak during his first months in office. The hard work of replacing fear and hatred with a measure of trust and confidence took place in more than 30 meetings with Mr. Shultz and the Soviet foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, between 1985 and 1988. The Soviets saw Mr. Shultz as their key interlocutor; in private, they called him the prime minister of the United States. Continuous meetings between Mr. Shultz and Mr. Shevardnadze helped ease the tensions between the superpowers and paved the way for the most sweeping arms control agreement of the Cold War, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. Ratified in June 1988, it banned land-based ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and missile launchers with ranges of up to 3,420 miles. Within three years, the two nations had eliminated 2,692 missiles and started a decade of verification inspections. The treaty remained in force until August 2019, when President Donald J. Trump scrapped it, contending that Russia had broken the accord by developing a new cruise missile. Almost alone among the members of the Reagan team, Mr. Shultz had seen early on that the new Soviet leader, Mikhail S. Gorbachev, and his allies in Moscow were different from their predecessors. The rest of the national security team, and especially Reagan's defense secretary, Caspar W. Weinberger (known as Cap), had scoffed at the idea that the Kremlin could change its tune. "Many people in Washington said: 'There is nothing different, these are just personalities. Nothing can be changed,'" Mr. Shultz recounted in an oral history of the Reagan administration. "That was the C.I.A. view; that was Cap's view; that was the view of all the hard-liners." "They were terribly wrong," he added. The world seemed on the verge of a lasting peace when he left office; the Berlin Wall still stood, but not for long. "It is fair to say that the Cold War ended during the Reagan years," Mr. Shultz wrote in his 1993 memoir, "Turmoil and Triumph: My Years as Secretary of State." The easing of four decades of grinding tension changed the global landscape. There would be fewer nuclear weapons pointed at great cities, fewer proxy wars in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But a lethal force was rising in

Afghanistan, where American-supplied weapons in the hands of Afghan rebels killed Soviet occupying forces throughout the 1980s. Both Moscow and Washington had poured billions of dollars into the fight, and both sides continued to support rival Afghan factions after the Soviets pulled out in February 1989. "We assert confidently our right to supply our friends in Afghanistan as we see the need to do so," Mr. Shultz announced in April 1988. American arms had helped empower a generation of holy warriors who had bled the Red Army, but who would eventually shelter and support the Qaeda terrorists who struck the United States on Sept. 11, 2001.

Strategies Against Terror

The United States was hit by terrorist attacks repeatedly in the Reagan years; the worst was the October 1983 suicide bombing of the Marine Corps headquarters at the Beirut International Airport that killed 241 Americans. They had been sent to Lebanon as peacekeepers while the United States tried and failed to broker a deal among the leaders of Israel, Lebanon and Syria after the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Mr. Shultz had proposed a new strategy of counterterrorism "preventive or pre-emptive actions against terrorists before they strike," as he said in a June 1984 speech. The idea won only muted support at the time, but it became a tenet of President George W. Bush's "war on terror." Mr. Shultz decisively lost the battle for control of foreign policy in the Western Hemisphere. The White House, the National Security Council and the C.I.A. believed that the rise of a left-wing government in Nicaragua foreshadowed a chain reaction that could inflame all of Central America. They chose to fight back through covert action, secret paramilitary operations and support for a counterrevolutionary force, the contras. Congress cut off aid to the rebels, but secret operations to support them continued apace. Reagan's national security adviser, Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, and Mr. Casey, the C.I.A. chief, oversaw the secret sale of arms to Iran as ransom for American hostages held in Lebanon. Both men knew that millions of dollars in profits from the arms sales were being channeled covertly to the Nicaraguan rebels, in defiance of the congressional ban. Mr. Shultz had been kept in the dark about secret presidential directives authorizing the trading of arms for hostages. Chagrined and outraged, he denounced the secret dealings after they were revealed in November 1986, directly challenging Reagan. He came close to losing his job. But alone among the senior members of the Reagan team, he emerged untarnished after the Iran-contra affair unraveled. The arms-for-hostages deal was "totally outside the system of government that we live by," Mr. Shultz later told Congress. "I don't think desirable ends justify means of lying, deceiving, of doing things that are outside our constitutional processes." Mr. Shultz knew the consequences of criminal acts and cover-ups. He had lived through Watergate. On the secretly recorded White House tapes, Nixon railed about Mr. Shultz's reluctance to use the I.R.S. to investigate and intimidate hundreds of people on the president's so-called enemies list. "He didn't get secretary of the Treasury because he has nice blue eyes," Nixon said. "It was a goddamn favor to get him that job." Nixon named Mr. Shultz labor secretary in January 1969, a post he held for 18 months until he took over the newly formed White House Office of Management and Budget in July 1970. His deputy there was Mr. Weinberger, whose zeal to carry out the president's demands to cut federal spending earned him the nickname "Cap the Knife." "Caspar Weinberger was noted as a big budget cutter," Mr. Shultz said in an oral history of the Nixon administration. "Nixon railed against the C.I.A. and their lousy intelligence, and said, 'Cap, I want you to cut the C.I.A.'s budget to one-third its present size.' Cap would light up like a Christmas tree. Then Nixon said: 'No. Make it one-half its present size.' Then we'd leave the meeting, and Cap would be very excited, and I would say: 'Cap, relax. He's just

showboating.' After two years at the budget office, Mr. Shultz became Treasury secretary in June 1972. The previous year, Nixon unilaterally made the dollar inconvertible to gold. That forced the rest of the world to move from a system of fixed rates of exchange for national currencies to a flexible system. Exchange rates ceased to be the way in which governments made monetary policy. Mr. Shultz traveled the world trying to make sure the dollar remained almighty. He quit the Nixon administration in May 1974, three months before the president resigned in disgrace, the last of Nixon's original cabinet members to depart. Before his death, he was the oldest surviving member of Nixon's inner circle and, along with former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, among the last. After 25 years in academia and government, Mr. Shultz joined the Bechtel Corporation (now Bechtel Group), one of the world's biggest engineering and construction companies, serving as its president from 1974 to 1982. He was paid nearly \$600,000 a year (about \$2 million in today's money) to run its global and domestic operations, which included the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the Washington Metro subway, King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and much of the infrastructure of the Saudi government. Throughout his years in power in Washington, Mr. Shultz tried to keep one secret out of print: that he had a tiger tattoo on his posterior, a legacy of his undergraduate days at Princeton University. When queried about the tattoo, Phyllis Oakley, a State Department spokeswoman at the time, replied, "I am not in a position to comment."

Princeton, Then the Pacific

George Pratt Shultz was born in Manhattan on Dec. 13, 1920, the only child of the former Margaret Lennox Pratt and Birl E. Shultz, an official with the New York Stock Exchange. He grew up in Englewood, N.J., and entered Princeton in the fall of 1938. In his senior year in 1941, he was majoring in economics when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7. He joined the Marines after graduation and saw combat in the Pacific. He joined the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology after earning his doctorate in industrial relations there in 1949. His field was labor economics. In 1955, he took a year's leave to serve as a senior staff member of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's Council of Economic Advisers, under its chairman, Arthur F. Burns, who later led the Federal Reserve Board. Starting in 1957, Mr. Shultz taught at the University of Chicago, where he was dean of its business school from 1962 to 1968. That year he took a fellowship at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, a wooded retreat for academics in Stanford. He returned to Stanford after leaving public office and receiving in 1989 the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. Over the next three decades, he wrote for academic journals and op-ed pages. His most recent book, published in the fall, was "A Hinge of History," written with James Timbie, a longtime State Department adviser. In the book, Mr. Shultz argued that the world is at a pivot point in history, much like the one it reached at the end of World War II, requiring international cooperation in grappling with an era that will bring fundamental changes in education, migration, national security, technology, economics and democratization. Mr. Shultz was a Marine when he met his future wife of nearly 50 years, Helena M. O'Brien, known as Obie. He was on a rest-and-recreation trip to Kauai, Hawaii, where she was an Army nurse. She died in 1995. In 1997, he married Charlotte Smith Mailliard Swig, San Francisco's chief of protocol. The high-society ceremony was held in the city's Grace Cathedral. He wore black tie with red, white and blue studs of rubies, diamonds and sapphire, and sported a tiger orchid boutonniere. His survivors include his wife; three daughters from his first marriage, Margaret Ann Shylt Tilsworth, Kathleen Pratt Shultz Jorgensen and Barbara Lennox Shultz White; two sons from his first marriage, Peter and Alexander; 11 grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren. The only scandal

that touched Mr. Shultz's personal life began to erupt in 2015. For four years, he had been a member of the board of directors of Theranos, a Silicon Valley start-up founded by Elizabeth Holmes, a young college dropout who claimed to have invented a revolutionary new blood-testing system. His enthusiastic support drew power brokers to the board, including Mr. Kissinger and James Mattis, the retired Marine general who would become President Trump's defense secretary. Theranos was valued at \$9 billion before whistle-blowers inside the company began talking to a Wall Street Journal reporter, saying the technology did not work as promised. The insiders included Mr. Shultz's grandson, Tyler Shultz, and the elder statesman pressured him to stay silent. It was not until Theranos collapsed in 2018 and its founders faced indictment on fraud charges that Mr. Shultz finally acknowledged the "troubling practices" at Theranos, saying in a public statement that his grandson had "felt personally threatened" by their confrontation "and believed that I had placed allegiance to the company over allegiance to higher values and our family." A lifelong Republican, Mr. Shultz largely stayed out of the political fray after leaving Washington. But he refused to publicly endorse Mr. Trump in 2016 and in 2020, adding that he did not back his Democratic opponents, either. In an interview with The New York Times in October, however, he offered no criticism of Joseph R. Biden Jr., Mr. Trump's Democratic challenger at the time. The two had worked together collegially when Mr. Shultz was secretary of state and Mr. Biden was a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Shultz said he had recently teased Mr. Biden, who was 77 at the time, telling him, "From my standpoint, you're a promising young man."

A Legacy Undone

Mr. Shultz lived long enough to see his most lasting legacy from the Reagan years come largely undone. The arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union were bristling with tens of thousands of nuclear weapons when he became secretary of state. Fears of Armageddon approached an all-time high. In June 1983, General Secretary Yuri Andropov warned a former American ambassador to Moscow, Averell Harriman, that the two nations were nearing "the dangerous 'red line'" of nuclear war. "I don't think the Soviets were crying wolf," Robert M. Gates, the C.I.A.'s top Soviet analyst at the time and later the secretary of defense, observed a quarter of a century later. "They may not have believed a NATO attack was imminent in November 1983, but they did seem to believe that the situation was very dangerous." Washington and Moscow had been preparing for World War III since the dawn of the nuclear age. They also had been negotiating a strategic arms limitation treaty since 1969. An agreement signed in 1979 would have reduced both sides' nuclear arsenals substantially. But after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan that year, the Senate never ratified it. Mr. Shultz's crowning arms-control achievement was the 1988 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and he was dismayed when President Trump scrapped it in 2019. "Withdrawing from the I.N.F. treaty was a giant mistake," Mr. Shultz said in the October interview with The Times. "You lose not only the agreement itself, but you lose all those verification provisions that we worked so hard on." Mr. Shultz and Mr. Gorbachev had argued to no avail in a Washington Post op-ed article in 2018 that abandoning the treaty "would be a step toward a new arms race, undermining strategic stability and increasing the threat of miscalculation or technical failure leading to an immensely destructive war." Mr. Shultz agonized over that threat. "We desperately need to have a discussion with Russia about this," he told an interviewer in November 2019. "There is too much loose talk about not just having nuclear weapons, but using them," he said. "People have forgotten their power. In my day, I remember nuclear weapons. We knew what they could do. It was very vividly wrong."

Iran 'hides spyware in wallpaper, restaurant and games apps' (BBC News, 2/8)

Iran is running two surveillance operations in cyber-space, targeting more than 1,000 dissidents, according to a leading cyber-security company. The efforts were directed against individuals in Iran and 12 other countries, including the UK and US, Check Point said. It said the two groups involved were using new techniques to install spyware on targets' PCs and mobile devices.

And this was then being used to steal call recordings and media files. One of the groups, known as Domestic Kitten or APT-50, is accused of tricking people into downloading malicious software on to mobile phones by a variety of means including:

- repackaging an existing version of an authentic video game found on the Google Play store
- mimicking an app for a restaurant in Tehran
- offering a fake mobile-security app
- providing a compromised app that publishes articles from a local news agency
- supplying an infected wallpaper app containing pro-Islamic State imagery
- masquerading as an Android application store to download further software

The American-Israeli company's researchers documented 1,200 victims being targeted by the campaign, living in seven countries. There had been more than 600 successful infections, it said. The second group, known as Infy or Prince Of Persia, is said to spy on the home and work PCs of dissidents in 12 countries, extracting sensitive data after tricking people into opening malicious email attachments. The Iranian government has not commented on the report.

Furball malware

Domestic Kitten's operation was first identified in 2018. And Check Point said there was evidence it had run at least 10 campaigns since 2017. Four of these were still active, with the most recent beginning in November 2020. And it was using an Iranian blog site, Telegram channels and text messages to lure people into installing its infected software, which the researchers have dubbed Furball, which could:

- record calls and other sounds
- track the device's location
- collect device identifiers,
- grab text messages and call logs
- steal media files, including videos and photos,
- obtain a list of other installed applications
- steal files from external storage

The 600 successful infections are said to have included dissidents, opposition forces and people belonging to the Kurdish ethnic minority in:

- Iran
- the US
- Great Britain
- Pakistan
- Afghanistan
- Turkey
- Uzbekistan

The other group, Infy, is said to have been operating as far back as 2007. Its most recent activity had targeted PCs, with fake emails with attractive content, usually with an attached document,

Check Point said. One example provided was of a document apparently about loans being offered to disabled veterans. Once the document was opened, a spying tool was installed and sensitive data stolen, the company said. Two documents recently used are said to have included a photo of an Iranian governor, with alleged contact details. The researchers said Infy's capabilities were "far superior" to most other known Iranian campaigns, thanks to its ability to be highly selective about its targets and to have generally have gone undetected. "It is clear that the Iranian government is investing significant resources into cyber-operations," Check Point cyber-research head Yaniv Balmas said. "The operators of these Iranian cyber-espionage campaigns seem to be completely unaffected by any counter-activities done by others, even though both campaigns had been revealed and even stopped in the past. "They have simply restarted."

Biden: US Won't Lift Iran Sanctions (VOA News, 2/7)

U.S. President Joe Biden says he will not lift economic sanctions against Iran unless Tehran first cuts its uranium enrichment back to the level it agreed to in the 2015 international treaty aimed at restraining its development of nuclear weapons. Biden has said he wants the U.S. to rejoin the nuclear treaty with Iran that former President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from. But when asked directly in a CBS News interview that aired Sunday whether the U.S. would lift sanctions first to get Iran to return to negotiations, Biden replied simply, "No." He nodded in agreement with CBS anchor Norah O'Donnell that Tehran must first stop enriching uranium at a higher level than allowed under the treaty. The pact had allowed Iran to enrich uranium at a 3.67% concentration level. But since mid-2019, it had pushed enrichment to a 4.5% level, and then last month to 20% — a level it had achieved before the accord. Experts say Tehran now has enough low-enriched uranium stockpiled for at least two nuclear weapons, if it chooses to pursue their manufacture. But Iranian officials, to the long skepticism of Western governments, have long maintained that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes. Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on state TV that if the United States wants "Iran to return to its commitments, the U.S. must lift all sanctions in practice, then we will do verification and see if the sanctions were lifted correctly, then we will return to our commitments." Khamenei's televised remarks were his first since Biden's January 20 inauguration. But in a CNN interview after Khamenei's remarks, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that there was no precondition that Iran receive compensation from the United States for the cost of sanctions imposed by Washington before restoring the nuclear pact. In the CBS interview, Biden also discussed U.S. relations with China, acknowledging that since taking office he had yet to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping, although Biden has talked with numerous other world leaders. Biden said, "There was no reason not to call him." He offered some praise of Xi but warned that relations between the countries would be different than they had been under Trump. "He's very bright. He's very tough," Biden said of Xi. "He doesn't have — and I don't mean it as a criticism, just the reality — he doesn't have a democratic, small D, bone in his body." "I've said to him all along that we need not have a conflict," the U.S. leader said, recalling discussions with Xi when Biden was the U.S. vice president from 2009 to 2017. "But there's going to be extreme competition. And I'm not going to do it the way that he knows. And that's because he's sending signals, as well. I'm not going to do it the way Trump did. We're going to focus on international rules of the road."

Iran Warns Nuclear Deal in Danger if US Does Not Ease Sanctions (VOA News, 2/6)

Iran's foreign minister warned that the Iran nuclear deal could be further jeopardized if the U.S. does not ease sanctions against the Middle Eastern power by Feb. 21. Mohammad Javad Zarif, in an interview published Saturday in the Iranian newspaper Hamshahri, said recently passed legislation compels the government to harden its position on the issue. He also noted the possible June election of a hardline president could further endanger the pact. "Time is running out for the Americans, both because of the parliament bill and the election atmosphere that will follow the Iranian New Year," Zarif said. Iran's New Year starts on March 21; three months after a parliament led by hardliners passed legislation establishing a two-month deadline for easing the sanctions. In 2018, former U.S. president Donald Trump withdrew from the deal signed in 2015 by Iran and several other world powers, alleging it failed to curb Iran's missile program and its growing influence in the Middle East. Iran announced last month it had resumed enriching uranium up to 20% purity at its Fordow enrichment plant, a level it attained before the agreement was reached. Iranian officials said last week enrichment capacity was increased at its Natanz facility. U.S. President Joe Biden, who has long criticized Trump's decision to withdraw from the pact, has vowed to re-enter the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, if Tehran resumes strict compliance. Under the deal, some sanctions against Iran were lifted in exchange for reducing its nuclear activities. Iran has demanded that the U.S. ease sanctions before it resumes compliance and rejected talks on broader security issues. Biden has said little publicly about Tehran since winning the presidency, but some U.S. media reports suggest his administration is quietly working to address Iran's nuclear and missile programs, as well as Tehran's regional activities, with the intent of determining whether and how to rejoin the agreement. According to CNN, Robert Malley, Biden's special envoy for Iran, is among several high-level officials seeking solutions to the dilemma. Malley is developing a team of experts with different perspectives on Iran, while reaching out to members of Congress.

US Urges Yemen's Houthis to Halt Attacks (VOA News, 2/8)

The United States is calling on Yemen's Houthi rebels to avoid any new military offensives inside Yemen, and to halt attacks affecting civilian areas in Saudi Arabia. In a statement late Sunday, State Department spokesman Ned Price said the United States is "deeply troubled by continued Houthi attacks." "We urge the Houthis to refrain from destabilizing actions and demonstrate their commitment to constructively engage in UN Special Envoy Griffiths' efforts to achieve peace," Price said. "The time is now to find an end to this conflict." U.N. envoy Martin Griffiths began two days of talks in Iran Sunday as he pushes for a negotiated political settlement to the conflict in Yemen, which began in late 2014 with the Houthis seizing the country's capital. Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign in defense of Yemen's internationally recognized government in early 2015. The U.S. call for the Houthis to cease attacks comes days after the Biden administration ordered an end to U.S. support for the Saudi-led coalition, which has come under criticism from rights groups for airstrikes that have struck civilian areas in Yemen. President Biden called Yemen's conflict a "humanitarian and strategic catastrophe." He also notified Congress last week that his administration would remove the Houthis from a list of foreign terror organizations, reversing the designation made in the final days of the administration of former President Donald Trump. Humanitarian organizations had warned that such a designation would harm efforts to get badly needed relief to Yemen. The United Nations calls the situation there the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Biden: China should expect 'extreme competition' from US (AP News, 2/7)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden says China is in for “extreme competition” from the U.S. under his administration, but that the new relationship he wants to forge need not be one of conflict. In an interview broadcast Sunday, Biden acknowledged that he has yet to speak with Chinese President Xi Jinping since his inauguration Jan. 20, but noted that the two leaders had met many times when both men served their countries as vice president. “I know him pretty well,” Biden said in an excerpt of the interview aired Sunday by CBS’ “Face the Nation.” When they do speak, they will have “a whole lot to talk about,” Biden said. Biden appears to be concentrating his initial telephone diplomacy on U.S. allies. He so far has spoken with the leaders of Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Australia and the NATO secretary-general. He also worked in a conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In the interview, Biden described Xi as “very bright” and “very tough” but without “a democratic, small D, bone in his body.” Shortly after Biden succeeded President Donald Trump in the White House, a spokesperson for China’s Foreign Ministry said that “after this very difficult and extraordinary time, both the Chinese and American people deserve a better future.” Beijing welcomed the Biden administration’s decision to remain in the World Health Organization and return to the Paris climate agreement. The new administration, however, is unlikely to significantly alter U.S. policies on trade, Taiwan, human rights and the South China Sea that have angered Xi’s increasingly assertive government. Biden, in the interview taped Friday, said he has said to Xi “all along, that we need not have a conflict.” But, Biden added, there will be “extreme competition. And I am not going to do it the way that he knows. And that’s because he’s sending signals as well.” Biden said he will not pursue U.S.-China relations in the way that Trump did but will focus on “international rules of the road.”

OPINION/ANALYSIS

We’re still missing the origin story of this pandemic. China is sitting on the answers. (The Washington Post, 2/5)

WHAT IS China trying to hide about the origins of the pandemic — and why? In Wuhan, a World Health Organization team has launched its investigation into the origins of the virus that has infected 105 million people worldwide and cost 2.2 million lives over the past year. The terms of reference for the investigation say it will be “open-minded” and “not excluding any hypothesis” about the origins of the virus. Many scientists have speculated that the virus leaped from animals, such as bats, to humans, perhaps with an intermediate stop in another animal. This kind of zoonotic spillover has occurred before, such as in the West Africa Ebola outbreak in 2014. But there is another pathway, also plausible, that must be investigated. That is the possibility of a laboratory accident or leak. It could have involved a virus that was improperly disposed of or perhaps infected a laboratory worker who then passed it to others. Wuhan, with a population of 11 million, is a major transportation hub and a center of virus studies in China, with at least six facilities with BSL-3 laboratories for handling infectious agents. Published papers show that some of these institutions have been very active in coronavirus research. The most active is the Wuhan Institute of Virology, where Shi Zhengli leads a research team that has extensively studied and experimented on bat coronaviruses that are very similar to the one that ignited the global pandemic. Dr. Shi said that when news of the outbreak first became known, she checked her laboratory records to see whether there had been any mishandling of experimental materials. She also asserted that the genetic sequence of the new coronavirus did not match viruses that her team had sampled from bat caves in China. “That really took a load off my mind,” she told Scientific American. “I had not slept a wink for days.” But that must not

be the end of the story. China actively covered up the early stages of the pandemic, concealed the transmissibility of the virus from its own people and the world, and punished Wuhan doctors who expressed worry about it in late December 2019. President Xi Jinping did not warn the public in China or abroad until mid-January. Since then, Chinese officials and scientists have advanced a host of dubious theories to suggest the origin of the virus was beyond China's borders: perhaps brought to China by contaminated packaging of frozen food from abroad or from the U.S. military biodefense laboratory at Fort Detrick, Md., or from mink farms. The disinformation only heightens suspicions that China is trying to distract from or conceal something.

'Gain of function' research

To find out if there was a leak or laboratory accident at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) or another lab, investigators would want to carefully examine research done there, including archived lab notes, records of experiments and data, intra-laboratory communications such as email, as well as bat samples, viral strains and all sequences from the WIV collection to compare them with known genetic blueprints from the pandemic virus. This would require transparency and verification of data and sample provenance. But it has not been forthcoming. It is known from public documents that Dr. Shi was conducting "gain of function" research on bat coronaviruses, which involves modifying their genomes to give the viruses new properties, such as the ability to infect a new host species or transmit from one host to another more easily. Such research is controversial — a gain of function experiment can create a danger that did not exist before. But the research might also help predict how a virus might evolve toward spillover, enabling the development of effective countermeasures such as a broad coronavirus vaccine. The research carried out by Dr. Shi was financed in part over the years by the United States, China and Europe. Grant documents show the work was aimed at determining the potential for spillover of bat coronaviruses from one species to another. The research involved constructing a series of novel chimeric viruses that would use different spike proteins from some unpublished natural coronaviruses. The ability of the resulting novel viruses to infect human cells in culture, and to infect laboratory animals, was to be tested. This included experiments on mice with cells that are genetically modified to respond as human respiratory cells would. The WIV also collected thousands of samples from bat caves in China. The work under Dr. Shi was partially funded by the National Institutes of Health through EcoHealth Alliance, a New York-based nongovernmental organization whose president, Peter Daszak, is a member of the WHO virus origin investigating team, and is leading a separate investigation by the Lancet.

A critical database went offline

At the core of Dr. Shi's work is a database at the institute. According to research by DRASTIC, a network of researchers and scientists, this is the most important bat coronavirus database in China. Overall, it holds records of some 22,000 samples and some of their genetic sequences, including for WIV virus sampling trips going back many years. The institute collected more than 15,000 samples from bats, covering over 1,400 bat viruses. The database holds more than 100 unpublished sequences of bat coronaviruses that could significantly help the probe into the origins of the pandemic. Of particular interest are the full sequences of eight viruses sampled in 2015 in an unidentified location in Yunnan province, which was only recently disclosed. In 2012, six people who were clearing bat feces from an abandoned mine in Yunnan developed an illness with symptoms very similar to covid-19. Three eventually died. The results of the investigation into the cause of their illness have not been fully disclosed. A bat-virus sampling trip by WIV-EcoHealth was underway in nearby locations while these six people were infected.

A virus designated RaTG13 was sampled from the mine in 2013 and has been described as the closest known relative of SARS-CoV-2. Based on limited information about their sequences, the other eight viruses are very similar to RaTG13 and may hold evolutionary clues. A section of the database was password-protected and not accessible. This may well have been to protect the materials so that scientists from WIV could be first in writing scientific papers about the viruses and sequences. But except for that private section, the database was accessible until Sept. 12, 2019, when it became unreachable from outside the institute, according to DRASTIC, which has studied the database usage records. Why then? Dr. Shi has said it was taken offline for security reasons. "We have nothing to hide," she told the BBC. In his final days in office, then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who had been harshly critical of China, issued a fact sheet and statement claiming: "The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both covid-19 and common seasonal illnesses." If the U.S. government possesses information to corroborate that statement, it should release it, including declassifying any intelligence. A second portal of virus databases in China, created by the National Virus Resource Center, affiliated with the WIV, has also gone offline, with the result that all the key virus databases managed by the WIV are now offline. On Feb. 3, the WHO team investigating the origins of the virus visited the WIV. We do not know what was said. But the goal must be to open the closed doors at the institute. If the WIV had no role in sparking the outbreak, it should be relatively straightforward for Dr. Shi to safely open up the databases to scientists so they can properly understand the evolutionary origins of SARS-CoV-2. The institute should provide all records regarding bat samples, viruses and sequences, with verified information provenance, and eventually, it should be disclosed to all. The origin of the pandemic is of interest to every person on the globe. We do not know where the pandemic began. But a major step toward finding the answer is to examine all the relevant databases and laboratory records, including those at the Wuhan Institute of Virology and elsewhere, and the clues they may hold.

The Arrest And Trial Of An Iranian Terrorist Posing As A Diplomat (Eurasia review, 2/8)

On July 1, 2018, an Iranian diplomat and expert in explosives Assadollah Assadi was arrested while committing an act of terrorism. This type of arrest had never occurred in Europe prior to 2018, although there was evidence that Iran was using its embassies and diplomats as cover for its terrorist activities against Iranian dissidents throughout Europe. This attack, had it not been thwarted, could have been one of the largest terrorist attacks in Europe because over 100,000 people and political leaders from around the globe were gathered for the event. The decision to move forward with this attack was green-lighted by the highest levels of the Iranian regime, including the Supreme Leader Khamenei, President Rouhani, and several ministers. The back story behind this plot started with the nationwide protests in Iran during December 2017. The protests were held in over 142 cities throughout Iran. In January 2018, the Supreme Leader blamed the protests on the PMOI/MEK, a long-standing Iranian opposition group. Later that month, President Rouhani called his French counterpart to complain about the MEK and urge the French government to stop hosting the group. The MEK is the cornerstone group of the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), which is a coalition of opposition groups fighting for a pro-democratic Iran and the end of the oppressive rule of the regime. The regime sees the MEK as its enemy and the only alternative to the current rulership under the mullahs. After the protests, the regime intensified their efforts to eliminate the MEK, which is seen as a viable threat to their continued rulership. Key members of the Iranian intelligence and Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) spoke of how the MEK will be targeted in a place where they do not expect. From 2017, the sanctioned bombing of the Iranian opposition was planned. Iranian embassies throughout Europe were used to cover up the movements of Iranian spies, including Assadi. He was documented as having made cash payments to Iranians throughout Europe, building an extensive network of spies and informants. Two of Assadi's accomplices, the Iranian-Belgian couple Nassimeh Naami and Amir Saadouni, had posed as supporters of the PMOI/MEK for years. They were tasked with planting and detonating the bomb at the rally's venue. The two were arrested in Belgium with the bomb in their possession. A fourth operative, Mehrdad Arefani, worked with Assadi for years and was positioned within the rally to provide information. Assadi had years of experience in planning and executing attacks against the MEK in Iraq before being assigned to the Iranian embassy in Vienna, where he gathered intelligence and built his network of spies and informants regarding the movements of the MEK and the NCRI's leadership and members. On June 20, Assadi was summoned to Iran and on June 22, he personally transported the bomb in his luggage onto European soil using his diplomatic immunity to avoid being searched. Assadi and his accomplices had been in contact for years, even being trained in Iran as necessary. The group was under police surveillance when the bomb drop was made from Assadi to his agents. These two agents were arrested with the bomb before reaching the gathering. Assadi was arrested in Germany on his return trip to Vienna. Their fourth accomplice was arrested in France at the Villepinte Hall, where the event was held. Mohammad Javad Zarif, the Foreign Minister of the Iranian regime, attempted to frame the thwarted attack as a false flag, essentially created by their enemies, the MEK, against their own members to be a distraction from President Hassan Rouhani's European visit. Then he called Assadi a rogue agent, who was not taking orders from Tehran. However, in his remarks to the Iranian parliament in November 2018, he noted that nothing could be done without being reported in and that Iran did not have a system of acting in an arbitrary fashion. During the investigation by the Belgium authorities, it became clear that this was not a one-man job by Assadi but represented authorization from the regime itself. They pointed to the fact that Assadi worked for the Iranian MOIS (Ministry of Intelligence and Security) and as a diplomat. Both of his bosses report directly to the Supreme Leader. MOIS has been designated a terrorist organization in some countries. "Terrorism is their number one export," said Maryam Rajavi, president-elect of the NCRI. She also noted that they hide behind Islam, using religion to justify their terrorist actions. Rajavi noted that they took a great risk in using their diplomat so openly in executing this attack. The regime also fears the uprisings of the Iranian people. Their distraction tactics are no longer working and the regime fears that if the MEK and the opposition continue to grow their influence with the Iranian people, it will mean the end of the regime itself. She called for MOIS to be designated a terrorist organization by the EU and its agents to be prosecuted for their actions. Rajavi also called for Iranian embassies, religious, and cultural centers to be shut down to ensure the safety of Iranians as well as Europeans throughout Europe. Appeasement and negotiation efforts have not stopped these types of attacks by the Iranian regime. Instead, the regime is emboldened by little to no consequences for its actions from the international community. The arrest, trial and the given verdicts with 20 years of imprisonment for Assadi and 15 to 18 years for his agents marks a sharp turn for the Iranian regime, whose operatives are being held accountable by the European governments for the first time. The question is whether Europe will abandon the appeasement tactics, thus removing the sense of immunity the regime operates under and prosecute the regime's agents for their terrorist actions.

NUCLEAR & IAEA

Experts Assess Mali's Cancer Control Capacities (IAEA, 2/8)

Health authorities in Mali have been working to address the country's growing cancer burden, but despite the strong commitment of the government to fighting the various forms of this non-communicable disease, considerable difficulties remain for cancer patients in accessing diagnosis and treatment. Experts who, at the request of the government, recently assessed Mali's cancer control capacities as part of an "imPACT Review" proposed workable solutions to strengthen the country's ability to provide cancer services to those in need.

German, Canadian reactors set new world records (WNN, 2/8)

The single-unit Grohnde nuclear power plant in Germany has produced more than 400 terawatt hours of electricity since it started up in 1984 - the only reactor to have achieved this milestone. Meanwhile, unit 1 of Canada's Darlington nuclear power plant has set a new world record with 1106 consecutive days of continuous operation.

IRAN

Khamenei Says Iran To Return To JCPOA Commitments If All US Sanctions Lifted

(Eurasia review, 2/8)

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said Iran will resume honoring the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in full only after the US has removed all sanctions on Tehran in a practical and verifiable manner. Addressing a group of Iran's Air Force commanders on Sunday, Ayatollah Khamenei made it clear for the US and the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear deal that Iran's return to its JCPOA commitments will depend on the full and practical removal of the American sanctions. Afterwards, Iran will verify whether the sanctions have been terminated correctly or not, and then it will return to the JCPOA commitments, Ayatollah Khamenei stressed. This is the definite policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran that is agreed upon by all authorities, the Leader noted, emphasizing that Tehran will not back off from this policy. Ayatollah Khamenei argued that the US and the EU3, who violated all of their JCPOA commitments, have no right to set conditions for Iran. The party that has a right to set conditions is Iran, the Leader said, adding that the Islamic Republic honored all of its undertakings under the nuclear deal.

DPRK

N.K. paper calls for military role in advancing economy on army founding anniversary

(Yonhap, 2/8)

SEOUL, Feb. 8 (Yonhap) -- North Korea's official paper said Monday the country's military should play a leading role in major construction and other economic development projects as the country marked the 73rd anniversary of the army's founding. At the eighth congress of the ruling Workers' Party in January, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un unveiled its new five-year economic development plan focusing on self-reliance amid multiple challenges, including efforts to ward off the coronavirus and crippling sanctions. Kim called for a "do-or-die struggle" to fulfill the new five-year plan, stressing the importance of regional development.

Biden Needs a New Goal for North Korea. A high-profile defector once again reiterates what should be obvious: North Korea will not denuclearize. Time for a new goal. (The diplomat, 2/6)

Former North Korean diplomat Ryu Hyun-woo gave his first interview on January 31 since defecting to South Korea more than a year ago, and he spoke what should be obvious: North Korea will not denuclearize – at least, not any time soon. “North Korea’s nuclear power is directly linked to the stability of the regime,” Ryu told CNN. “I can’t imagine they abolish this. This is a message U.S. President Joe Biden needs to hear. After some promising sallies into diplomacy, the Trump administration squandered its chance with North Korea by demanding Pyongyang commit to full denuclearization before serious talks could even begin. Biden cannot improve on that dismal record if he begins with the same mistake. He must accept that denuclearization is not a realistic goal for U.S.-North Korea relations for the foreseeable future and negotiate instead for more achievable ends.

COVID-19

More than 462,000 people have died from coronavirus in the U.S. (The Washington, 2/8)

The disease caused by the novel coronavirus has killed at least 462,000 people in the United States since February 2020 and has enveloped nearly every part of the country. The seven-day average death toll routinely topped 3,000 in January, higher than the previous peak in April, despite improvements in treatment that make survival more likely. Six times in January, covid-19 killed more than 4,000 people in one day. But the number of hospitalizations and new cases began to fall in January, and the pace of vaccinations accelerated to more than a million shots a day just as new, more transmissible variants of the virus began to appear in parts of the country.

SPACE

Space race: UAE, US and Chinese missions prepare to explore Mars (Al Jazeera, 2/8)

The Red Planet is about to get a little crowded. Three separate missions to Mars launched by the United States, China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will all reach their destination this month after taking flight within just 11 days of each other in 2020. The uncrewed missions promise to yield new insights for Earth-bound scientists intent on unravelling the mysteries of the solar system and scanning Mars for signs of extraterrestrial life, as well as enhancing our collective understanding of the cosmos.

Lockheed Martin selects ABL rocket for Shetland launches (BBC News, 2/8)


Aerospace giant Lockheed Martin has selected the rocket it will use to kick-start space launches from the island of Unst in Shetland. The vehicle, called the RS1, will be provided by ABL Space Systems of El Segundo, California. If everything comes together, an inaugural flight could occur next year. Lockheed is looking to stimulate the launch business in the UK to take advantage of a rapidly expanding market for small satellites. These spacecraft, many no bigger than a shoebox, are all seeking more flexible and affordable ways of getting into orbit, and Lockheed believes it's putting together an attractive package.

Isotropic Systems raises \$42 million (Space News, 2/8)

WASHINGTON — Isotropic Systems raised \$42 million to continue development of broadband terminals for use by a wide range of satellite systems in a round led by satellite operator SES. Isotropic announced Feb. 8 the new round, including equity investment as well as grant funding from the British government. Besides SES, other investors include Orbital Ventures as well as existing investors Boeing HorizonX Global Ventures, Space Angels and Firmament Ventures.

The company has now raised about \$70 million to date. The company will use the funding to continue development of flat-panel antenna systems capable of working with multiple satellite systems, with the goal of having its first commercial system ready next year. The company is opening a new technology and testing facility near its headquarters in Reading, England, and plans to grow its workforce from 70 to 110 people by the end of the year.

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6/2/2023

From:	(b)(6)@state.gov
To:	EAP-PG-Taskings-DL <EAP-PG-Taskings-DL@state.gov>
Subject:	Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID- 19's Origin
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 01:36:45 +0000

From: U.S. Department of State <usstatebpa@public.govdelivery.com>
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:38 PM
To: EAP-Press <EAP-Press@state.gov>
Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

You are subscribed to Press Releases for U.S. Department of State. This information has recently been updated, and is now available.

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

01/15/2021 07:23 PM EST

Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

- 1. Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- 2. WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
- 3. Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO’s final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

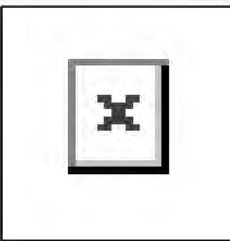
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FACT SHEET: ACTIVITY AT THE WUHAN INSTITUTE OF VIROLOGY

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting “gain-of-function” research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including “RaTG13,” which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV’s work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China’s past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China’s military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today’s revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19’s origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus’s origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

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The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting “gain-of-function” research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including “RaTG13,” which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV’s work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China’s past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China’s military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today’s revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19’s origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus’s origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

###

(b)(5)

China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The fact sheet accompanying this release provides additional detail from these declassified materials. These issues must be thoroughly investigated in order for the WHO visit to be considered credible. We call on the WHO to take this investigation seriously, and rigorously look into this new information. By now, they should know better than to give CCP authorities the benefit of the doubt.

END STATEMENT

Fact sheet

Disclaimer: The U.S. Intelligence Community does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. The Intelligence Community has not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a consistent pattern with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Chinese scientists have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of this pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died since this virus escaped Wuhan. Their families, and all of humanity, deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic – and how to prevent the next one.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and worldwide. Today's disclosures highlight three elements that Beijing has kept secret, and that may help explain COVID-19's origin.

First, illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- We have ~~evidence~~ reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV got sick last autumn, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. These illnesses ~~is~~ raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people and

Commented [ECK3]: Not sure this is necessary.

killed one. Accidents happen, especially when safety standards are poor. But cover-ups make things far worse.

- No independent journalist, investigator, or global health authority has been able to interview researchers at the WIV, particularly those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

Commented [ECK4]: Didn't our consulate document lax security and safety protocols at WIV?

Commented [YM5]: I don't think this is new information. It's a general statement rather than informational.

Commented [FD6R6]: Correct, it's not newly disclosed in this statement by S. But it is directly relevant context that most people around the world do not know. Namely that there have been deadly lab leaks in China before, including of SARS a few years ago. So the idea of a deadly accidental lab leak is hardly far-fetched.

Second, suspicious research at the WIV:

- In the months before the outbreak, WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronaviruses identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since experimented with animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of experiments with viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators should have unfettered access to the complete records of the WIV's work on bat and pangolin coronaviruses in the months before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with the RaTG13 coronavirus prior to the outbreak.

Commented [FD7]: These are important terms, even if wonky, for drawing attention to the whole research field – and to longstanding scientific concerns about its safety.

Third, Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, years of evidence indicates that the WIV has collaborated on secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention. Such U.S. concerns grow far graver in light of COVID-19 and its outbreak in Wuhan.
- A credible investigation would examine the secret military projects at the WIV and interview responsible officials, including from military elements such as the Academy of Military Medical Sciences. A priority for the United States would be to determine

Commented [ECK8]: Where? OPCW?

whether any U.S. government research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

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~~Today's disclosures just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators may finally get some access after a more than a year of delays and obfuscation – the origin remains uncertain. But these disclosures demand thorough investigation.~~

Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

~~The world cannot afford another pandemic that could kill even more people. If the Chinese Communist system had a modicum of transparency, it is possible none of this would have happened. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to the epicenter within days of an outbreak. China refused to do so, and instead punished brave doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. This repression has put our whole species in peril. The world should be spared such endangerment in the future, when the next novel virus emerges in China, as may only be a matter of time.~~

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From: "Gibbs, Jeffrey J" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Billingslea, Marshall S (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: 1-NPT 2-Covid Origin
Date: Fri, 15 Jan 2021 23:10:07 +0000

(b)(6) may be slow-rolling the effort. Suggest that you leave him a message that absence any discussion, S will sign the version w/o L edits.

Also, re our Covid origin discussion, two short public letters from two members of our AVC panel that are worthy of review.

My personal e-mail is (b)(6) and phone (tied into the cell) is (b)(6) It was great working for you.

Jeff Gibbs
Senior Advisor
AVC Bureau
Department of State
(b)(6)

~~SBU - DELIBERATIVE PROCESS~~

(b)(6)

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<https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-world-needs-a-real-investigation-into-the-origins-of-covid-19-11610728316>

ESSAY

The World Needs a Real Investigation Into the Origins of Covid-19

A team of WHO researchers has arrived in China but won't investigate the possibility that the coronavirus originated in a lab.




Dr. Shi Zhingli, whose lab at the Wuhan Institute of Virology has been a suspected source of the coronavirus, in 2017.

PHOTO: JOHANNES EISELE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By Alina Chan and Matt Ridley

Jan. 15, 2021 11:31 am ET

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In the first week of January, scientists representing the World Health Organization (WHO) were due to arrive in China to trace the origins of Covid-19. The team membership and terms of reference were preapproved by the Chinese government, yet at the last

minute Beijing denied entry to the investigators. This prompted WHO to take the rare step of criticizing China, which relented and allowed the group to enter the country this week.

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The brief standoff highlights a more serious problem: the inadequacy of WHO's current investigative framework for exploring all plausible origins of Covid-19. The world needs an inquiry that considers not just natural origins but the possibility that SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, escaped from a laboratory. The WHO team, however, plans to build on reports by Chinese scientists rather than mount an independent investigation. Given that Chinese authorities have been slow to release information, penalized scientists and doctors who shared clinical and genomic details of the novel coronavirus, and have since demonstrated a keen interest in controlling the narrative of how the virus emerged, this is not a promising foundation for WHO's investigation.

Critics are concerned that the WHO team doesn't have the expertise for an investigation that would examine possible lab origins of the coronavirus.

The WHO team includes experts who traced the origins of Ebola and MERS outbreaks, but critics are concerned that it doesn't have the expertise for an investigation that would examine possible lab origins. Dr. David Relman of Stanford University, who raised the possibility early on that the virus might have leaked from a lab, told us: "Based on the scant information that has been shared publicly about the WHO investigation, it doesn't appear that WHO has adequately represented the range of views and perspectives of key stakeholders or incorporated all needed forms of expertise." Responding to whether the WHO team will investigate lab origins, Dr. Peter Ben Embarek, the leader of the team, told us, "If our studies point to a possible lab accident, then other international mechanisms would be involved to document such an event. It would take time and additional types of expertise."



FILE # 2022-00062 A-00000565244

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Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director-general of the World Health Organization, at a press conference in March 2020.

PHOTO: SALVATORE DI NOLFI/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Could the virus have escaped from a laboratory? Then-deputy U.S. national security adviser Matthew Pottinger told international leaders late last year that the latest intelligence points to SARS-CoV-2 having originated from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV). This intelligence has not been made public, and China has denied that the virus came from a lab. Dr. Shi Zhengli, whose lab at WIV has been a suspected source of the virus, told Scientific American last March that “none of the [early SARS-CoV-2] sequences matched those of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves.”



WSJ NEWSLETTER

Notes on the News

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The hypothesis that SARS-CoV-2 originated in a lab remains controversial. Last March, in the journal *Nature Medicine*, Dr. Kristian Andersen of the Scripps Research Institute and colleagues asserted that “SARS-CoV-2 is not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” They said there was no evidence to support lab-based origins and that the available data was consistent with natural evolution. Dr. David Robertson of the

University of Glasgow told us that “SARS-CoV-2 is just too different to the [viruses] we were aware of prior to its emergence.”

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The ability to build coronavirus genomes without leaving traces of manipulation has existed for years.

In November, however, in the journal PNAS, Dr. Relman wrote that Dr. Andersen’s argument didn’t acknowledge that unpublished viruses closely related to SARS-CoV-2 could have been studied in a laboratory. For more than a decade, Dr. Shi has been publishing experiments on “chimera” coronaviruses, built by inserting parts of newly found viruses into better known viruses to understand how novel viruses could infect human cells. These were used to assess the risk that such viruses could spill over into humans.

The ability to build coronavirus genomes without leaving traces of manipulation has existed for years. Dr. Ralph Baric of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a world-leading coronavirus expert and collaborator of Dr. Shi, told an Italian television documentary last June, “In sequence databases there were sequences for a large number of bat coronaviruses that were SARS-like, reported out of China.” He added that “whether the virus existed beforehand, it would only be within the records of the Institute of Virology in Wuhan.”

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For some scientists, the location of the first detected outbreak is enough to raise suspicions. In the words of Dr. Richard Ebright of Rutgers University, “the outbreak occurred on the doorstep of laboratories that conduct the world’s largest research project on horseshoe-bat viruses, that have the world’s largest collection of horseshoe-bat viruses, and that possessed and worked with the world’s closest sequenced relative of the outbreak virus. The laboratories actively searched for new horseshoe-bat viruses in horseshoe-bat colonies in caves in remote rural areas in Yunnan province, brought those

new horseshoe-bat viruses to Wuhan, and then mass-produced and studied those new horseshoe-bat viruses, year-round, inside Wuhan.”

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Such concerns have gained prominence over the past year and were recently explored in a [much-discussed article](#) in New York magazine, “The Lab-Leak Hypothesis” by Nicholson Baker.



In January 2020, a police officer stands guard outside the seafood market in Wuhan, China, where the coronavirus was first detected.

PHOTO: HECTOR RETAMAL/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

SARS viruses are known to have escaped previously from laboratories in Singapore, Taiwan and twice in Beijing. Dr. Maciej Boni of Pennsylvania State University told us that if the virus escaped from the Wuhan lab (though he thinks this is unlikely), he would expect that “some of the early December cases should be traceable to WIV employees, family members of WIV employees or frequent social contacts of WIV employees. If this evidence is presented, it will be the first ‘positive evidence’ that SARS-CoV-2 may have a lab origin.”

What would it take to properly investigate possible lab origins? Dr. Relman said that “it will be critical to obtain independently verified, time-stamped records of sample inventories, data, lab notebooks and records, internal and external communications, personnel health records and serum samples, and access to personnel so that they can be interviewed in private without fear of repercussions.” Yet the path to such a credible investigation seems nearly impossible in the current geopolitical climate.

Several scientists also told us they were troubled by the presence on the WHO team of Dr. Peter Daszak of the New York-based EcoHealth Alliance. Dr. Daszak has been a longtime collaborator of Dr. Shi since they worked together to trace SARS viruses to bats after the 2003 epidemic. His organization has administered more than \$100 million in U.S. federal grants to fund overseas fieldwork and laboratory experiments, including those performed

Last February, Dr. Peter Daszak organized a statement in The Lancet, a prominent medical journal, to ‘condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 doesn’t have a natural origin.’

Last February, Dr. Daszak organized a statement in The Lancet, a prominent medical journal, to “condemn conspiracy theories suggesting that Covid-19 doesn’t have a natural origin.” The statement was drafted when little was yet known about the virus. Dr. Daszak declined to comment for this piece, but a spokesman for Dr. Daszak told us: “The Lancet letter was written during a time in which Chinese scientists were receiving death threats and the letter was intended as a showing of support for them as they were caught between important work trying to stop an outbreak and the crush of online harassment.” Yet, in June, Dr. Daszak wrote an opinion piece for the Guardian headlined, “Ignore the conspiracy theories: scientists know Covid-19 wasn’t created in a lab.”

The spokesman for Dr. Daszak told us that any questions about his potential conflict of interest should be referred to WHO. Dr. Ben Embarek said that he sees no problem in having Dr. Daszak on his investigative team: “Of course the WHO team will have discussion with the scientists and researchers in Wuhan. And therefore it is good to have on the team someone who knows the area well.”

Miles Pomper, a co-author of an expert guide to investigating outbreak origins published in October by the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, said that “The independence of the WHO investigation may be seriously compromised by the process used to choose investigators.... In particular, the choice of Dr. Daszak, who has a personal stake in ensuring current Chinese practices continue and who is a longtime collaborator of a scientist at the center of the investigation, is likely to taint its results.”

Another co-author of the guide, Dr. Filippa Lentzos, said, “We also need to take a hard look in the mirror. It is our own virologists, funders and publishers who are driving and endorsing the practice of actively hunting for viruses and the high-risk research of deliberately making viruses more dangerous to humans. We need to be more open about the heavily vested interests of some of the scientists given prominent platforms to make claims about the pandemic’s origins.”

As a scientist and a science writer, we believe that both natural and lab-based scenarios of Covid-19's origins must be rigorously investigated, not only to avert future pandemics but for the sake of science's reputation. The formal investigation launched by WHO is only taking steps to look into natural origins. That needs to change.

—Dr. Chan is a researcher at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Mr. Ridley is a member of the House of Lords and the author, most recently, of “How Innovation Works: And Why It Flourishes in Freedom.”

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To stop the next pandemic, we need to unravel the origins of COVID-19

David A. Relman^{a,b,c,d,1}

We find ourselves ten months into one of the most catastrophic global health events of our lifetime and, disturbingly, we still do not know how it began. What's even more troubling is that despite the critical importance of this question, efforts to investigate the origins of the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus and of the associated disease, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), have become mired in politics, poorly supported assumptions and assertions, and incomplete information.

SARS-CoV-2 is a betacoronavirus whose apparent closest relatives, RaTG13 and RmYN02, are reported

to have been collected from bats in 2013 and 2019, respectively, in Yunnan Province, China (1). COVID-19 was first reported in December 2019 more than 1,000 miles away in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Beyond these facts, the "origin story" is missing many key details, including a plausible and suitably detailed recent evolutionary history of the virus, the identity and provenance of its most recent ancestors, and surprisingly, the place, time, and mechanism of transmission of the first human infection. Even though a definitive answer may not be forthcoming, and even though an objective analysis requires addressing



To avoid or mitigate the dire consequences of this and future pandemics (here, people in PPE bury a victim in Delhi, India in June), unraveling the origins of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 will be essential—even though a definitive answer may be elusive, and an objective analysis means broaching some uncomfortable possibilities. Image credit: Shutterstock/PradeepGaur.

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The author declares no competing interest.

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some uncomfortable possibilities. It is possible that we will pursue this question. Preventing the next pandemic depends on understanding the origins of this one.

There are several potential origin scenarios. First, SARS-CoV-2 may have evolved in bats, which are known reservoirs of immense coronavirus diversity (2), and then spread directly, or indirectly via an intermediate host, to humans through natural mechanisms. The degree of anticipated but undiscovered natural diversity clearly lends support to this scenario, as well as support to other scenarios. Second, SARS-CoV-2 or a recent ancestor virus may have been collected by humans from a bat or other animal and then brought to a laboratory where it was stored knowingly or unknowingly, propagated and perhaps manipulated genetically to understand its biological properties, and then released accidentally.

Some have argued that a deliberate engineering scenario is unlikely because one would not have had the insight *a priori* to design the current pandemic virus (3). This argument fails to acknowledge the possibility that two or more as yet undisclosed ancestors (i.e., more proximal ancestors than RaTG13 and RmYN02) had already been discovered and were being studied in a laboratory—for example, one with the SARS-CoV-2 backbone and spike protein receptor-binding domain, and the other with the SARS-CoV-2 polybasic furin cleavage site. It would have been a logical next step to wonder about the properties of a recombinant virus and then create it in the laboratory. Alternatively, the complete SARS-CoV-2 sequence could have been recovered from a bat sample and viable virus resurrected from a synthetic genome to study it, before that virus accidentally escaped from the laboratory. The third scenario, seemingly much less likely, involves laboratory manipulation or release, with the clear intention of causing harm.

Even though strong opinions abound, none of these scenarios can be confidently ruled in or ruled out with currently available facts. Just because there are no public reports of more immediate, proximal ancestors in natural hosts, doesn't mean that these ancestors don't exist in natural hosts or that COVID-19 didn't begin as a spillover event. Nor does it mean that they have not been recovered and studied, or deliberately recombined in a laboratory.

Why do these distinctions matter? If we find more concrete evidence of a "spill-over" event with SARS-CoV-2 passing directly from bat to human, then efforts to understand and manage the bat-human interface need to be significantly strengthened. But if SARS-CoV-2 escaped from a lab to cause the pandemic, it will become critical to understand the chain of events and prevent this from happening again. Rather than resorting to hunches or finger-pointing, each scenario must be systematically and objectively analyzed using the best available science-based approaches. There is a path to greater clarity. It requires scientific rigor, forensic approaches, deliberate methods, transparency, and cooperation.

In an effort to reveal the origins of the pandemic, researchers so far have focused on the SARS-CoV-2

sequence. However, the site of the pandemic virus tells us only so much. First, the closest known relatives, RaTG13 and RmYN02, are not that close (4). Second, there is probably more than one recent ancestral lineage that contributes to SARS-CoV-2 because its genome shows evidence of recombination between different parental viruses. In nature, recombination is common among coronaviruses. But it's also common in some research laboratories where recombinant engineering is used to study those viruses. The bottom line is simple: We need to identify the immediate parent(s) of SARS-CoV-2, and they're missing.

To find its parents and understand its recent history, we need 1) additional genome sequences of coronaviruses from relevant bats and other suspect

A deliberative process for investigating the origins of this pandemic must be representative of all relevant disciplines, expertise, and stakeholders; must achieve political neutrality, scientific balance, and access to all relevant information and samples; and must operate with transparency and independent oversight. Without these features, it will not be credible, trustworthy, or effective.

hosts—some of these likely exist already in laboratories, given the efforts so far undertaken to survey bats in particular (2, 5); 2) measurements of SARS-CoV-2 evolution under a variety of defined conditions so that differences between viral genomes can be understood better as differences in time on an evolutionary clock; and 3) data from antibody surveys of humans at high risk of coronavirus exposure and from past cases of similar disease, so that previously unrecognized encounters can be revealed. In addition, we need to address whether there is information about host or environmental samples that contain recent ancestors of SARS-CoV-2, data perhaps not yet publicly available. More generally, are there relevant scientific data, including from coronavirus engineering work in laboratories, that have not been shared widely? Who knew what about relevant viruses and cases of disease before December 2019, and when? This information will go a long way toward clarifying the origins of this pandemic, even if certainty continues to elude us.

The means are just as important as the goals. An investigative process should be transparent, collaborative, international, and, to the extent possible, devoid of political interest. Recent, productive scientific collaborations between the United States and China, for example, provide hope that such a process can be achieved. But the kind of effort required will need to expand far beyond what's taken place so far, and nations other than the United States and China will need to be involved. Conflicts of interest by researchers, administrators, and policymakers on all sides must be revealed and addressed, and all relevant global

First published by the World Health Organization and *The Lancet* COVID-19 Commission (6) have hinted that they have taken some first steps, but their efforts so far have been cloaked in secrecy (7, 8). A deliberative process for investigating the origins of this pandemic must be representative of all relevant disciplines, expertise, and stakeholders; must achieve political neutrality, scientific balance, and access to all relevant information and samples; and must operate with transparency and independent oversight. Without these features, it will not be credible, trustworthy, or effective.

"UNCLASSIFIED" understanding of the origins of COVID-19 clearly serves the interests of every person in every country on this planet. It will limit further re-criminations and diminish the likelihood of conflict; it will lead to more effective responses to this pandemic, as well as efforts to anticipate and prevent the next one. It will also advance our discussions about risky science. And it will do something else: Delineating COVID-19's origin story will help elucidate the nature of our very precarious coexistence within the biosphere.

-
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Subject: Re: For Review: Draft Article 5 re China BWC compliance—serial passage as another technique that might have been applied
Date: Sun, 22 Nov 2020 18:11:41 +0000

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7435492/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serial_passage

Serial passage - Wikipedia

Serial passage refers to the process of growing bacteria or a virus in iterations. For instance, a virus may be grown in one environment, and then part of that virus can be removed and put into a new environment.

en.wikipedia.org

Bioessays. 2020 Aug 12 : 2000091.


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PMCID: PMC7435492

PMID: [32786014](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32786014/)

Might SARS-CoV-2 Have Arisen via Serial Passage through an Animal Host or Cell Culture?

A potential explanation for much of the novel coronavirus' distinctive genome

Karl Sirotkin ¹ and Dan Sirotkin¹

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1. Introduction

To date, the origins of SARS-CoV-2 remain in doubt, and its behavior enigmatic: It has been reported that “the virus acts like no microbe humanity has ever seen.”^[1] Although based on sequence analysis many prominent virologists and other eminent scientists have concluded that the novel coronavirus causing the current pandemic was not designed or manipulated in a laboratory and was the result of a natural zoonotic jump,^[2] this assertion fails to fully account for all possible origins of two unique genomic characteristics found in SARS-CoV-2, and ignores the long history of serial passage as a method to manipulate viral genomes. The long-standing practice of serial passage is a form of gain-of-function research that forces zoonosis between species, and requires the same molecular adaptations necessary for a natural zoonotic jump to occur within a laboratory, leaving the same genetic signatures behind as a natural jump but occurring in a much shorter period of time.

The genetic signatures in question includes two distinctive features possessed by SARS-CoV-2's spike-protein: the unique sequence in the receptor binding domain (RBD), a region known to be critical for SARS-CoV-2's utilization of human angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE2), which is the cell surface receptor used by both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 for fusion with target cells and subsequent cell entry. The second feature is the presence of a polybasic furin cleavage site, which is also known as a multibasic cleavage site (MBS)—a four amino acid insertion with limited sequence flexibility—within the coronavirus's novel spike-protein, that is not found in SARS-CoV or other lineage B coronaviruses. This furin cleavage site, which is poly or multibasic by definition since its composed of multiple basic amino acids, is an important virulence feature observed to have been acquired by fusion proteins of avian influenza viruses and Newcastle Disease Virus either grown under experimental conditions or isolated from commercial animal farms—settings that mimic the conditions of serial laboratory passage. In fact, no influenza virus with a furin cleavage site has ever been found in nature,^[3] and it is a feature that has been thoroughly investigated in the literature since it appears to allow the influenza viruses that carry it to establish a systemic multiorgan infection using different cell types including nerve cells,^[3] is correlated with high pathogenicity, and also plays a key role in overcoming the species barrier.^[4] More generally, despite the fact that not all serially passed viruses have demonstrated an increase in pathogenicity, the fact remains that every highly pathogenic avian influenza virus, defined by having a furin cleavage site, has either been found on commercial poultry farms that create the pseudo-natural conditions necessary for serial passage, or created in laboratories with gain-of-function serial passage experiments.^[3]

Although they only emerge under artificial conditions in influenza viruses, these furin cleavage sites are found within several branches of the coronavirus family tree. However SARS-CoV-2 is the only lineage B coronavirus found with one, and the only other coronaviruses known to have them are only at most 60% identical to this novel coronavirus.^[5] An intriguing clinical correlate is that furin cleavage sites within influenza viruses are associated with lymphopenia in infected mice, and with neurological conditions following replication in the brains of ferrets,^[6] both of which are clinical manifestations observed in hospitalized patients infected by SARS-CoV-2 and suffering from COVID-19.^[1] This indicates that furin cleavage sites may be an example of the convergent evolution that dominates virus–host interactions, since viral proteins evolve convergently and often accumulate many of the same linear motifs that mediate many functionally diverse biophysical interactions in order to manipulate complex host

processes.^[7]It is possible that this novel coronavirus gained its furin cleavage site through recombination in an intermediate host species, however there are also two laboratory processes that may have imbued SARS-CoV-2 with its furin cleavage site which will be discussed below.

Without incorporating the historical and biological implications of serial viral passage either through lab animals in vivo or through cell cultures in vitro, it is impossible to comprehensively evaluate whether SARS-CoV-2 is the result of a laboratory leak or a natural zoonotic jump. Moreover, despite the published consensus being that SARS-CoV-2 arose naturally, because these publications universally ignore the scenario of the widely used practice of laboratory serial passage, this latter scenario deserves a thorough investigation. Especially since serial passage through a live animal host simply forces the same molecular processes that occur in nature to happen during a zoonotic jump, and in vitro passage through cell culture mimics many elements of this process—and neither necessarily leaves any distinguishing genetic traces.

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2. The History of Viral Serial Passage

The dual-use gain-of-function research tool of serial passage was first applied to a strain of H1N1 Swine Flu, a variant of the pandemic influenza virus that was genetically modified before it either leaked out of a Soviet lab or was introduced as part of an attenuated vaccine trial in 1977. Although no one has ever taken responsibility for the introduction of this virus, it would become the first known example of a virus created by serial passage leaving a lab, which was later determined due to its inexplicable genetic distance from any known sister strain.^[8] This extra distance would be expected since serial passages artificially accelerates genetic divergence between taxa, resulting in the accumulation of genetic distance at a much faster rate than it occurs in a natural setting.

Then in 1979, just 2 years after the introduction of this modified H1N1 Swine Flu, a different Soviet lab leaked weaponized anthrax out through an improperly maintained exhaust filter, and Soviet authorities convincingly blamed the deaths on contaminated local meat. This cover up withstood a formal inquiry conducted in 1986, and was not revealed to be a fabrication until 1992, when an analysis of dispersion patterns revealed that the victims were not those working with the supposedly contaminated meat, but instead all lived downwind from the Sverdlovsk weapons lab and its improperly maintained exhaust vent. Therefore, there is a history of denying laboratory leaks on the commercial meat industry that dates back about 40 years, an effective excuse that provided the Soviets with an alibi that held up for nearly 2 decades.

The Soviet strain of serially passaged H1N1 Swine Flu was likely being developed as part of a vaccine program, one of the humane goals of gain-of-function research that exist alongside riskier and more troublesome ones like developing bioweapons. Its emergence ignited the debate between the risks and rewards of dual-use gain-of-function research—causing it to become the poster virus for the dangers this protocol posed.^[8]

This debate would largely fade in the decades that followed, until two separate teams used genetic manipulation followed by serial passage between ferrets to create mammal-transmissible H5N1 Bird Flu strains of influenza virus in 2011 that had the gain-of-function of being transmissible by aerosol. The first team was led by Dr. Ron Fouchier and conducted at the

Erasmus Medical Center in the Netherlands, and demonstrated that as few as five mutations prior to serial passage were sufficient to create a modified strain of the H5N1 Bird Flu that could be transmitted by aerosol while remaining highly lethal.^[9] The creation of this highly virulent strain that was said by a reporter to be able to “make the deadly 1918 pandemic look like a pesky cold,”^[10] and was contentious enough to cause the scientists working on them to prepare for a media storm^[11]—a storm that rolled in on the back of a second similar experiment.

Instead of only tweaking the H5N1 Bird Flu in a few places before serial passage, Dr. Yoshihiro Kawaoka of the Universities of Tokyo and Wisconsin used genetic engineering to combine genes from the H1N1 Swine Flu as well as the H5N1 Bird Flu to create a chimeric virus that was then serially passed through ferrets, creating another airborne virus with potentially pandemic properties.^[12] Both experiments created a modified genome that appeared to be the result of natural, albeit accelerated, selection since the process of serial passage forces the mutations selected for in natural zoonotic jumps, and masks the direct genetic engineering done on the viruses. These experiments were viewed by many as being sufficiently dangerous that they should not be published,^[13] however they were both eventually released with certain methodological and sequence details left out.

In the years that followed, gain-of-function serial passage through ferrets was used to increase the virulence of the H7N1 Bird Flu as well as allowing for its aerosol transmission without first introducing any mutations.^[14] Additionally, the H1N1 Bird Flu was also found to become airborne and increase in virulence after in vivo passage through swine.^[15, 16] And although serial passage in the laboratory does not invariably increase viral pathogenicity, highly pathogenic influenza viruses all contain furin cleavage sites,^[16] which only emerge after serial passage in laboratories or pseudo-naturally on commercial animal farms.

The process of sequential passage through animal hosts or cell cultures leaves a genome that appears natural and not purposefully manipulated since it effectively mimics the natural process of zoonosis, and leaves a genome that appears to be the result of natural selection so long as its relationship to related strains of virus is ignored. However, the artificial generations added by forced serial passage creates the artificial appearance of evolutionary distance, which was the characteristic of the H1N1 Swine Flu Soviet leak in the 1970s that lead researchers to conclude it had been constructed in a lab, and is exactly what is found with SARS-CoV-2, which is distant enough from any other virus that it has been placed in its own clade.^[17]

2.1. Serial Passage and Its Molecular Signatures

Although serial passage mimics many of the natural zoonotic processes that occur during a natural zoonotic jump, because serial passage artificially condenses a natural phenomenon into a small temporal window, some subtle differences can be found. In addition to the inexplicable genetic distance from its sister strains, which screams out for an intermediate relative to complete the phylogenetic picture, SARS-CoV-2 has a remarkably strong affinity for spike-protein binding to ACE2—some 10–20 times higher than SARS-CoV's.^[18] That affinity may have emerged after mutational events either in an intermediate natural host or after a zoonotic jump into humans that theoretically could have occurred earlier than the first

documented infection, which would give it time to increase that significantly. So logically, it could also have emerged via selection after serial passage through laboratory cell cultures or laboratory animals as well. And regarding the second distinctive feature found in the novel coronavirus: If other viruses have been observed to acquire furin cleavage sites by passage under experimental laboratory conditions, then such a mechanism is theoretically possible for SARS-CoV-2 as well.^[2]

In the case of influenza viruses like those mentioned above, their gain-of-function furin cleavage sites are thought to be a result of two different molecular processes. The first is either nucleotide insertions or substitutions that are able to be rescued and then eventually selected for due to the high multiplicity of infection found in serial passage protocols.^[19] And the second is the recombination of multiple viral RNAs inside a host cell,^[20] which may also include additional viruses introduced through accidental laboratory co-infections.

Unlike influenza viruses, serial passage through ferrets has not been recorded in the literature for coronaviruses. However, since several branches of coronavirus have furin cleavage sites, a molecular pathway for their emergence must exist and may reemerge during serial passage. Several factors weigh into the probability that coronaviruses can gain furin cleavage sites following serial passage: The frequency of evolutionary motifs meant to deal with virus–host interactions that are often shared between viruses, the observations that when the infectious bronchitis coronavirus (IBV) coronavirus is serially passed through chickens it developed notable mutations along its spike-protein genes,^[21] and the fact that when a lineage A bovine coronavirus was subject to in vitro serial passage through cell lines, a 12-nucleotide insert found within only a small minority of the pooled viruses spike-protein region was strongly selected for and quickly emerged as the dominate strain.^[22] These findings all point to the possibility that SARS-CoV-2 may have gained its furin cleavage site the same way influenza viruses do—through the in vivo serial passage between the live hosts that presents the immune challenges and intense selective pressure necessary for the recombination and mutations that lead to its emergence to occur. And just like influenza viruses are only able to preserve their furin cleavages in artificial environments since the heightened virulence they impart kills their hosts before they can propagate in a natural setting, based on the known taxonomy lineage B coronaviruses do not appear to be able to support furin cleavages in nature.

There is no doubt that the acquisition of the furin cleavage site was one of the key adaptations that enable SARS-CoV-2 to efficiently spread in the human populations compared to other lineage B coronaviruses, and provides a gain-of-function.^[23] In addition to the possibility of obtaining a furin cleavage site through natural recombination in a secondary host or through serial passage either in a laboratory or on a commercial farm, one could have been spliced directly into the novel coronavirus's backbone in a laboratory using classic recombinant DNA technology that has been available for nearly 20 years. This allows for the removal of the restriction site junctions that are the telltale sign of direct genetic manipulation and permits reassembly without introducing nucleotide changes—creating a virus without any evidence of manipulation using the aptly named “No See'm technology.”^[24] So although the entire spike-protein RBD was not assembled from scratch, it is certainly plausible that the 12-nucleotide-long furin cleavage site could have been spliced directly into SARS-CoV-2. Furin cleavages already have been successfully spliced into other coronaviruses, including the

IBV,^[25] and even into SARS-CoV, where it increased cell-to-cell fusion in in vitro experiments that only examined only the spike-protein's function, which would presumably heighten its infectivity in vivo.^[26]

Moreover, when a furin cleavage site was introduced to the IBV coronavirus spike-protein via recombination, just like influenza viruses hosting this feature, it appeared to impart it with increased lethality as well as inflict neurological symptoms that had never previously been reported in studies of the murine IBV coronavirus.^[25] The presence of this cleavage site also increased damage to the respiratory and urinary systems, paralleling SARS-CoV-2 systemic multiorgan symptoms—especially reports that infection with the novel coronavirus not only targets the lungs where it binds to ACE2 receptors, but also the entire cardiovascular system,^[27] the nervous system,^[28] and our kidneys as well.^[29] It might be more than a coincidence that the Vero cells often used in serial passage are derived from kidney epithelial cells extracted from African green monkeys, which have ACE2 receptors very similar to those found in humans and would be shared by the humanized mice that are also used for serial passage research.

2.2. Natural Origin, or Gain-of-Function Lab Escape?

Gain-of-function research on bat-borne coronaviruses has been ongoing for nearly a decade everywhere from the University of North Carolina to the Wuhan's Institute of Virology, which is supported by related facilities such as Wuhan's Center for Disease Control and Prevention as well as Wuhan University. A coronavirus that targets the ACE2 receptor like SARS-CoV-2 was first isolated from a wild bat in 2013 by a team out of Wuhan. This research was funded in part by EcoHealth Alliance,^[30] and set the stage for the manipulation of bat-borne coronavirus genomes that target this receptor and can become airborne. Many more viruses have been collected in Wuhan over the years, and one research expedition captured as many as 400 wild viruses,^[31] which were added to a private repository that has since grown to over 1500 strains of virus,^[32] meaning that the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention has a massive catalogue of largely undisclosed viruses to draw from for experiments. And in subsequent years, EcoHealth Alliance received funding for project proposals outlining gain-of-function research to be done in Wuhan, hoping to use cell cultures and humanized mice as well as “[spike]-protein sequence data, infectious clone technology, in vitro and in vivo infection experiments and analysis of receptor binding”^[33] to manipulate bat coronavirus genomes—all of which are consistent with the wet-work that would be needed to engineer this novel coronavirus in a laboratory. But for whatever reason, the Wuhan Institute of Virology has refused to release the lab notebooks of its researchers, which are ubiquitous in even the simplest laboratories and are expected to be meticulously detailed given the sensitive and delicate work that takes place in BSL-4 research labs intent on documenting their intellectual property, despite the fact that these notebooks would likely be enough to exonerate the lab from having any role in the creation of SARS-CoV-2.^[34]

Although it does not prove a laboratory origin, another gain-of-function experiment demonstrates one possible step along the way to engineering SARS-CoV-2: the synthetic reconstruction of the SARS coronavirus to impart this virus with a high affinity for ACE2. This involved isolating a

progenitor coronavirus from civets and then serially passing it through mammalian ACE2 receptor-expressing cells—serial passage through host cell lines instead of entire hosts, which imparted a strong affinity for ACE2,^[35] and another novel strain of coronavirus that was also presumably airborne. A few years after this study, more gain-of-function research was performed that involved the creation of a chimeric bat-borne coronavirus by directly manipulating the bat coronavirus spike-protein gene,^[36] which created a coronavirus so virulent that it evoked the following dire warning from Simon Wain-Hobson, a virologist with the Pasteur Institute in Paris: “If the [new] virus escaped, nobody could predict the trajectory.”^[37]

Although SARS-CoV-2's efficient solution for ACE2 binding has been accurately described as something that could not be intentionally engineered nucleotide-by-nucleotide,^[2] it could well be selected for after serial passage through ferrets or cell cultures in a lab. The only origin for the SARS-CoV-2 spike-protein RBD that the sequence data excludes is the deliberate manufacturing and introduction of the entire SARS-CoV spike-protein RBD sequence to create SARS-CoV-2. Otherwise, there are no genetic data to distinguish among natural and engineered possibilities at the present time.

2.3. Ferreting Out the Signs of Serial Passage

Curiously, studies examining SARS-CoV-2's infectivity in ferrets found that it spreads readily among them, and also appears airborne in that animal model.^[38] This lends support to the idea that ferrets may have been used for serial passage since viruses typically take a significant many months if not years to acclimate enough to spread at all among any new species, nonetheless become airborne, which requires further mutations.

This relationship was further supported by reports out of the Netherlands that the novel coronavirus had spread among thirteen different mink farms there, and also to at least one farm in Denmark^[39] and to another in Spain where 87% of the mink were infected.^[40] Minks are a closely related subspecies of ferret that can produce fertile offspring together, and so the fact that not only did the virus spread to fifteen different farms in three countries, but also appears to have spread from minks into farm workers^[41] indicates that accidental commercial serial passage through minks could have played a role in its creation, as an alternative to laboratory ferrets. Nevertheless, regardless of where any possible serial passage occurred, the fact that SARS-CoV-2 spreads from humans to minks and then back to humans demonstrates a high affinity for both species, despite neither nominally being a natural reservoir. Further support for the possibility that serial passage through lab ferrets or throughout mink farms played a role in the genesis of this novel coronavirus is provided by a preprint that notes the obvious ease with which it passes through the air between ferrets, since SARS-CoV-2 was transmitted through the air to three out of four indirect recipient ferrets monitored for airborne passage of the novel coronavirus.^[42] It seems reasonable to think that SARS-Cov-2's apparent affinity for ferrets and minks should lead to an investigation of mink farms in the Hubei province were the novel coronavirus was discovered, since a viable pathway for its emergence could be infected bats defecating on commercial mink farms, which would loosely parallel the emergence of MERS-CoV from herds of camels following putative fecal contamination by local bats.^[43]

The prospect that serial passage through lab animals or on commercial farms may have played a role in the creation of SARS-CoV-2 is also raised by an April 2020 preprint, which appears to have been retracted after Chinese authorities implemented the censorship of any papers relating to the origins of the novel coronavirus.^[44] This paper found that coronaviruses that target the ACE2 receptor bind with ferret cells more tightly than any other species except the tree shrew, which only scored about 2% higher. Tree shrews have also been used for serial viral passage, and have been promoted as a preferable animal host for laboratory experimentation since they are cheaper, smaller, easier to handle, and closer to humans evolutionarily and physiologically than ferrets.^[45] However, one does not exclude the other as a possible host, and a recent preprint examining SARS-CoV's binding affinity in humans raises additional questions about its initial emergence. It found that the novel coronavirus appears to be far more adapted to human ACE2 receptors than those found in bats, which is unexpected given that bats are the virus's assumed source, and which lead the lead research to observe that SARS-CoV-2 was perfectly adapted to infect humans since its first contact with us, and had no apparent need to for any adaptive evolution at all.^[46]

Although the novel coronavirus also appears to have a high affinity for the pangolin ACE2 receptor,^[47] phylogenetic analysis of the neutral sites that best determine shared heritage^[48] and a distinctive amino acid sequence both indicate that pangolins are unlikely to have served as an intermediate host,^[47] so this affinity is likely due to the convergent motifs that often mark viral evolution and not shared heritage. The unexpected immediate affinity for humans was also reflected by another preprint, which observed that SARS-CoV-2 appeared just as adapted to humans at the very start of its epidemic as SARS-CoV was in the latest stages of its emergence,^[49] an unexpected finding since viruses^[49] are expected to mutate substantially as they acclimate to a new species.^[50] SARS-CoV-2's muddled origins are made even more Gordian by a study published March 2018 that examined people who live in villages about a kilometer away from bat caves. This study revealed that only 2.7% of those villagers had antibodies indicating any past exposure to bat coronaviruses. The authors also sampled people living in Wuhan, and found no evidence of exposure to SARS-CoV-like coronaviruses at all.^[51]

This means there is very little serological evidence of any exposure to these coronaviruses even in Chinese villagers living in close proximity to bat caves, and at the epicenter of the current outbreak—no previous exposure was found at all. These data do not support the idea that SARS-CoV-2 was circulating in humans prior to the outbreak began in Wuhan in the early winter or fall of 2019, making a zoonotic jump even more unlikely since natural jumps leave wide serological footprints in their new host populations as early variants of a prospective virus make limited and unsuccessful jumps into individuals of the new host species, a trial-and-error that must occur before mutations that allow adaptation to a new host species are selected.^[50] However these results do not rule out a much earlier jump into humans somewhere outside Hubei province, an alternative that is awaiting empirical support.

Taken together, the available evidence does not point definitively toward a natural origin for SARS-CoV-2, rather, much of it is more consistent with what would be found if the novel coronavirus had arisen from serial passage of a “precursor” progenitor virus in a lab, or from bats infecting a commercial mink farm somewhere in China, which would also provide the conditions

for serial passage. However, more evidence is required before a conclusive judgement can be made one way or the other.

Further research around SARS-CoV-2's affinity to ferrets and minks, as well as other possible intermediate hosts seems warranted, and certainly the examination of all past gain-of-function serial passage research by the scientific community at large should occur to determine what other definitive genomic signatures serial passage leaves besides the creation of furin cleavage sites, in case more of those can be found in this novel coronavirus. Two additional unique genomic signature are already being researched, as one preprint indicates that SARS-CoV-2 possesses a genomic region not found in other coronaviruses that appears to cloak the novel coronavirus from white blood cells, a characteristic also found with HIV.^[52] And the second preprint identifies a region on the spike-protein gene found in no other bat-borne coronavirus that is nearly identical to superantigenic and neurotoxic motifs found in some bacteria, which may contribute to the immune overreaction that leads to the Kawasaki-like multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children, and cytokine storms in adults.^[53] Given the unique traits found in SARS-CoV-2 and all the open questions there still are around its emergence, until either a natural or laboratory origin is conclusively demonstrated both avenues should be robustly investigated by the scientific community.

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3. Conclusions and Outlook

The history of gain-of-function research is one of science's most significant and troubling, especially since the Nuremberg Code, research scientists' Hippocratic Oath, dictates that experiments that could endanger human life should only occur if the potential humanitarian benefits significantly outweigh the risks.^[54] It seems ill-advised to rule out the possibility that gain-of-function techniques such as serial passage may have played a role in the creation of SARS-CoV-2 until more definitive data are collected, and when the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation has calculated that the odds that any given potential pandemic pathogen might leak from a lab could be better than one in four.^[55]

The release of the H1N1 Swine Flu in 1977 first initiated the discussion about the moral and physical hazards involved with dual-use gain-of-function research, and it was the creation of extraordinarily virulent H5N1 Bird Flu strains—using the same technique of serial passage through an animal host in a lab—that contributed to the NIH imposing a moratorium on dual-use gain-of-function research from 2014 until 2017, after which it was relaxed explicitly to allow influenza strains as well as coronaviruses to be studied. This moratorium was meant to limit “the potential to create, transfer, or use an enhanced potential pandemic pathogen.”^[56] However, just as an increased pace of research into influenza vaccines increased the odds that a leak would occur leading up to the 1977 release of H1N1 Swine Flu, which is the most often cited as originating from a laboratory leak,^[8] it would follow that an increased pace of research into coronaviruses over the past few years would have increased the odds that a lab leak of one would occur; after all, these viruses were pinpointed back in 2006 as a viable vector for an HIV vaccine^[57] and research into a pan-coronavirus vaccine has been ongoing for decades.

And whether or not gain-of-function research is determined to have played a role in SARS-CoV-2's emergence, the fact that it creates opportunities for pandemic viruses to leak out of labs calls for a re-examination of the moratorium against this practice, because the emergence of this novel coronavirus has demonstrated that the international public health community is not prepared to handle the leak of a pandemic virus. Furthermore, none of the gain-of-function research conducted since 2014 has provided humanity with any tools at all to fight back against the ongoing pandemic caused by this novel coronavirus.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Notes

Sirotkin K., Sirotkin D., Might SARS-CoV-2 Have Arisen via Serial Passage through an Animal Host or Cell Culture?. *BioEssays* 2020, 2000091 10.1002/bies.202000091 [[PMC free article](#)][[PubMed](#)] [[CrossRef](#)]

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From: Gross, Laura J. (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 3:43 PM
To: Paulopol, Andreea I. (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G. (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Gibbs, Jeffrey J. (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: For Review: Draft Article 5 re China BWC compliance

Hi all - I know that I am a bit behind on the background of this effort, having only been briefed this week. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

From: Paulopol, Andreea I. (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, November 20, 2020 2:43 PM
To: DiNanno, Thomas G. (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Gross, Laura J. (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J. (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: For Review: Draft Article 5 re China BWC compliance

AA/S DiNanno—

Resending per our separate email just now. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Happy to discuss further.

Thanks

(b)(6)

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Paulopol, Andreea I

Sent: Friday, October 30, 2020 5:02 PM

To: DiNanno, Thomas G. (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: Gross, Laura J. (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J. (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: For Review: Draft Article 5 re China BWC compliance

AA/S DiNanno—

Per discussions, I'm attaching a draft approach re China BWC compliance under Article 5, along with a

(b)(5)

Again, while Article 5 has been invoked only once by Cuba, please note that Article 6 has never been tested before. (b)(5)

Welcome your review and happy to answer any questions.

Thanks,
Andreea

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

From: Paulopol, Andreea I

Sent: Friday, May 29, 2020 1:48 PM

To: AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>

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

Subject: DARs re Chinese CBMs and C-19 RFI

(U//FOUO) **Update on Chinese BWC CBMs re COVID-19:** CBW (Paulopol) reviewed the partial translation of restricted access of Chinese BWC CBMs which acknowledge "a new coronavirus pneumonia outbreak appeared in Wuhan, Hubei Province in December 2019" and notes that "the

outbreak has spread to 31 provinces.” It further highlights that “beginning on March 6, 2020, the number of new cases in mainland China dropped to below 100, beginning on March 12, the number of new cases dropped to single digits, and beginning March 13, the number of imported cases was greater than the number of new cases in China.” There could be questions about how reliably they are diagnosing cases, however, the statement is probably correct, though the choice to highlight this in their CBMs, seems political in nature. The CBMs also note that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was the one that first processed the unknown virus in a moderate risk (BSL-2) laboratory before moving to high-risk (BSL-4) laboratory and indicates that the “source of the virus is pending confirmation by scientific research.”


(SBU) **COVID-19 Request for Information:** DOD (IC) released its COVID-19 request for information from industry and academia on seven mission areas that also includes combating the spread among the items listed. It’s been reported that over 3300 submissions have been received up to now. Providing the link for more details and awareness: <https://www.afwerx.af.mil/coronavirus.html>

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(7)(E)



From: "Park, Christopher J (T)" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Kang, Eliot (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: Federal Grants and Contracts Awarded to EcoHealth Alliance
Date: Fri, 18 Dec 2020 00:18:29 +0000

Unfortunately the spreadsheets tell us exactly nothing about EcoHealth Alliance's expenditure or activity on "gain of function" research. Some of the grants may potentially have included such work – and of course the term encompasses work to, say, adapt a human-adapted coronavirus to mice so you can study disease dynamics, which makes it less, not more, dangerous to humans. But what EcoHealth is known for is slogging around in the bush collecting samples and characterizing them to develop a better picture of the "virome" – what kinds of viruses are out there, with what kind of genetic diversity, and what the reservoir species are. Highly unlikely that any of these with the possible exception of the NIAID-funded grants would have involved GOF.

From: Kang, Eliot (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 7:01 PM
To: Park, Christopher J (T) (b)(6)@state.gov> (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Federal Grants and Contracts Awarded to EcoHealth Alliance

From: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 6:52:38 PM
To: Ford, Christopher A (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Kang, Eliot (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fw: Federal Grants and Contracts Awarded to EcoHealth Alliance

If you want a glance at how much USG money was going to support PRC gain of function research via the "Eco Health alliance," see attached.

EcoHealth Alliance

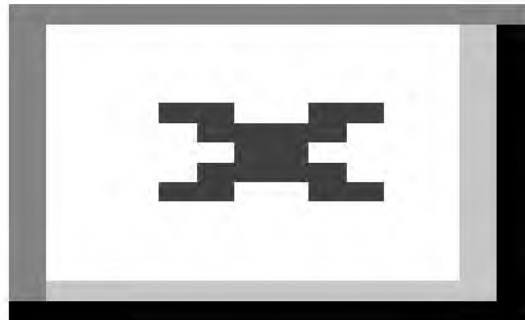
Orchestrated Key Scientists'

Statement on “natural origin” of SARS-CoV-2

Google Bookmark Facebook More 13

by Sainath Suryanarayanan of U.S. Right to Know

Emails obtained by U.S. Right to Know show that a statement in *The Lancet* authored by 27 prominent public health scientists condemning “conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin” was organized by employees of EcoHealth Alliance, a non-profit group that has received millions of dollars of U.S. taxpayer funding to genetically manipulate coronaviruses with scientists at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.



Peter Daszak of the Ecohealth Alliance

The emails obtained via public records requests show that EcoHealth Alliance President Peter Daszak drafted the *Lancet* statement, and that he intended it to “not be identifiable as coming from any one organization or person” but rather to be seen as “simply a letter from leading scientists”. Daszak wrote that he wanted “to avoid the appearance of a political statement”. The scientists’ letter appeared in *The Lancet* on February 18, just one week after the World Health Organization announced that the disease caused by the novel coronavirus would be named COVID-19.

The 27 authors “strongly condemn[ed] conspiracy theories suggesting that COVID-19 does not have a natural origin,” and reported that scientists from multiple countries “overwhelmingly conclude that this coronavirus originated in wildlife.” The letter included no scientific references to refute a lab-origin theory of the virus. One scientist, Linda Saif, asked via email whether it would be useful “to add just one or 2 statements in support of why nCOV is not a lab generated

virus and is naturally occurring? Seems critical to scientifically refute such claims!" Daszak responded, "I think we should probably stick to a broad statement."

Growing calls to investigate the Wuhan Institute of Virology as a potential source of SARS-CoV-2 have led to increased scrutiny of EcoHealth Alliance. The emails show how members of EcoHealth Alliance played an early role in framing questions about possible lab origin of SARS-CoV-2 as "crackpot theories that need to be addressed," as Daszak told *The Guardian*.

Although the phrase "EcoHealth Alliance" appeared only once in *The Lancet* statement, in association with co-author Daszak, several other co-authors also have direct ties to the group that were not disclosed as conflicts of interest. Rita Colwell and James Hughes are members of the Board of Directors of EcoHealth Alliance, William Karesh is the group's Executive Vice President for Health and Policy, and Hume Field is Science and Policy Advisor.

The statement's authors also claimed that the "rapid, open, and transparent sharing of data on this outbreak is now being threatened by rumours and misinformation around its origins." Today, however, little is known about the origins of SARS-CoV-2, and investigations into its origins by the World Health Organization and *The Lancet* COVID-19 commission have been shrouded in secrecy and mired by conflicts of interests.

Peter Daszak, Rita Colwell, and *The Lancet* Editor Richard Horton did not provide comments in response to our requests for this story.

This article is reprinted from the website of US Right to Know.

For more information:

A link to the entire batch of EcoHealth Alliance emails can be found here: **EcoHealth Alliance emails: University of Maryland** (466 pages)

From: Pease, Michael <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Thursday, December 17, 2020 7:40 AM

To: DiNanno, Thomas G <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6) <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6) <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Federal Grants and Contracts Awarded to EcoHealth Alliance

Attached is a formatted listing of federal grant and contract data for EcoHealth Alliance, sorted by agency and period-of performance start. DoD awards records are highlighted.

Note:

- All but one of the DoD grants to EcoHealth Alliance grants were for "SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH - COMBATING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION". Most grants were awarded by DTRA.
- All of the DoD contracts for EcoHealth Alliance were awarded by DTRA.
- The latest \$4.9M DoD contract for EcoHealth Alliance was terminated for cause in June.

Complete raw data CSV files also available. Source:

https://www.usaspending.gov/keyword_search/%22ecohealth%20alliance%22

Michael Pease

*Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
US Department of State*

(b)(6)

JWICS: (b)(6)@state.ic.gov

SIPR: (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Feith, David"
To: Lo, Debra (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 00:08:37 +0000

Many thanks Debra as ever. Look forward to staying in touch.

Will send new contact info. I'll be doing some thinktanking/writing and likely a business venture.

Keen to see what you do in Ankara.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On January 16, 2021 at 12:54:52 PM EST, Lo, Debra (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Hi David, please do not lose touch no matter. Do you know your next plans already?

You know, I know, and many people know you have an impact and made a difference.

(b)(6) I have a good size portfolio with quite a bit of work per the usual...

My best, Debra

Please pardon any typos.

From: Feith, David <(b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 3:42:20 AM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
2. **WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. **Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to

withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must

have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

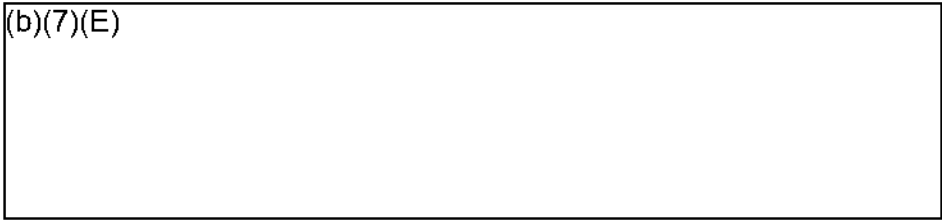
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David Feith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)



From: (b)(6)
To: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 01:39:35 +0000

David,

We have been asking — and State has been refusing — to provide us a classified briefing for almost ten months now on COVID origins. My expectations given the release of this “fact sheet” is that you all are prepared brief, and back it up with factual evidence, on Monday morning.

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 15, 2021, at 7:43 PM, Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo
January 15, 2021

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

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Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

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The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with

both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.

- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do

everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: (b)(6)

To: 'Paulopol, Andreea I' (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Date: Tue, 16 Feb 2021 16:09:30 +0000

Dear Andreea,

Thank you! I did keep my observations separate so if you want to share that you can copy/paste without citing me.

Have you seen the following: [https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/02/12/china-covid-misinformation-li-meng-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/02/12/china-covid-misinformation-li-meng-yan/?fbclid=IwAR1NPjxB2tXFns8Kh3B_phTzYgGhFaapdQ6Yb49x9hKnWtLnQsrPDAqmNl)

[yan/?fbclid=IwAR1NPjxB2tXFns8Kh3B_phTzYgGhFaapdQ6Yb49x9hKnWtLnQsrPDAqmNl](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2021/02/12/china-covid-misinformation-li-meng-yan/?fbclid=IwAR1NPjxB2tXFns8Kh3B_phTzYgGhFaapdQ6Yb49x9hKnWtLnQsrPDAqmNl) (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Take care,

(b)(6)

From: Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 9:14 AM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Dear (b)(6)

I truly appreciate your review (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Again, many thanks for your thoughts!

Andreea

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 6:15 PM

To: Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Hi Andreea,

I've now spoken to a few people about this paper and read a portion myself (b)(5)

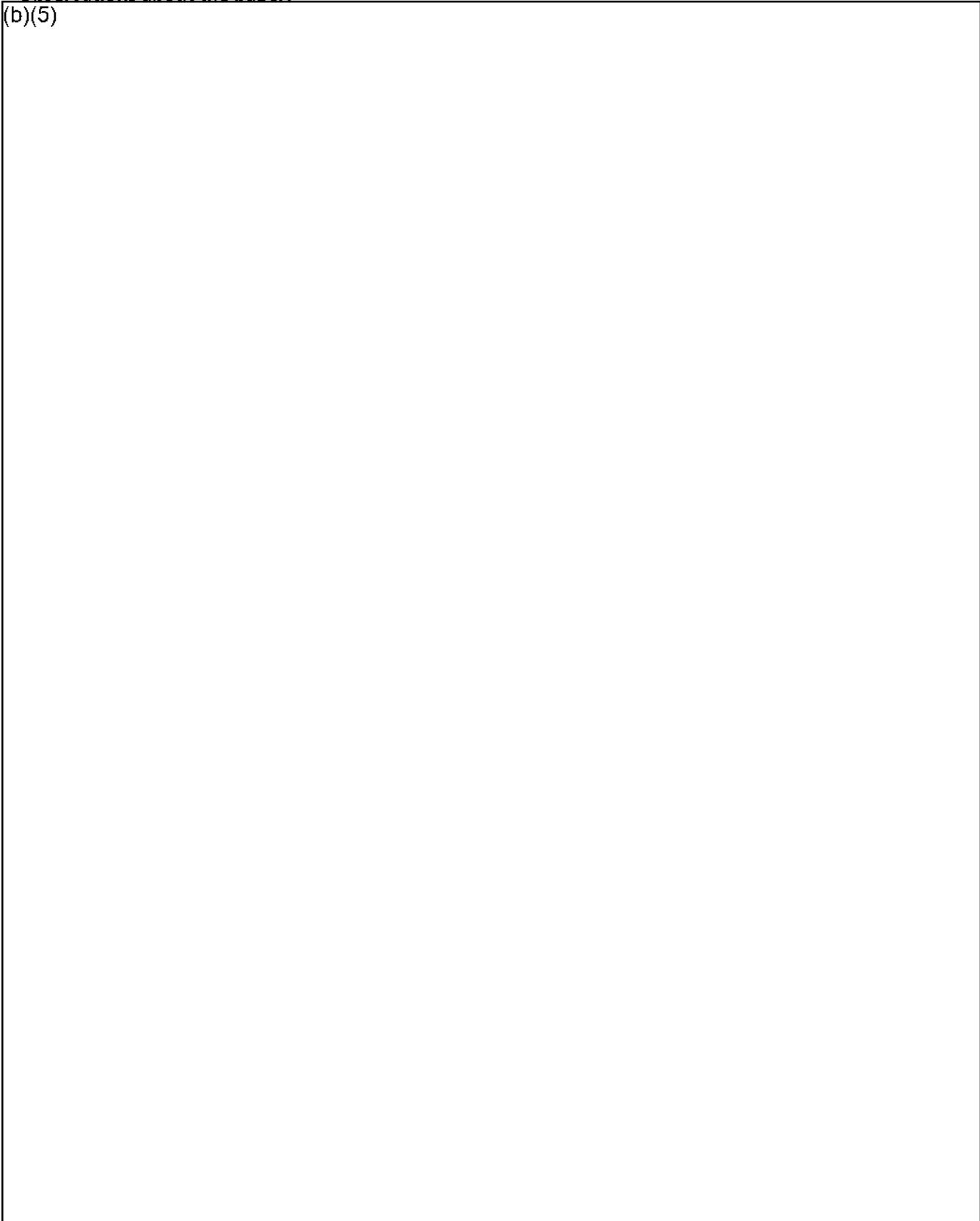
(b)(5)

Take care,

(b)(6)

Observations about the paper:

(b)(5)



(b)(5)

From: Paulopol, Andreea (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 4:00 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Dear (b)(6)

Do you know whether anyone has reviewed this paper? Debunked it with science?

DOI* links to the paper can be found at:

- The paper - <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4477081>
- The video - <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4477212>


There is a Seattle newspaper talking about this paper:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-study-by-dr-steven-quay-concludes-that-sars-cov-2-came-from-a-laboratory-301217952.html>

Regards,
Andreea

*Andreea Paulopol
Physical Scientist
Office of Chemical and Biological Weapons Affairs
Bureau of Arms Control, Compliance and Verification
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520
Desk: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.gov*

(b)(7)(E)



From:	"Feith, David" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Undisclosed recipients:
Subject:	Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID- 19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 00:42:20 +0000

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
2. **WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. **Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

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--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "DiNanno, Thomas G"

Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>;

Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>;

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

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

Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>;

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of Baric emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19 (SBU)

Date: Mon, 28 Dec 2020 20:03:37 +0000

Agree Jeff- we'll make final changes and get it out tomorrow AM.

From: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, December 28, 2020 2:18 PM

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

(b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G

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

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19 (SBU)

I had suggested in a comment in the draft demarche, which I thought had been accepted, that although I originally intended to insert references to various published or openly known materials, I thought better of it for a number of reasons, not all of which I would care to list on an unclass system.

(b)(5)

Jeff Gibbs

Senior Adviser AVC

SSD/AVC

c: (b)(6)

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

Sent: Monday, December 28, 2020 1:19 PM

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

(b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J

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

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19 (SBU)

Please call me ASAP. Why is Pease working on redrafting the demarche into some special format for Laura? Cant Laura do ANY work. This is ridiculous. I have been involved hundreds of demarches in my career. There isn't a format issue with what (b)(6) wrote. And, of course, he has written more demarche cables than any of us, I suspect. Ridiculous.

(b)(5)

I have taken Feith off this "thread" since he at least needs to stay focused on what's important to the country not some demarche format. We are the global superpower—we can draft a demarche anyway we want.

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

Sent: Monday, December 28, 2020 8:06 AM

To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19 (SBU)

I'm in the office.



(b)(6)

Chief of Staff
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State
HST Room S950

Office: (b)(6)
Cell:

OpenNet: (b)(6)@state.gov
ClassNet: (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov
JWICS: (b)(6)@state.ic.gov

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

Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2020 9:55 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

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

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19 (SBU)

(b)(6) If you happen to go in tomorrow, I recommend you work with Mike and David F on a

(b)(5); (b)(6)

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

Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2020 9:37 PM

To: (b)(6) @state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>

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

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19

Awesome context, as always. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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

Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2020 8:54 PM

To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>

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

Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19

Under **WIV's Microbial Resources and Bioinformatics Research Center**, there are 6 groups:

1. Virus Resources and Biotechnology Subject Group (病毒资源与生物技术学科组),
2. Applied Microbiology and Genetic Engineering Subject Group (应用微生物与基因工程学科组),
3. System Virology Group (系统病毒学学科组),
4. Insect Virus Genetic Engineering Group (昆虫病毒基因工程学科组),
5. Molecular Virology and Bioengineering Technology Group (分子病毒学及生物工程技术学科组),

6. Arbovirus Vector Control Subject Group (虫媒病毒媒介控制学科组, headed by Yuan Zhi-Ming)

To carry out arbovirus detection and biological control of vector mosquitoes.

Focuses on the rapid detection of dengue virus, Japanese encephalitis virus and West Nile virus and the interaction between the virus and the host, mosquito pathogenic microorganisms and their genetic resources, microbial genomics and comparative genomics, and mosquito toxin protein characteristics and the mode of action, the genetic improvement of mosquito-killing bacteria and the construction of engineered strains, the development of new bacterial mosquito-killing preparations and the assessment of the environmental safety of wild-type and recombinant microorganisms, etc., develop new biological control technologies, and establish and perfect biological control Integrated control system for mosquitoes based on arboviruses.

From: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2020 7:13 PM
To: Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov> (b)(6) @state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.gov> (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19

Please run

, Director WIV Lev 4 Lab, to ground ASAP. (b)(6) Can you look into this person? Thanks very much!

From: Pease, Michael (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Sunday, December 27, 2020 12:46 PM
To: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.gov> (b)(6) @state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Initial analysis of (b)(6) emails: May/June US-China VTC's on COVID-19

Reference my last note below, attached is the relevant raw OCR'd text recovered from (b)(6) emails documenting his participation in a series of two US National Academy of Science – Chinese Academy of Science VTCs in May and one in June on the subject of COVID-19.

Initial summary of findings:

- Context: These brief verbal exchanges occurred months after the PRC had successfully conquered the pandemic and prevented any meaningful exchange of data and scientific collaboration, meanwhile most of the rest of the world is still trying unsuccessfully to deal with the pandemic.
- Dates of the three two-hour VTCs: 11 and 13 May, 9 June.

- Purpose: *“to discuss what has been learned thus far from the pandemic, how to mitigate its impact, and preventing future pandemics.”* (Note: subject of SARS-CoV-2’s origin was off the table from the very beginning of the planning sessions, so was anything else that might be deemed “political”)
- Unstated purpose: to allow the PRC to maintain the façade of cooperation while preventing any meaningful exchange of data and any inquiry into COVID-19's origin that might be unfavorable to the regime, and some of the VTC participants.
- CAS allowed the US to use the Zoom record feature to produce a transcript of the call. In return the US approved the following PRC press release. Here's an approved draft of the PRC version of events:

○

Scientists from China and US Share Experience in COVID-19 Prevention and Control

About 30 scientists from China and the United States held an online dialogue to share their experience in COVID-19 prevention and control and opinions on the prevention of future pandemic on May 12th and 14th (Beijing time). The virtual dialogue was jointly organized by the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) and the National Academy of Medicine (NAM). Participants shared their experience in fighting against COVID-19 and exchanged views on such topics as clinical issues related to treatment and management of patients, and limiting the spread of COVID-19 and steps towards restarting society.

COVID-19, an infectious disease caused by the most recently discovered coronavirus, has so far spread to 216 countries, areas and territories, with over 4.5 million confirmed cases and claiming 300 thousand deaths globally, according to the World Health Organization. “The pandemic will not really be controlled in any country, until it is ultimately controlled in every country. So it's in our mutual interest to do our best to learn as rapidly and as effectively as we can from one another,” said Dr. Harvey Fineberg, President of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, one participant of the dialogue.

Experts taking part in the dialogue agreed that it is of great importance to have a discussion to promote exchanges between the scientific communities of the two countries. “It's an extension of a dialogue that's been going between scientists in China and the U.S. We are very happy to be able to continue this dialogue in this time when actually all the work we are doing becomes very important,” said Diane Griffin, Vice President of NAS, in the dialogue. Dr. George F. Gao, convener from the Chinese side, Director-General of the Chinese Center for Disease Prevention and Control, said, “This is a great dialogue. We hope that both sides

could continue to organize dialogues like this, and contribute to the global efforts in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic from the scientific perspective."

- Notable participants included Baric, Daszak, Shi and Yuan (WIV leaders)
- The agenda items listed below speak volumes IMHO given:
 - This is the first such exchange we are aware of, six months into a devastating pandemic and the US is still struggling with these questions
 - Discussion of such critical and sweeping issues is limited to a 6-hour exchange between a couple dozen US and PRC personnel
 - The PRC has continued to prevent direct access to raw data and collaboration between scientists.
 - The only alternative has been to wait for PRC-government sanctioned academic papers and misleading press releases to emerge.

- Issues discussed:

Day 1

Introductory remarks and group introductions

- China situational overview

- U.S. situational overview

Clinical Issues Related to Treatment and Management of Patients

Clinical manifestations of COVID-19 disease:

- What range of clinical, end-organ, organ, and other body system manifestations of disease has been documented in China

Influence of Patient Characteristics:

- How did patient age, gender, general health condition, or other characteristics influence the efficacy of drugs, NPIs, or best practices?

- How was this determined?

Protection of Medical Personnel:

- What measures have proven most effective in [text not recovered by OCR]

Drug Treatments:

- What has been the Chinese experience with developing drug treatments or using existing drugs in treatment of patients, from prophylaxis to pre-symptomatic patients to patients with severe symptoms?

Non-pharmaceutical Interventions:

- Were effective non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) for patient care identified?

- Were there other best practices for management of COVID-19 patients that emerged from the pandemic experience?

Immune plasma:

- What is China's experience in using immune plasma or other antibody-based therapies in the treatment of COVID-19 patients or prevention of further spread of disease?

Lessons Learned:

o Were other lessons learned from China's pandemic experience that should be applied to future staffing and equipping of hospitals or other patient care facilities?

Future Collaboration:

o What are the most fruitful areas of future scientific collaborations between our countries in this area?

Day 2

Viral shedding:

o What is the degree of shedding among pre-symptomatic/asymptomatic individuals?

o Do recovered patients continue to shed infectious virus? If yes, for how long?

o Has post-infection viral shedding been demonstrated to result in new infections?

o Has an explanation regarding pathogenesis leading to apparent recrudescence of disease in previously positive, then negative patients been arrived at?

Immune response:

o How is immune response being measured? Is it via binding assays versus neutralization tests, use of antibody assays in diagnosis of acute disease and as an indicator of protection?

o Was there standardization of your testing tools?

o Immunity: After recovery, do patients have immunity? How protective is this immunity?

o Is there indication of persistence of such immunity?

Vaccines:

o Has the Chinese research community made progress in the development of COVID-19 vaccines?

Exposure routes:

o Has progress been made in understanding the routes of exposure to COVID-19 air, water, and surfaces, both indoors and outdoors?

Contact with Animals:

o Would increased surveillance of or interventions to reduce contact with pets, wild, or livestock animal species help limit the future spread of COVID-19 or other coronaviruses?

Halting Spread:

o What measures have proven most effective in halting viral spread in China?

Preventing a Fall Resurgence:

o What steps should be taken in anticipation of a fall resurgence in transmission?

Reestablishing Normality:

o What lessons has China learned about returning society and the economy to a "normal" state?

Future Collaboration:

o What are the most fruitful areas of future scientific collaborations between our countries in this area?

Day 3 (June 9)

Immune Response and Immunotherapy

o Use of antibody assays in diagnosis of acute disease and as an indicator of protection

o How is immune response being measured?

o Was there standardization of testing tools?

o What is the overall situation of serologic investigation in the US?

o What can be said about the characterization of the

Innate immune responses?

humoral immune response?

cellular immune response?

o What is China's experience in using immune plasma or other antibody-based therapies for COVID-19 patients and for prevention of infection?

o Is the use of immune plasma effective?

o Have there been any complications?

o What has been China's experience with human monoclonal antibodies for treatment and prevention?

o Do a majority of the monoclonal antibodies isolated from patient B cells produce neutralizing antibodies?

o What immunopathologies are evident in the patients with COVID-19?

o Are there any biomarkers in patients who develop systemic inflammation?

o What is the most effective treatment for patients who develop a cytokine storm?

Immunity

o After recovery, what types of antiviral immune responses are present?

o Do these immune responses protect from re-infection?

o What is known about the durability of neutralizing antibody and longevity of protective immunity?

o Did recovery from SARS provide any protection from infection with SARS-CoV-2?

o Progress in the development of vaccine in the U.S. especially mRNA vaccine?

Reactivation or Reinfection of Recovered Patients, Fall resurgence

o Has reactivation of latent virus or re-infection been seen among survivors?

o Is reactivation/reinfection a concern with respect to a fall resurgence?

o What steps should be taken in anticipation of a fall resurgence in transmission?

o What is the COVID-19 prevention and control strategy in the US for the second half of this year?

o When do you expect COVID-19 vaccine to be available in the U.S.?

- Chinese Participants included

- Zhu Chen: Dr. Zhu Chen is president of the Red Cross Society of China, CAS member. He was previously minister of the National Health Commission of China. (Only available on the 14th)

- George F. Gao: Dr. George F. Gao is Director-General of CCDC, a professor at the CAS Institute of Microbiology, CAS member.

- Dongfeng Gu: Dr. Dongfeng Gu is vice president of Southern University of Science and Technology, CAS member.

- Hualiang Jiang: Dr. Hualiang Jiang is currently a professor at CAS Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica (SIMM), CAS member. He was previous director of SIMM, and now he is the chairman of the Scientific Committee of the institute. His research focuses on drug discovery and development. (Only available on the 12th)

- Lanjuan Li: Dr. Lanjuan Li is a physician and professor in infectious diseases, a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering. She is currently director of the State Key Laboratory for Diagnosis and Treatment of Infectious Diseases. (Only available on the 12th)
- Zhengli Shi: Dr. Zhengli Shi is a professor at CAS Wuhan Institute of Virology.
- Chen Wang: Dr. Chen Wang is vice president and a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, and president of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. (Only available on the 14th)
- Guiqiang Wang: Dr. Guiqiang Wang is a professor at the Peking University First Hospital and is president of the Society of Infectious Diseases, Chinese Medical Association. (Only available on the 12th)
- Haiming Wei: Dr. Haiming Wei is a professor at the University of Science and Technology of China.
- Zhiming Yuan: Dr. Zhiming Yuan is a professor at CAS Wuhan Institute of Virology, Director of Wuhan P4 lab.
- Yongqing Zhang: Dr. Yongqing Zhang is Deputy Director-General of CAS Bureau of Frontier Sciences and Education, a professor at CAS Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology. (Only available on the 12th)
- Guoping Zhao: Dr. Guoping Zhao is a professor at CAS Shanghai Institutes for Biological Sciences, CAS member.
- Qi Zhou: Dr. Qi Zhou is Deputy Secretary-General of CAS, Director of CAS Institute of Zoology, CAS member. (Only available on the 12th)

- US Participants included
 - Ralph Baric: Dr. Ralph Baric, PhD, is a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology at the University of North Carolina's School of Public Health.
 - Peter Daszak: Dr. Peter Daszak, PhD, is president of EcoHealth Alliance, a nonprofit non-governmental organization that supports various programs on global health.
 - Victor Dzau: Dr. Victor Dzau, MD, is currently president of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. He was previously the president and CEO of Duke University Medical Center.
 - David Franz: Dr. David R. Franz, DVM, PhD, is currently retired, but served in the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command for 23 of 27 years on active duty and as Commander of the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID).
 - Harvey Fineberg: Dr. Harvey Fineberg, MD, is currently president of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, immediately prior to which he was President of the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine).
 - Diane Griffin: Dr. Diane Griffin, MD, PhD, is University Distinguished Service Professor in the W. Harry Feinstone Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the current vice-president of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

- Peggy Hamburg: Dr. Margaret (Peggy) Hamburg, MD, is an American physician and public health administrator. She served as the 21st Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration from May 2009 to April 2015 and is currently foreign secretary for the U.S. National Academy of Medicine.
- James Le Duc: Dr. James Le Duc, PhD, is the director of the Galveston National Laboratory, professor, Microbiology and Immunology and the John Sealy Distinguished Chair in Tropical and Emerging Virology, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston Texas.
- Stanley Perlman: Dr. Stanley Perlman, MD, PhD, is Professor of Microbiology and Immunology and of Pediatrics at the University of Iowa Health Care.
- David Relman: Dr. David Relman, MD, PhD is a microbiologist and the Thomas C. and Joan M. Merigan Professor in Medicine and in Microbiology & Immunology at the Stanford University School of Medicine.
- Linda Saif: Dr. Linda J. Saif, PhD, is Distinguished University Professor, Department of Veterinary Preventive Medicine, Food Animal Health Research Program, Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center of the Ohio State University.
- Pei-Yong Shi: Dr. Pei-Yong Shi, PhD, is I.H. Kempner Professor of Human Genetics, University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston Texas.

From: Pease, Michael

Sent: Saturday, December 26, 2020 5:17 PM

To: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David

(b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: (b)(6) UNC FOIA Emails Update

First, the bad news: UNC's or (b)(6) lawyers did what most lawyers do when responding to FOIA requests - i.e., they purposefully converted all emails to low resolution image files. This makes it very hard to convert them back to usable text. Consequently we get a higher percentage of misidentified letters, numbers and symbols (aka "noise") during the OCR process.

Now for the good news: The techs at Sayari did a great job of OCRing the huge set of PDF image files, although there is still is a significant amount of noise in the text to contend with. From the resulting 89 raw text files (76MB) I was able to isolate at least 2,141 emails within about 200 threads spanning dates from October 2017 through 30 July 2020.

Of note, as highlighted below:

- (b)(6) was involved in hundreds of "Red Dawn" emails about the pandemic involving USG officials starting around 22 January.
- It appears that there may have been at least three virtual meetings involving (b)(6) with Chinese scientists in May and June (will take a look at those emails).
- (b)(6) may have been working with DTRA in early 2019.

- Baric may have been a source for INR regarding the origins of COVID-19 (7 emails between 23 and 25 March - will take a look at those emails).

More to follow.

Here is a summary table of unique subject lines/threads harvested from the text files:

Thread Subject Text	Emails	Days	Earliest Thread Email	Latest Threat Email	Found In
Collaborative coronavirus discussion invitation	1	1	1/10/2017	1/10/2017	1-1-1000.txt
nice work !!!!!!!	2	1	2/15/2017	2/15/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Zika in SE Asia	1	1	4/19/2017	4/19/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 invited speakers	1	1	4/25/2017	4/25/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Professorship Virology, Berlin	1	1	5/10/2017	5/10/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 Oral Presentation	1	1	5/26/2017	5/26/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 Group Photo	1	1	6/7/2017	6/7/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 Gala Dinner	1	1	6/8/2017	6/8/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 Gala Dinner at the Grand Hall	1	1	6/8/2017	6/8/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Thank you for attending Nido2017	1	1	6/15/2017	6/15/2017	1-1-1000.txt
CETR Program Information	1	1	6/23/2017	6/23/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Nido2017 Photo Gallery	1	1	7/3/2017	7/3/2017	1-1-1000.txt
IDEA team photo	1	1	7/13/2017	7/13/2017	1-1-1000.txt
NBIC Biosurveillance Presentation Series	9	6	7/13/2017	7/18/2017	1-1-1000.txt
NBIC Biosurveillance Presentation Series info for presenters	2	2	7/18/2017	7/19/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Talk	2	1	7/19/2017	7/19/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Virology Special Issue Presubmission Deadline is Aug 18, 2017	1	1	8/14/2017	8/14/2017	1-1-1000.txt
CEPI invitation to vaccine R&D pipeline and cost tracking survey against epidemic infectious diseases	1	1	9/27/2017	9/27/2017	1-1-1000.txt
NAS GNL invitation to participate in a meeting of U.S. and Chinese experts, Jan 16-18 2018	1	1	11/2/2017	11/2/2017	1-1-1000.txt
NAS mtg in Galveston	2	2	11/10/2017	11/11/2017	1-1-1000.txt
RFA-AI-17-042: Centers of Excellence for Translational Research (CETR)	1	1	12/1/2017	12/1/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Flight arrangements to Galveston for NAS/Chinese Academy meeting Jan. 16-18	7	3	12/18/2017	12/20/2017	1-1-1000.txt
Happy Holidays from Virologica Sinica!	1	1	12/22/2017	12/22/2017	1-1-1000.txt
US-China meeting in Galveston	2	3	1/3/2018	1/5/2018	1-1-1000.txt

Agenda and travel info for upcoming Galveston, Texas meeting	1	1	1/12/2018	1/12/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Two tenure track assistant professor positions at Duke-NUS EID	1	1	1/17/2018	1/17/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Thank You!	2	1	1/19/2018	1/19/2018	1-1-1000.txt
EcoHealth Alliance - W9	1	1	1/24/2018	1/24/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Nice meeting you in Galveston and invitation to Wuhan meeting in October 2018	2	1	2/7/2018	2/7/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Ralph's upcoming visit	1	1	2/23/2018	2/23/2018	1-1-1000.txt
trip to new york	2	1	3/6/2018	3/6/2018	1-1-1000.txt
"Baric Dinner" has been canceled.	1	1	3/6/2018	3/6/2018	1-1-1000.txt
"Baric Dinner" has been canceled.	1	1	3/6/2018	3/6/2018	1-1-1000.txt
[RESCHEDULED] Call with Peter - now on 3/15	1	1	3/12/2018	3/12/2018	1-1-1000.txt
dual use safety language	1	1	3/23/2018	3/23/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Visit to UNC	1	1	3/28/2018	3/28/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Invitation Letter for the 8th International Symposium on Emerging Viral Diseases	5	140	4/14/2018	8/31/2018	1-1-1000.txt
visit	1	1	4/23/2018	4/23/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Information for ICEID 2018 Plenary and Panel Speakers	1	1	8/10/2018	8/10/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Thank you for speaking at ICEID	2	1	8/30/2018	8/30/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Abstract for Wuhan meeting	1	1	9/24/2018	9/24/2018	1-1-1000.txt
International Symposium on Emerging Viral Diseases, Wuhan	4	10	9/30/2018	10/9/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Final Program of the 8th International Symposium on Emerging Viral Diseases	1	1	10/15/2018	10/15/2018	1-1-1000.txt
NASEM bio meetings in Harbin, China in Jan 2019?	4	4	11/13/2018	11/16/2018	1-1-1000.txt
Visa information for NAS January trip to Harbin, China	1	1	11/28/2018	11/28/2018	1-1-1000.txt
NASEM bio meetings in Harbin, China in Jan 2019 - update and conference call	1	1	12/11/2018	12/11/2018	1-1-1000.txt
NASEM bio meetings in Harbin, China in Jan 2019 - conference call on 12/18 at 2 PM ET	1	1	12/14/2018	12/14/2018	1-1-1000.txt
NASEM bio meetings in Harbin, China in Jan 2019 - conference call on 12/18 at 2 PM ET docs	2	1	12/17/2018	12/17/2018	1-1-1000.txt
NASEM bio meetings in Harbin, China in Jan 2019 - travel memo and final agenda	1	1	1/3/2019	1/3/2019	1-1-1000.txt
new call from DTRA	1	1	1/3/2019	1/3/2019	1-1-1000.txt
National Academies Travel Reimbursement: Harbin 2019 meeting	1	1	1/11/2019	1/11/2019	1-1-1000.txt

postdoctoral position available at the Virus Ecology Unit, Rocky mountain Laboratories, NIAID	1	1	1/14/2019	1/14/2019	1-1-1000.txt
National Academies Travel Reimbursement: Harbin 2019 meeting - docs and photos	1	1	1/17/2019	1/17/2019	1-1-1000.txt
Ralph's visit to Columbia	3	1	3/20/2019	3/20/2019	1-1-1000.txt
new coronavirus from Wuhan	6	2	1/9/2020	1/10/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Rg novel coronavirus	2	12	1/10/2020	1/21/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Wuhan outbreak	5	9	1/20/2020	1/28/2020	1-1-1000.txt
{EXTERNAL} 2019-nCOV	1	1	1/22/2020	1/22/2020	1-1-1000.txt
2019-nCOV	10	8	1/22/2020	1/29/2020	1-1-1000.txt
2019-nCov	2	4	1/23/2020	1/26/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Wolverines 2019-nCoV Call	1	1	1/26/2020	1/26/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn Call Listening Session 2019-nCoV Call	139	20	1/26/2020	2/14/2020	1-1-1000.txt 1-1001-2000.txt 1-2001-3000.txt 1-3001-4000.txt 1-4001-5000.txt 9-6001-7000.txt
2019-nCoV	18	3	1/28/2020	1/30/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn: Wolverines 2019-nCoV Call is open	3	1	1/29/2020	1/29/2020	1-1-1000.txt
deadline question re: Virology paper/for publication in San Jose Mercury News/Bay Area News Group	1	1	1/30/2020	1/30/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn Call Listening Session 2019-nCoV Call,	3	1	2/2/2020	2/2/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn Call Listening Session 2019-nCOV Call	12	9	2/2/2020	2/10/2020	1-1-1000.txt 1-1001-2000.txt 1-2001-3000.txt
Reminder - Invitation to the Global Research and Innovation Forum: Towards a Roadmap for the 2019 Novel Coronavirus	1	1	2/3/2020	2/3/2020	1-1-1000.txt
2019-nCoV in kids--the dog that didn't bark	1	1	2/3/2020	2/3/2020	1-1-1000.txt
Reminder - Invitation to the Global Research and Innovation Forum: Towards a Roadmap for the 2019 Novel	1	1	2/3/2020	2/3/2020	1-1-1000.txt
{EXTERNAL} Red Dawn Call Listening Session	1	1	2/4/2020	2/4/2020	1-1001-

2019-nCoV Call					2000.txt
URGENT: Please review by NOON if at all possible...	10	1	2/4/2020	2/4/2020	1-1-1000.txt 1-1001-2000.txt
Link to documents on prioritisation of vaccines documents	1	1	2/5/2020	2/5/2020	1-1001-2000.txt
please use -	1	1	2/5/2020	2/5/2020	1-1001-2000.txt
Thanks and News about the letter	1	1	2/7/2020	2/7/2020	1-1001-2000.txt
nCOV-2019	4	1	2/8/2020	2/8/2020	1-1001-2000.txt
nCoV-2019	3	1	2/8/2020	2/8/2020	1-1001-2000.txt
ACE/ACE2	1	1	2/10/2020	2/10/2020	1-2001-3000.txt
Red Dawn COVID-2019	5	1	2/13/2020	2/13/2020	1-3001-4000.txt
Isolation and Quarantine for HCWs	25	2	2/14/2020	2/15/2020	1-4001-5000.txt
Isolation and Quarantine for HCWS	4	2	2/14/2020	2/15/2020	1-4001-5000.txt
Flash!!! Red Dawn Call Saturday Air Evacuation--What Time works??	15	1	2/15/2020	2/15/2020	1-4001-5000.txt
Flash!! Red Dawn Call Air Evacuation Risk Mitigation Measures	2	1	2/15/2020	2/15/2020	1-4001-5000.txt
Flash!! Red Dawn Call Detection Kits, Disease Characterization	1	1	2/15/2020	2/15/2020	1-5001-5508.txt
Red Dawn Breaking, COVID-19	11	3	2/16/2020	2/18/2020	1-5001-5508.txt 2-2001-3000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking, COVID-19 Collaborative, Feb 16	15	7	2/16/2020	2/22/2020	1-5001-5508.txt 2-1-1000.txt 2-2001-3000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking, COVID-19 Collaborative, Feb 16 start	137	9	2/16/2020	2/24/2020	1-4001-5000.txt 1-5001-5508.txt 2-1-1000.txt 2-1001-2000.txt 2-2001-

					3000.txt
Time to chat about coronavirus?	3	2	2/17/2020	2/18/2020	1-4001-5000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking, COVID-19 Collaborative, Feb 16 start --- Rapid testing vs Safe and compliant quarantine -	1	1	2/21/2020	2/21/2020	2-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking, COVID-19 Collaborative, Feb 16 start -- asymptomatic vs symptomatic, flu vs COVID-19	1	1	2/24/2020	2/24/2020	2-2001-3000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking Bad, Start	2	2	2/24/2020	2/25/2020	2-3001-4000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking Bad, Start Feb 24	121	7	2/24/2020	3/1/2020	2-2001-3000.txt 2-3001-4000.txt 2-4001-5000.txt 2-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Rising Start Feb 29	124	5	2/29/2020	3/4/2020	2-5001-6000.txt 2-6001-6093.txt 3-1-1000.txt
Restricted Wolverine Call Sunday Evening (today) at 8 PM EST	2	1	3/1/2020	3/1/2020	3-1-1000.txt
Updated Travel Policy and Meeting Guidelines in Response to Coronavirus	1	1	3/3/2020	3/3/2020	3-1-1000.txt
Red Dawn Rising Start Feb 29 -- Evidence of how NPI works --	1	1	3/4/2020	3/4/2020	3-1-1000.txt
Red	2	1	3/5/2020	3/5/2020	2-2001-3000.txt 3-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Raging Start March	6	8	3/5/2020	3/12/2020	3-5001-6000.txt 4-8001-9000.txt

<p>Red Dawn Raging Start</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>3/5/2020</p>	<p>3/13/2020</p>	<p>3-5001-6000.txt 4-1-1000.txt 4-1001-2000.txt 4-13001-14000.txt 4-2001-3000.txt 4-3001-4000.txt 6-1-1000.txt 7-10001-11000.txt 7-8001-9000.txt</p>
<p>Red Dawn Raging Start March 4</p>	<p>204</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>3/5/2020</p>	<p>3/16/2020</p>	<p>3-1-1000.txt 3-1001-2000.txt 3-2001-3000.txt 3-3001-4000.txt 3-4001-5000.txt 3-5001-6000.txt 3-6001-6626.txt 4-1-1000.txt 4-10001-11000.txt 4-1001-2000.txt 4-11001-12000.txt 4-12001-13000.txt 4-13001-14000.txt 4-2001-3000.txt 4-3001-4000.txt 4-4001-5000.txt 4-5001-</p>

					6000.txt 4-6001- 7000.txt 4-7001- 8000.txt 4-8001- 9000.txt 4-9001- 10000.txt 5-1-1000.txt 5-1001- 2000.txt 5-2001- 3000.txt 5-4001- 5000.txt 5-5001- 6000.txt 5-6001- 7000.txt 6-1-1000.txt 7-1-1000.txt 7-12001- 12178.txt
Dean Nelson and other admin at CVM were in/are still in Wash DC	1	1	3/6/2020	3/6/2020	3-1001- 2000.txt
[EXTERNAL) Red Dawn Raging Start March 4	15	5	3/8/2020	3/12/2020	3-1001- 2000.txt 3-2001- 3000.txt 3-3001- 4000.txt 3-4001- 5000.txt 4-3001- 4000.txt

					3-1001-2000.txt 3-2001-3000.txt 3-3001-4000.txt 3-4001-5000.txt 4-2001-3000.txt 6-1001-2000.txt 6-3001-4000.txt 7-10001-11000.txt 7-1001-2000.txt 7-3001-4000.txt 7-4001-5000.txt 7-6001-7000.txt 7-8001-9000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Raging Start March 4	45	9	3/8/2020	3/16/2020	
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Raging Start	2	1	3/9/2020	3/9/2020	3-3001-4000.txt
Red Dawn Raging, Start March 4	4	1	3/10/2020	3/10/2020	3-4001-5000.txt
[EXT] Red Dawn Raging Start March 4	2	1	3/12/2020	3/12/2020	4-1-1000.txt
Epidemiologist needed	1	1	3/13/2020	3/13/2020	4-6001-7000.txt
Singapore's measures to contain COVID-19	11	2	3/15/2020	3/16/2020	5-4001-5000.txt 7-8001-9000.txt
Impact of Social Distancing Practices	1	1	3/16/2020	3/16/2020	7-12001-12178.txt
Red Dawn Responding, Start 16	2	2	3/16/2020	3/17/2020	8-1-1000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn	4	5	3/16/2020	3/20/2020	7-10001-11000.txt 9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt

Red Dawn Responding, Start 16 March	91	15	3/16/2020	3/30/2020	10-4001-5000.txt 7-12001-12178.txt 8-1-1000.txt 8-1001-1670.txt 9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt 9-4001-5000.txt 9-5001-6000.txt
Social Distancing	1	1	3/17/2020	3/17/2020	8-1-1000.txt
No reinfection and titer data in COVID Plasma	4	1	3/18/2020	3/18/2020	8-1-1000.txt
COVID Plasma	1	1	3/18/2020	3/18/2020	8-1-1000.txt
CONFIRMED - COVID-19 Conversations Webinar Series Advisory Group Meeting	1	1	3/18/2020	3/18/2020	8-1-1000.txt
Has everyone seen this?	2	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	8-1001-1670.txt
NPI New Statistical Analysis Study	1	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	8-1001-1670.txt
The psychological impact of quarantine and how to reduce it	3	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	9-1-1000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux,	1	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	9-1-1000.txt
Have you seen this article on hydroxychloroquine and azithromycin tx	2	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	8-1001-1670.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start	2	1	3/19/2020	3/19/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux,	5	2	3/19/2020	3/20/2020	9-1001-2000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020 0319, 10:35	5	2	3/19/2020	3/20/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020	6	2	3/19/2020	3/20/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt

[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020 0319,	5	2	3/19/2020	3/20/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020 0319, 10:35 EDT	69	4	3/19/2020	3/22/2020	8-1001-1670.txt 9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt
Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020 0319, 10:35 EDT	11	5	3/19/2020	3/23/2020	8-1001-1670.txt 9-1001-2000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Reflux, Start 2020 0319, 10:35 EDT	12	5	3/19/2020	3/23/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red	2	1	3/20/2020	3/20/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt
Update & action items - NAM-APHA COVID-19 Webinar Series	8	2	3/21/2020	3/22/2020	9-1-1000.txt 9-1001-2000.txt
Webinar topic	1	1	3/22/2020	3/22/2020	9-1001-2000.txt
Red Dawn Suppression, Start Mar 23, 10:00	1	1	3/23/2020	3/23/2020	9-2001-3000.txt
Red Dawn Suppression, Start Mar	2	1	3/23/2020	3/23/2020	9-2001-3000.txt
BWIRP Files	4	1	3/23/2020	3/23/2020	9-2001-3000.txt
The Science of Social Distancing: A free webinar from NAM and APHA	4	2	3/23/2020	3/24/2020	9-2001-3000.txt
Inquiry on Interest and Availability to Participate in INR Analytic Exchange on Scientific Evidence on Origins of Novel	7	3	3/23/2020	3/25/2020	9-2001-3000.txt 9-3001-4000.txt
Red Dawn Suppression, Start Mar 23, 10:00 EDT	83	5	3/23/2020	3/27/2020	9-1001-2000.txt 9-2001-3000.txt 9-3001-4000.txt 9-4001-

						5000.txt 9-5001- 6000.txt
FDA announcement	1	1	3/24/2020	3/24/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
*** China Data Dr. Michael Joyner***	1	1	3/25/2020	3/25/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
*** China Data Dr. Michael Joyner**	1	1	3/25/2020	3/25/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
[EXTERNAL] ***China Data Dr. Michael Joyner***	2	1	3/25/2020	3/25/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
China Data Dr. Michael Joyner	2	1	3/25/2020	3/25/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
China Data Dr. Michael Joyner	2	1	3/25/2020	3/25/2020		9-2001- 3000.txt
Reuse of N95 Masks	5	2	3/25/2020	3/26/2020		9-3001- 4000.txt
Red Dawn Pondering, Start Mar 27, 15:45	42	16	3/27/2020	4/11/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt 9-6001- 7000.txt
CONFIRMED: Second advisory call for COVID-19 webinar series	1	1	3/28/2020	3/28/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Red Dawn Pondering, Start Mar 27, 15:45	2	1	3/29/2020	3/29/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt
Red Dawn Pondering, Start Mar 27,	2	1	3/29/2020	3/29/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt
Masks	10	4	3/29/2020	4/1/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt
updates - NAM-APHA webinar series	1	1	3/31/2020	3/31/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt
Red Dawn Rooster, Start April 2, 17:00	29	6	4/2/2020	4/7/2020		9-5001- 6000.txt 9-6001- 7000.txt
Red Dawn Rolling, Start April 6, 15:00	35	6	4/6/2020	4/11/2020		9-6001- 7000.txt
Advisory Group Call: NAM-APHA COVID-19 Webinar Series	7	87	4/6/2020	7/1/2020		10-5001- 6000.txt 10-6001- 7000.txt
Health, Safety & Store Updates â€” The Latest	2	4	4/7/2020	4/10/2020		9-6001-

from Kroger					7000.txt
Health, Safety & Store Updates - The Latest from Kroger	2	4	4/7/2020	4/10/2020	9-6001-7000.txt
NAM-APHA COVID-19 Webinar Series Update	2	1	4/9/2020	4/9/2020	9-6001-7000.txt
Red Dawn	3	32	4/12/2020	5/13/2020	10-5001-6000.txt 4-12001-13000.txt 9-6001-7000.txt
Red Dawn Breaking Debacle - How can we help those at risk?	1	1	4/13/2020	4/13/2020	9-6001-7000.txt
Red Dawn Setting, Begin 13 April 08:00	60	23	4/13/2020	5/5/2020	10-1-1000.txt 10-1001-2000.txt 10-2001-3000.txt 9-10001-11000.txt 9-13001-14000.txt 9-15001-16000.txt 9-6001-7000.txt 9-7001-8000.txt 9-8001-9000.txt 9-9001-10000.txt

Red Dawn Setting, Begin 13April 08:00	176	24	4/13/2020	5/6/2020	10-1-1000.txt 10-1001-2000.txt 10-2001-3000.txt 10-3001-4000.txt 9-10001-11000.txt 9-11001-12000.txt 9-12001-13000.txt 9-13001-14000.txt 9-14001-15000.txt 9-15001-16000.txt 9-16001-16505.txt 9-6001-7000.txt 9-7001-8000.txt 9-8001-9000.txt 9-9001-10000.txt
Update on Health Data Security	1	1	4/14/2020	4/14/2020	9-7001-8000.txt
Red Dawn Setting, Begin 13 April	4	2	4/14/2020	4/15/2020	9-7001-8000.txt 9-8001-9000.txt
Red Dawn Setting, Begin	8	13	4/14/2020	4/26/2020	10-1-1000.txt 9-11001-12000.txt 9-12001-13000.txt 9-8001-9000.txt
talk on the phone?	7	3	4/16/2020	4/18/2020	9-7001-8000.txt 9-8001-

					9000.txt
Red Dawn Setting, Begin 13April	3	3	4/20/2020	4/22/2020	10-1-1000.txt
Drug repurposing screen paper	2	1	4/22/2020	4/22/2020	9-10001-11000.txt
questions from leadership group	1	1	4/22/2020	4/22/2020	9-10001-11000.txt
interesting paper	4	1	4/22/2020	4/22/2020	9-10001-11000.txt
New paper	2	1	4/23/2020	4/23/2020	9-10001-11000.txt
background for NAM-APHA advisory group call tomorrow	4	15	4/23/2020	5/7/2020	10-3001-4000.txt 9-11001-12000.txt 9-13001-14000.txt
NIAID COVID strategic plan	1	1	4/24/2020	4/24/2020	9-10001-11000.txt
2020 April 25 Daily COVID-19 LST Report (Red Dawn Setting, Begin 13April 08:00]	1	1	4/26/2020	4/26/2020	9-12001-13000.txt
Register Now! Webinar on Can old drugs take down a new coronavirus? The state of COVID-19 drug repurposing efforts	1	1	4/27/2020	4/27/2020	9-12001-13000.txt
Register Now! Webinar on Can old drugs take down a new coronavirus? The state of COVID-19 drug repurposing	2	1	4/27/2020	4/27/2020	9-12001-13000.txt
Direct observation of repeated infections with endemic coronaviruses	13	2	4/28/2020	4/29/2020	9-13001-14000.txt
apropos "warp speed" vaccine development	1	1	4/30/2020	4/30/2020	9-14001-15000.txt
Just in: Compilation of RECS	1	1	4/30/2020	4/30/2020	9-14001-15000.txt
INVITIVION: virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19	1	1	5/3/2020	5/3/2020	10-1-1000.txt
Paul H. Lambert recommends as speaker in the webinar: IABS webinar on COVID, MAY 27: update Information, with	1	1	5/4/2020	5/4/2020	10-1001-2000.txt
lecture on COVID-19 animal models by Emmie de Wit, NIAID, on May 6 at 3:00 p.m.	2	1	5/4/2020	5/4/2020	10-1001-2000.txt
Paul H. Lambert recommends as speaker in the webinar: IABS webinar on COVID, MAY 27: update Information,	2	2	5/4/2020	5/5/2020	10-1001-2000.txt

Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: planning discussion on May 7	11	7	5/4/2020	5/10/2020	10-1001-2000.txt 10-3001-4000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing, Begin May 5, 12:50 EDT	84	49	5/5/2020	6/22/2020	10-2001-3000.txt 10-3001-4000.txt 10-4001-5000.txt 10-5001-6000.txt
Paper of interest	3	1	5/6/2020	5/6/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
webinar on extreme weather and COVID-19	9	8	5/8/2020	5/15/2020	10-3001-4000.txt 10-4001-5000.txt
Re. List of Chinese participants - Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: planning discussion on May 7	1	1	5/11/2020	5/11/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: ZOOM link for first call	1	1	5/11/2020	5/11/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: final docs, Zoom link (and back up phone number)	4	1	5/11/2020	5/11/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: final docs	1	1	5/12/2020	5/12/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19: Zoom link for Wednesday May 13 call 9pm et	9	3	5/12/2020	5/14/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing, Begin May 5, 12:50	2	2	5/13/2020	5/14/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing, Begin May 5,	2	2	5/13/2020	5/14/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
CCPP19: Early safety preprint posted on medRxiv	1	1	5/14/2020	5/14/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Your preprint 10.1101/2020.05.12.20099879 has posted on medRxiv	1	1	5/14/2020	5/14/2020	10-3001-4000.txt
Follow up Meeting to Discuss Results of the Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19	6	5	5/14/2020	5/18/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
Nice interview with Cat Lutz	4	1	5/15/2020	5/15/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
SARS-COV-2 NHP Research Publications	1	1	5/20/2020	5/20/2020	10-4001-5000.txt

SARS-CoV-2 NHP Research Publications	3	1	5/20/2020	5/20/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
3rd Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19	3	3	5/20/2020	5/22/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
background for tomorrow's NAM-APHA advisory group call	2	1	5/21/2020	5/21/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
Reaching out to Red Dawn team members	2	1	5/25/2020	5/25/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
3rd Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting on COVID-19 Tuesday, June 9, 9-11PM ET	11	10	6/1/2020	6/10/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
ZOOM link 3rd Virtual U.S. China dialogue meeting, Tuesday, June 9, 9-11PM ET	4	6	6/4/2020	6/9/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
[SUSPICIOUS MESSAGE] Agenda & background for NAM-APHA advisory group call at 2 pm	1	1	6/5/2020	6/5/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
Agenda & background for NAM-APHA advisory group call at 2 pm	2	1	6/5/2020	6/5/2020	10-4001-5000.txt
June 10 Daily COVID-19 LST Report	2	2	6/10/2020	6/11/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
Join us for a Conversation with California's COVID-19 Testing Task Force Leaders on Friday, June 26th	1	1	6/22/2020	6/22/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing, Update on California Testing Task Force Webinar Friday 26 June, 4-	1	1	6/23/2020	6/23/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing, Update on California Testing Task Force Webinar Friday 26 June, 4-5 PM EDT	3	3	6/23/2020	6/25/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Posturing	3	6	6/25/2020	6/30/2020	10-5001-6000.txt
Red Dawn Rhapsodizing Begin July 2, 2020	61	25	7/2/2020	7/26/2020	10-6001-7000.txt 10-7001-7245.txt
Op-Ed - Treat COVID19 as though it were airborne - until we prove that it is not	5	2	7/14/2020	7/15/2020	10-6001-7000.txt
July 20 Daily COVID-19 LST Report	2	2	7/20/2020	7/21/2020	10-6001-7000.txt
COVID-19 Conversations: K-12 School Reopening Webinar - Draft Agenda	2	3	7/21/2020	7/23/2020	10-6001-7000.txt
[EXTERNAL] Your preprint 10.1101/2020.07.29.20162917 has posted on medRxiv	2	1	7/30/2020	7/30/2020	10-7001-7245.txt
Preprint 10.1101/2020.07.29.20162917 has posted on medRxiv	1	1	7/30/2020	7/30/2020	10-7001-7245.txt

(b)(6)



From: Bilahari Kausikan (b)(6)
To: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 09:15:10 +0800

And do you use Signal or WhatsApp?

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Jan 2021, at 09:13, Bilahari Kausikan (b)(6) wrote:

What will you do next?

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Jan 2021, at 08:52, Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

Finished on Wednesday. CC'ing my personal email here. Look forward to remaining a loyal reader of yours.

From: Bilahari Kausikan (b)(6)
Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:49 PM
To: Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Are you staying in State?

Sent from my iPhone

On 16 Jan 2021, at 08:42, Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
Michael R. Pompeo
January 15, 2021

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
2. **WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. **Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a

full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From:	"Kelly Craft" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Fri, 15 Jan 2021 20:21:30 -0500

Thank you !

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On January 15, 2021 at 7:42:22 PM EST, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo
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In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

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--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From:	(b)(6)
To:	Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date:	Sat, 16 Jan 2021 16:22:44 -0500

Thanks for keeping me on the distro list. What's next for you? Can I/AHS be helpful?

On Fri, Jan 15, 2021 at 7:42 PM Feith, David (b)(6) @state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Office of the Spokesperson

January 15, 2021

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As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus’s origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

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

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(b)(6) @state.gov

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(b)(7)(E)

From: (b)(6)
To: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 00:51:52 +0000

This is great

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 15, 2021, at 7:42 PM, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
Michael R. Pompeo
January 15, 2021

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

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David Feith

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

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(b)(7)(E)

From: "Feith, David" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 14:30:44 +0000

Mike, thanks for your very generous note. It's extremely gratifying, especially given my admiration for your wizardly research skills and always careful and measured analytical work. It has been a pleasure and an education to work with you over the last several months, and I hope we get the chance to keep it up, one way or another, after I leave State this week. (CC'ing my personal email here.)

(b)(5)

Thanks again for your kind words. They truly mean a lot from someone who has performed such long faithful service to country.

All best,
David

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On January 16, 2021 at 11:18:00 AM EST, Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
Thanks to your expertise, focus, and inspiring tenacity, the West now has a much greater chance of eventually understanding and appreciating two of the most important threats to our civilization -- i.e., pathogenic gain of function research and authoritarian regimes. For this I am profoundly grateful.

(b)(5)

You have inspired me to investigate the term 'mensch'. Having done so, I can think of no higher nor more apt complement. You are a mensch. Thank you sir, very much.

All the very best to you and yours,
Mike

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

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42 PM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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U.S. Department of State

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(b)(7)(E)

From: (b)(6)
To: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sun, 17 Jan 2021 00:07:19 +0000

I assumed that was the calibration: enough of a shot into the bow of Beijing and WHO, but knowing a Friday night statement wouldn't make much news. Still, I find the hesitancy at the top, combined with the incredibly serious insinuations of the middle, a difficult combination. Let's chat on Monday if you have a moment. Thanks. Hope the weekend is quiet.

(b)(6)

From: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Saturday, January 16, 2021 7:01 PM
To: (b)(6)
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Yep. We did the other side a favor with the timing. But on the assumption this info is arresting enough that it will earn/force greater scrutiny, even without winning the news cycle. Happy to talk if helpful.

--

David Feith
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (EAP)
U.S. Department of State
202.647.4612 (o)

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

On January 15, 2021 at 10:12:52 PM EST, (b)(6) wrote:
Wow. Quite a Friday night statement!

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

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

Sent: Friday, January 15, 2021 7:42:20 PM

Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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Michael R. Pompeo

January 15, 2021

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

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(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Craft, Kelly (USUN New York)"(b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin; Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 01:21:31 +0000

Thank you !

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On January 15, 2021 at 7:42:22 PM EST, Feith, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
<https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>

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The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

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<https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology
Office of the Spokesperson
January 15, 2021

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined

with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting "gain-of-function" research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including "RaTG13," which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV's work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China's past biological weapons work, which

Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.

- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today's revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19's origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus's origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

--

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

(b)(6)

(b)(6) @state.gov

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6)@state.gov>

To: (b)(6)

Subject: RE: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Date: Tue, 16 Feb 2021 14:14:07 +0000

Dear (b)(6)

I truly appreciate your review (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Again, many thanks for your thoughts!

Andreea

From: (b)(6)

Sent: Friday, February 12, 2021 6:15 PM

To: Paulopol, Andreea (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Hi Andreea,

I've now spoken to a few people about this paper and read a portion myself (b)(5)

(b)(5)

Take care,

(b)(6)

Observations about the paper:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)



From: Paulopol, Andreea (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 4:00 PM

To: (b)(6)

Subject: FW: Dr. Quay's paper on Bayesian analysis of COVID-19

Dear (b)(6)

Do you know whether anyone has reviewed this paper? Debunked it with science?

DOI* links to the paper can be found at:

- The paper - <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4477081>
- The video - <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4477212>

There is a Seattle newspaper talking about this paper:

<https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/new-study-by-dr-steven-quay-concludes-that-sars-cov-2-came-from-a-laboratory-301217952.html>

Regards,
Andreea

Andreea Paulopol
Physical Scientist
Office of Chemical and Biological Weapons Affairs
Bureau of Arms Control, Compliance and Verification
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20520
Desk: (b)(6)
(b)(6)@state.gov

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(7)(E)

From: "Paulopol, Andreea I" [(b)(6)]@state.gov>
To: svcSMARTCrossLow_SMG <svcSMARTCrossLowAA@smg.state.gov>
Subject: FW: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
Date: Tue, 26 Jan 2021 18:39:25 +0000

From: [(b)(6)]
Sent: Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:32 AM
To: Paulopol, Andreea I [(b)(6)]@state.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "U.S. Department of State" <usstatebpa@public.govdelivery.com>
Date: January 15, 2021 at 7:38:06 PM EST
To: meda22@aol.com
Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
Reply-To: usstatebpa@public.govdelivery.com

You are subscribed to East Asia and the Pacific for U.S. Department of State. This information has recently been updated, and is now available.

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

01/15/2021 07:23 PM EST

Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that

several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.

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[Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology](#)

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(b)(6)



From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
 Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>;
To: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
 (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: 2 news articles from Japan (in English) on China's BW research/compliance etc
Date: Mon, 7 Dec 2020 18:37:09 +0000

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 1:35 PM
To: Pease, Michael (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: PLA NDU 2017 book on "Strategy"

Section 5 (Pages 165-172) of Chapter 9, titled "Warfare in Biological Domain" of NDU's book is attached, along with its Table of Contents.
 It's very general...
 (INR helped me on this search...)

V/R, (b)(6)

(b)(7)(E)

Biological Weapons the Focus of China's Military Research in the Last 20 Years

Published March 25, 2020 By Monika Chansoria



<https://japan-forward.com/biological-weapons-the-focus-of-chinas-military-research-in-the-last-20-years/>

Independent Chinese media outlet *Caixin Global* revealed that Chinese laboratories had in fact identified a mystery virus — later identified as COVID-19 — to be a highly infectious new pathogen by late December 2019. But they were ordered to stop further testing, destroy samples, and suppress the news to the fullest extent possible.

The regional health official in Wuhan City, the epicenter of the pandemic, demanded the destruction of the lab samples, which established the cause of an unexplained viral pneumonia since January 1, 2020. China didn't acknowledge that there was human-to-human transmission until more than three weeks later.

Caixin Global provides the clearest evidence yet of the scale of this fatal cover-up in the very crucial early weeks, when the opportunity was lost to control the

outbreak — a contagion that spread throughout the world thereafter, and has caused a global shutdown, literally.

Warfare Beyond Rules

It is only apposite to go back and trace the many notable military research writings that have advocated for more than two decades that China should prepare itself to wage warfare beyond rules put in place by the Western powers.

In 1996, two Chinese military officers (colonels in the People's Liberation Air Force (PLAAF), Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, took part in military exercises conducted by China for the purpose of coercing the island nation of Taiwan. This was the period when Taipei was getting ready for its presidential elections. Soon enough, East Asia witnessed the return of great power rivalry to the region when the United States dispatched two aircraft carrier groups to the area.

This became the backdrop in which these two colonels met in a small town in southeastern China's Fujian province and began their research. The end product was a co-authored book, *Chao Xian Zhan: Dui Quanqiu Hua Shidai Zhanzheng yu Zhanfa de Xiangding (Warfare Beyond Rules: Judgment of War and Methods of War in the Era of Globalization)*, published by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Art Press.

The central premise of *Warfare Beyond Rules* is that China should be prepared to conduct "warfare beyond all boundaries and limitations to defend itself."

In the book, Qiao and Wang argue that the existing rules of war, international laws, and agreements were developed by the Western powers, and that the United States leads the race in new-age military technologies and weapon platforms. Writing more than two decades ago, Qiao and Wang stated that, because of higher costs, cutting-edge weapons' platforms could trigger a national economic collapse.

A Revolution in Warfare By All Means

The book — termed *Unrestricted Warfare* in the English translated version — went on to state that geographical security is an outdated concept. Threats to national security may not come from cross-border invasion, but from non-military actions. Qiao and Wang articulated that definitions of security must include geographical, political, economic, resource, religious, cultural, data, environmental, and near-earth space security.

While commenting on the bans on chemical, biological weapons, and landmines, the authors argued that for a country to accept rules which regulate war depends on whether the laws and rules are favorable to its own national interests. They contended that powerful nations use the rules to control others, for instance “by banning chemical and biological weapons.”

The essence drawn out from these arguments is that China should freely decide and opt for the means of warfighting by disregarding agreements and codes of conduct developed over the past decades by the West. Basically, in theory, the book *Warfare Beyond Rules* highlights thinking out of the box.

Most significantly, with an aim to target the adversary’s vulnerable targets in unexpected ways, *Warfare Beyond Rules* underlined the concepts of “asymmetric warfare.” This included guerrilla war, terrorist actions, and cyber-attacks against data networks.

Qiao and Wang called for a “revolution in war,” which combines conventional with non-war actions, and military with non-military actions. In an alarming opinion, they stated that war may include a blend of stealth planes and cruise missiles, along with biochemical, financial, and terrorist attacks.

War for Biological Dominance

More than a decade later, a 2010 publication titled *War for Biological Dominance* (制生权战争) emphasized the impact of biology on future warfare.

The book, published by Xinhua Publishing House in October 2010, was authored by Guo Jiwei (郭继卫), a professor and chief physician at the Third Military Medical University, Army University. The book highlighted the decline of traditional military thinking and focused upon emerging trends in military thinking, the invisible battlefield, and unexpected changes.

Subsequently, in 2015, then-president of the Academy of Military Medical Sciences He Fuchu (贺福初) argued in an essay that biotechnology would assume the shape of a new strategic commanding height in national defense. These will range from biomaterials to “brain control” weapons.

He Fuchu went on to become the vice president of the PLA’s Academy of Military Sciences (中国人民解放军军事科学研究院 Zhōngguó Rénmín Jiěfàngjūn Jūnshì

Kēxué Yánjiūyuàn) — the highest-level research institute of the PLA, headquartered in Beijing.

Chinese writings over the past two decades have amplified that cross integration of biotechnology, engineering, and information technology will become the new strategic doctrine for future military revolutions, as cited in the October 2015 edition of the *Liberation Army Daily*. These writings consistently put forth that weaponization of living organisms shall become a reality in the future, with non-traditional combat styles taking center stage.

Biology Among the 7 New Domains of Warfare

Foremost among the new-age defense high frontiers will be the biological frontier. Biodiversity and technology innovation will redefine biological military revolution. Since 2016, China's Central Military Commission has been funding projects on military brain science, advanced bio-mimetic systems (that mimic biological systems), biological and biomimetic materials, and new-age biotechnology.

Further and more significantly, biology has been demarcated as “one of the seven new domains of warfare” in a 2017 book titled *New Highland of War* (National Defense University Press) authored by Zhang Shibo (张仕波). Zhang is a retired general and former president of China's National Defense University. In the book, Zhang argues that modern biotechnological development is gradually showing strong signs characteristic of an offensive capability, including the possibility of employing “specific ethnic genetic attacks” (特定种族基因攻击).

More recently, the 2017 edition of *Science of Military Strategy* (战略学) — an authoritative textbook published by the PLA's National Defense University — has introduced a new section on “biology as a domain of military struggle.” This section discusses new potential kinds of biological warfare, including “specific ethnic genetic attacks.”

Contemporary advances in biotechnology and genetic engineering hold worrying implications for military affairs. The Chinese military's interest in these gets reflected through its strategic writings and research, which consistently have argued that advances in biology are contributing to changing the form or character (形态) of conflict.

China's 13th Five-Year Plan

China's national strategy of military-civil fusion (军民融合) has highlighted biology as a priority. As a result, as per the September 2017 *Thirteenth Five-Year Special Plan for Military-Civilian Integration Development*, the Party Central Committee, the State Council, and the Central Military Commission have put in motion the full implementation of the development strategy of military-civilian integration in the field of science and technology. This was done in accordance with the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China.

Among the key tasks of this 2017 plan are the implementation of key technology-military-civilian integration projects.

In accordance with the requirements of the key national research and development (R&D) plan for the design of the entire chain and implementation of integrated organizations, a number of deployments have been made. These include the fields of biology, among others, with dual-use features to accelerate the formation of new productivity and combat effectiveness in scientific and technological achievements.

The plan also aims to strengthen the capability of military and civilian science and technology collaborative innovation and coordinate the layout of basic research and cutting-edge technology research. Accordingly, a special fund for basic research military-civilian integration has been set up to focus on supporting basic national defense research projects and promote the transformation of the results of basic civil research into military applications — more specifically, in the fields of biological crossover and disruptive technologies.

Study of the Chinese military's interest in biology as an emerging domain of warfare becomes increasingly relevant in the current COVID-19 context, particularly when viewed against the two-decade-old backdrop of emphasis on biological frontiers of warfare put forth by Chinese military thinkers.

It is well-established that Chinese military strategists have been arguing about potential "genetic weapons" and the possibility of a "bloodless victory." The task becomes all the more challenging, owing to the lack of transparency and uncertainty of ethics in China's research activities.

Thus, the research writings cited above defend China's move, if it were to come to that, of not hesitating to use as many means of warfare as possible. Clearly,

those include weapons that are “not permitted by international law and the rules of war,” such as chemical and biological weapons.

The dangerous recommendations of most of these writings raise alarm bells about China’s future commitment on banning chemical and biological weapons.

RELATED ARTICLE: Is China Producing Biological Weapons? Look At Its Capabilities and International Compliance

Author: Monika Chansoria

Dr. Monika Chansoria is a Senior Fellow at The Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo and the author of five books on Asian security. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of The Japan Institute of International Affairs or any other organization with which the author is affiliated.

Is China Producing Biological Weapons? Look At Its Capabilities and International Compliance



March 5, 2020 By **Monika Chansoria**

<https://japan-forward.com/is-china-producing-biological-weapons-look-at-its-capabilities-and-international-compliance/>



China's novel coronavirus epidemic could well become Xi Jinping's greatest internal challenge. The epidemic's economic and social ramifications are stretching beyond control and have assumed the shape of a global threat.

The virus' genome initially was referred to as "Wuhan pneumonia" in a few quarters, after the city in central China where the first human infections were detected.

From keeping an economy up and running with 750 million people in quarantine, to ensuring that their faith in the communist party's regime that appears to be already shattered doesn't turn into rebellion, the challenge for Xi is complex and galore.

This article reviews the background of Chinese activities in the field of biological weapons research, capability, and international compliance.

Geneva Protocol on Chemical and Biological Weapons

The Geneva Protocol calls for the prohibition of the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous, or other gases, and of bacteriological methods of warfare. It prohibits the use of chemical and biological weapons in international armed conflicts. It was signed in Geneva on June 17, 1925, and registered in the League of Nations on September 7, 1929.

The People's Republic of China acceded to the Geneva Protocol and reaffirmed its commitment to it in July 1952.

This protocol did not, however, prohibit the production or stockpiling of chemical weapons. That ban was achieved only many decades later under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) in 1993, which China signed that year but ratified only in 1997.

It was reported in the September 1988 edition of *Jiefangjun Bao* (解放军报 *People's Liberation Army Daily*) that China carried out in Tibet what it called "chemical defense maneuvers in the high-altitude zone to test newly developed equipment."

I wrote in my book titled *Nuclear China: A Veiled Secret* (KW Publishers, 2014) that almost no details of these programs and capabilities have appeared in open source literature. The Chinese secrecy and ambiguity on these subjects remains unparalleled.

If Chinese writings on chemical weapons are sparse, the case of any information on biological weapons is even worse. Although the Chinese government has declared past chemical weapons related activity to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) at The Hague, the information has not been made public and remains strictly classified.

Biological Weapons Convention

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their

Destruction (BWC) was signed in London, Moscow, and Washington on April 10, 1972. China finally acceded to the BWC in 1984.

While destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles was achieved through the CWC and the OPCW, the progress on BWC was rather slow, primarily due to the lack of a formal verification mechanism. More specifically, in the case of China, the BWC verification protocol was bogged down, in part because of policy differences between China and the United States over the issue of export controls.

The 1972 BWC bans “microbial or other biological agents, or toxins whatever their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes.” Likewise, the BWC bans “weapons, equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict.” The potential means of delivery systems could be cruise missiles, fighters, bombers, helicopters, artillery, rockets, mortars and sprayers.

It is extremely difficult to assess from open source material whether China possesses the technology for delivering biological weapons agents. However, a few sources indicate that modern Chinese cruise missiles can theoretically deliver both chemical and biological agents.

China is not a member of the Australia Group (AG), a voluntary supply-side export control multilateral regime established in 1985 to identify those exports which need to be controlled so as not to contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons. Nevertheless, China’s export control regulations currently bring its laws in line with the AG guidelines and control lists.

BWC and China’s Compliance

China officially states that it remains in compliance with its BWC obligations and that it has never had an active biological weapons program. However, during the course of research for my 2014 book, the earliest efforts at biological weapons’ defense by the Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) were discovered. These were anti-plague units formed in 1952 during the involvement of the Chinese People’s Volunteer Army in Korea.

As per U.S. sources, China’s biological weapons activity has been extensive. According to the 1993 *State Department Compliance Report*, China’s activities continued even after it had joined the BWC. Moreover, a 2010 report indicated

that the dual-use activities during that period could have, in fact, breached the BWC.

It needs to be acknowledged that China's infrastructure provides it with advanced capabilities, allowing it to develop, produce, and weaponize agents. Reports of a Chinese biological weapons facility existing in the Xinjiang province, not very far from the nuclear testing site at Lop Nor, have emerged frequently. In fact, an outbreak of hemorrhagic fever in the late 1980s at this facility could possibly have been the result of China's offensive biological weapons research, according to the 1999 book by Ken Alibek titled *Biohazard: The Chilling True Story of the Largest Covert Biological Weapons Program in the World—Told from Inside by the Man Who Ran It* (Random House, 1999).

Earlier, in December 1994, the *Ming Pao Daily* published an article by Wong Mei titled, "Biological Army Unit Does Research in Bacteriological Warfare, Making Profit of 1 Million Yuan Each Year," which elaborated upon the PLA's Anti-biological Warfare Unit.

At one time, the public health division of the PLA's then-General Department had circulated a notice, stating that there was an outbreak of endemic hemorrhagic fever in a "certain" place whose major means of infection were rats and fleas. The U.S. Department of Defense, in its report, *Proliferation: Threat and Response*, maintained that:

China continues to maintain some elements of an offensive biological warfare program it is believed to have started in the 1950s.... China is believed to possess an offensive biological warfare capability based on technology developed prior to its accession to the [BWC] in 1984.

Further, a Spring 2002 *Nonproliferation Review* paper, titled "China's Role in the Chemical and Biological Disarmament Regimes," cited a 1996 Beijing Renmin Junyi Chubanshe publication by Zhu Kewen, Gao Zixian, and Gong Chun, titled *Zhongguo Junshi Yixueshi*. The *Nonproliferation Review* paper stated that it was believed that China had conducted research on potential biological weapons agents, including the causative agents of tularemia, Q fever, plague, anthrax, and eastern equine encephalitis.

Beijing is said to possess the technology to mass-produce most traditional biological weapons agents, including causative agents of anthrax, tularemia, and botulism. The same publication argued that China's biological weapons defense doctrine emphasized on ridding an affected area of infected insects and vermin on the assumption that modern armies would employ these crude methods of delivery.

The PLA's "Anti-Biological Warfare Unit" stationed in northern China was reported in the *Ming Pao Daily*, with its official name being the "Military Medical Research Institute of the Beijing Military Region" (*Junqu Junshi Yixue Yanjiusuo*). Specialized equipment was also fielded to counter the biological weapons threat to the troops of China's PLA, including aerosol samplers and biological weapons agent sampling kits in unspecified numbers.

The PRC's Biological Warfare Research Organizations

The Spring 2002 *Nonproliferation Review* put out that, as far as cultivation of biological weapons agents was concerned, there were biological products factories at Wuchang (one of 13 urban districts of the prefecture-level city of Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province), Chongqing, and Kunming. Biological weapons agent production facilities are also located in Shenyang, Shanghai, Lanzhou, and Guangzhou.

Besides, there are three primary large-scale biological research and production sites, namely:

1) Yan'an Bacteriological Factory at Yan'an and Xishan

Yan'an is a prefecture-level city in the Shanbei region bordering Shanxi to the east and Gansu to the west. Xishan is one of the seven districts of the prefecture-level city of Kunming, the capital of Yunnan province in southwest China.

These facilities have four types of bacteriological bombs:

- Smoke-type bacteria bombs (may refer to aerosols)
- Paper canister type, bacteriological containers
- Malignant *shayan* bacteria grenade
- Tetanus bacteria bomb

2) Dalian Biological Products Factory at Dalian

Dalian is a port city on the Liaodong Peninsula, at the southern tip of China's Liaoning province. Its products include:

- Tetanus/cholera mix vaccine
- Diphtheria vaccine
- Rabies virus vaccine
- Tetanus vaccine (toxoid)
- Typhus vaccine

3) Changchun Biological Products Factory at Changchun

Changchun is the capital of northeast China's Jilin province.

It would suffice to conclude that, akin to the ambiguity and secrecy surrounding China's nuclear weapons and other aspects of military modernization, Beijing has successfully created a wall preventing any outflow of information regarding its biological or chemical weapons capabilities, including production and mobilization potential. What remains available in the declassified realm is the PLA's dictum that using chemical weapons would "be just like releasing the evil spirits from Pandora's box, eventually slipping towards the abyss of nuclear war."

Author: Monika Chansoria

Dr. Monika Chansoria is a Senior Fellow at The Japan Institute of International Affairs in Tokyo and the author of five books on Asian security. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of The Japan Institute of International Affairs or any other organization with which the author is affiliated.

01 15 2021 Secretary Pompeo's Statement on COVID Origin

Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

01/15/2021 07:23 PM EST

Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

The United States has repeatedly called for a transparent and thorough investigation into the origin of COVID-19. Understanding the origin of this pandemic is essential for global public health, economic recovery, and international security.

To assist the vital work of the World Health Organization (WHO) investigative team that arrived in China this week, the United States government is today sharing new information concerning the activities inside China's government laboratories in 2019.

In particular, we urge the WHO to press the government of China to address the following:

1. **Illnesses at the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):** The United States government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
2. **WIV Research on "RaTG13" and "gain of function":** Starting in at least 2016, WIV researchers studied RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). Since the outbreak, the WIV has not been transparent nor consistent about its work with RaTG13 or other similar viruses, including possible "gain of function" experiments to enhance transmissibility or lethality.
3. **Secret WIV Links to Military Research:** Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China's military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.

The COVID-19 pandemic was avoidable. Any responsible country would have invited world health investigators to Wuhan within days of an outbreak. China instead refused offers of help – including from the United States – and punished brave Chinese doctors, scientists, and journalists who tried to alert the world to the dangers of the virus. Beijing continues today to withhold vital information that scientists need to protect the world from this deadly virus, and the next one.

The United States reiterates the importance of unfettered access to virus samples, lab records and personnel, eyewitnesses, and whistleblowers to ensure the credibility of the WHO's final report. Until the CCP allows a full and thorough accounting of what happened in Wuhan, it is only a matter of time until China births another pandemic and inflicts it on the Chinese people, and the world.

01 15 2021 Fact Sheet Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

Fact Sheet: Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology

01/15/2021 07:08 PM EST

Office of the Spokesperson

For more than a year, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has systematically prevented a transparent and thorough investigation of the COVID-19 pandemic's origin, choosing instead to devote enormous resources to deceit and disinformation. Nearly two million people have died. Their families deserve to know the truth. Only through transparency can we learn what caused this pandemic and how to prevent the next one.

The U.S. government does not know exactly where, when, or how the COVID-19 virus—known as SARS-CoV-2—was transmitted initially to humans. We have not determined whether the outbreak began through contact with infected animals or was the result of an accident at a laboratory in Wuhan, China.

The virus could have emerged naturally from human contact with infected animals, spreading in a pattern consistent with a natural epidemic. Alternatively, a laboratory accident could resemble a natural outbreak if the initial exposure included only a few individuals and was compounded by asymptomatic infection. Scientists in China have researched animal-derived coronaviruses under conditions that increased the risk for accidental and potentially unwitting exposure.

The CCP's deadly obsession with secrecy and control comes at the expense of public health in China and around the world. The previously undisclosed information in this fact sheet, combined with open-source reporting, highlights three elements about COVID-19's origin that deserve greater scrutiny:

1. Illnesses inside the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV):

- The U.S. government has reason to believe that several researchers inside the WIV became sick in autumn 2019, before the first identified case of the outbreak, with symptoms consistent with both COVID-19 and common seasonal illnesses. This raises questions about the credibility of WIV senior researcher Shi Zhengli's public claim that there was "zero infection" among the WIV's staff and students of SARS-CoV-2 or SARS-related viruses.
- Accidental infections in labs have caused several previous virus outbreaks in China and elsewhere, including a 2004 SARS outbreak in Beijing that infected nine people, killing one.
- The CCP has prevented independent journalists, investigators, and global health authorities from interviewing researchers at the WIV, including those who were ill in the fall of 2019. Any credible inquiry into the origin of the virus must include interviews with these researchers and a full accounting of their previously unreported illness.

2. Research at the WIV:

- Starting in at least 2016 – and with no indication of a stop prior to the COVID-19 outbreak – WIV researchers conducted experiments involving RaTG13, the bat coronavirus identified by the WIV in January 2020 as its closest sample to SARS-CoV-2 (96.2% similar). The WIV became a focal point for international coronavirus research after the 2003 SARS outbreak and has since studied animals including mice, bats, and pangolins.
- The WIV has a published record of conducting “gain-of-function” research to engineer chimeric viruses. But the WIV has not been transparent or consistent about its record of studying viruses most similar to the COVID-19 virus, including “RaTG13,” which it sampled from a cave in Yunnan Province in 2013 after several miners died of SARS-like illness.
- WHO investigators must have access to the records of the WIV’s work on bat and other coronaviruses before the COVID-19 outbreak. As part of a thorough inquiry, they must have a full accounting of why the WIV altered and then removed online records of its work with RaTG13 and other viruses.

3. Secret military activity at the WIV:

- Secrecy and non-disclosure are standard practice for Beijing. For many years the United States has publicly raised concerns about China’s past biological weapons work, which Beijing has neither documented nor demonstrably eliminated, despite its clear obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention.
- Despite the WIV presenting itself as a civilian institution, the United States has determined that the WIV has collaborated on publications and secret projects with China’s military. The WIV has engaged in classified research, including laboratory animal experiments, on behalf of the Chinese military since at least 2017.
- The United States and other donors who funded or collaborated on civilian research at the WIV have a right and obligation to determine whether any of our research funding was diverted to secret Chinese military projects at the WIV.

Today’s revelations just scratch the surface of what is still hidden about COVID-19’s origin in China. Any credible investigation into the origin of COVID-19 demands complete, transparent access to the research labs in Wuhan, including their facilities, samples, personnel, and records.

As the world continues to battle this pandemic – and as WHO investigators begin their work, after more than a year of delays – the virus’s origin remains uncertain. The United States will continue to do everything it can to support a credible and thorough investigation, including by continuing to demand transparency on the part of Chinese authorities.

From: "Suarez, Gonzalo O" <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Park, Christopher J (T) <(b)(6)@state.gov>;
To: Ganzer, Ann K <(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Kang, Eliot <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
Date: Sat, 16 Jan 2021 04:42:26 +0000

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Date: January 15, 2021 at 7:40:15 PM EST
Subject: Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin
To: Suarez, Gonzalo O <(b)(6)@state.gov>

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Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin

01/15/2021 07:23 PM EST

Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State

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