



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

May 8, 2024

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 May 3, 2024, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. In the August 28, 2023, production, there were portions of A-00000565067 deemed illegible. The Department has re-produced the document in a format that’s legible.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemptions are marked on each record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing these records and applying FOIA exemptions. All non-exempt material that is reasonably segregable from the exempt material has been released and is enclosed.

We will keep you informed as your case progresses. If you have any questions, your attorney may contact Assistant U.S. Attorney, Stephanie Johnson at stephanie.johnson5@usdoj.gov or (202) 252-7874. Please refer to the case number, FL-2020-00095, and the civil action number, 22-cv-01130, in all correspondence about this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Avery Bullard". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Avery Bullard
Acting Chief, Litigation and Appeals Branch
Office of Information Program 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

Timeframe	Excerpts	Classification	Source(s)	Serial/URL/Ref
1985	China joins Biological Warfare Convention	U	UN	UNODA website
1989	Kanatjan ALIBEKOV claimed that "[Soviet] analysts concluded [two epidemics of hemorrhagic fever that swept the region around a Chinese nuclear test site and biological weapons laboratory] were caused by an accident in a lab where Chinese scientists were weaponizing viral diseases."	U	NY Times	https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/05/world/soviet-defector-says-china-had-
1/1/2000	(SBU) The PRC also collaborated with the United States and other international partners to develop its laboratory network system through a series of the technical exchanges, training programs, and other collaborative efforts, which included biosafety and quality assurance. For over 20 years, the U.S. CDC has provided financial and technical support to the Chinese Center for Disease Prevention and Control (China CDC) to improve its influenza surveillance system.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
1/1/2003	Chinese Academy of Sciences approved construction of BSL-4 laboratory at WIV	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s-
12/31/2003	(SBU) In 2003, the PRC dedicated \$250 million (2 billion RMB) towards SARS prevention and control efforts, and subsequently an additional \$850 million (6.8 billion RMB) to further develop laboratory facilities throughout China.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365

1/1/2004	(U) Prior to the COVID-19 virus outbreak, the Chinese government initiated a series of self-reflective changes to its emergency response structure for preventing and controlling infectious diseases. After garnering widespread criticism for its response to the 2003 SARS epidemic, which resulted in 5,327 cases and 348 deaths in China, PRC leadership publicly recognized shortcomings in its management of the outbreak. The PRC subsequently accelerated reforms to improve its infectious disease prevention system and emergency response to epidemics, resulting in significant restructuring and a massive build-up in its capabilities.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 476
2004	[In 2004, China suffered a SARS outbreak due to a lab leak that killed one person and infected nine. PRC authorities blamed negligence and punished five senior officials at the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention.]	U	SCMP	Jun Mai, "Chinese research lab denies rumours of links to first coronavirus"
1/1/2004	(SBU) In response [to the 2004 SARS outbreaks from a Beijing lab], the PRC devoted massive funding to develop a secure biocontainment laboratory system to prevent future infectious disease incidents. With this strong financial support and legal framework, the former Ministry of Health (now the National Health Commission) swiftly launched a national biosafety program in 2004, establishing thousands of biocontainment laboratories with biosafety levels (BSLs) ranging from 1 to 4 depending on the pathogenicity of microbes being studied.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
1/1/2004	A senior French civil servant told <i>Le Figaro</i> that French military officers and scientists opposed the plan to help build the [WIV BSL-4] laboratory when it was announced in 2004 but were overruled by Jacques Chirac, then president, who wanted to boost cooperation with China.	U	The Times	https://t.co/rvaRQTMwEd https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/coronavi

1/1/2004	Construction of WIV BSL-4 Lab begins (National Bio Safety Lab, Wuhan)	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s
3/25/2004	A 26 year old female laboratory researcher from Anhui Province working for the Chinese National Institute of Virology in Beijing, which is part of China's Center for Disease Control, developed symptoms on 25 March 2004 and was clinically diagnosed with SARS coronavirus.	U	WHO	https://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_04_23/en/
4/8/2004	26 year old researcher's mother became ill in Anhui on 8 April and died on 19 April. She had provided bedside care to her daughter at the Beijing hospital	U	WHO	https://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_04_23/en/
4/17/2004	(SBU) PRC efforts were unable to prevent the leak of SARS-CoV in 2004 at the National Institute of Virology Laboratory (NIVL) in Beijing. Two graduate students researching the virus and seven of their close contacts were infected, hundreds of Chinese citizens were forced into quarantine, and major concerns were raised about Chinese biosafety regulations.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
4/17/2004	31 year old male laboratory researcher who also worked at the Beijing virology institute... Developed symptoms on 17 April and was hospitalized in isolation on 22 April. Health authorities have diagnosed him as a suspected SARS case.	U	WHO	https://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_04_23/en/
4/22/2004	20-year-old nurse in Beijing, reported [to be diagnosed with SARS coronavirus] yesterday (article published 4/23/2004), who remains in intensive care... "cared for the original 26 year old female researcher" in the Beijing hospital.	U	WHO	https://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_04_23/en/
4/22/2004	31 year old male laboratory researcher who also worked at the Beijing virology institute is hospitalized in isolation on 22 April 2004.	U	WHO	https://www.who.int/csr/don/2004_04_23/en/

4/26/2004	<p>The latest outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in China, with eight confirmed or suspected cases so far and hundreds quarantined, involves two researchers who were working with the virus in a Beijing research lab, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Monday (April 26).</p> <p>"We suspect two people, a 26-year-old female postgraduate student and a 31-year-old male postdoc, were both infected, apparently in two separate incidents," Bob Dietz, WHO spokesman in Beijing, told The Scientist.</p> <p>The woman was admitted to hospital on April 4, but the man apparently became infected independently 2 weeks later, being hospitalized on April 17. Both worked at the Chinese Institute of Virology in Beijing, part of China's Center for Disease Control. China has level three research guidelines and rules in place for handling the SARS virus, which are "of acceptable quality" to WHO, Dietz told The Scientist. But "it's a question of procedures and equipment. Frankly we are going to go in now a take a very close look," he said.</p>	U	The Scientist	https://archive.is/6wHD9#selection-895.0-899.121
7/2/2004	<p>Five top officials of the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Thursday were punished to take blame for this year's outbreak of SARS. These officials, including centre Director Li Liming, should take responsibility for the outbreak which started with the infection of two laboratory researchers by the SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) virus, Vice-Premier Wu Yi said Thursday at a working conference. Official investigation shows that it is an accident due to negligence. The cases had been linked to experiments using live and inactive SARS corona virus in the CDC's virology and diarrhea institutes where interdisciplinary research on the SARS virus was conducted. The CDC's mistakes also include allowing researchers to experiment with biological materials infected with SARS in common laboratories, and the failure to immediately report the abnormal health conditions of its researchers.</p>	U	China Daily	https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-07/02/content_344755.htm

12/31/2006	(SBU) The State Council issued over 14 biosafety measures from 2003 to 2006, including its "Management Regulations on Laboratory Biosafety of Pathogenic Microorganisms," setting clear guidelines for the handling of infectious or pathogenic diseases in biomedical laboratories.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
12/12/2007	WIV-associated scientists publish study on SARS-like CoV in horseshoe bats. Scientists succeed in making SL-CoV transmissible to humans by combining with HIV pseudovirus (provided by WIV) with SL-CoV	U	American Society of Microbiology, Journal of Virology	https://jvi.asm.org/content/82/4/1899
1/1/2011	(SBU) In a joint U.S. - China CDC publication in Health Affairs from 2011 during the PRC expansion of its laboratory system, China CDC Disease Control and Emergency Response Office Director Feng Zijian praised municipal and provincial level laboratories for their ability to meet "high-level biosafety standards." He acknowledged, however, that China CDC and clinical hospital laboratories lacked highly skilled staff and basic laboratory quality management procedures. China CDC also faced a shortage of infectious disease specialists, observed Feng, whose salaries were sometimes lower than the average income in China.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365

9/13/2011	<p>"On the heels of a damaging laboratory outbreak that sickened 27 students, leaders at China's Northeast Agricultural University last week dismissed two administrators, apologized for insufficient safety practices, and offered thousands of dollars in compensation to the students, who contracted brucellosis while dissecting goats in an anatomy course last December....University administrators now admit the goats were not properly quarantined prior to reaching the lab and that instructors did not follow standard safety procedures. Infected students told the Chinese press that they did not receive safety training ahead of the dissections. One told the newspaper SouthernWeekend that after a classmate asked about safety equipment, one instructor discouraged the group from wearing gloves, pointing out that he had been dissecting animals with his bare hands for 30 years. Several students then declined to wear gloves, the student said." Basic safety is apparently one of the areas to have suffered. In a survey of 231 fourth-year medical students published in the Chinese journal Northwest Medical Education in 2010, 19% were unfamiliar with the term "laboratory biosafety." Seventy-nine percent had heard the term but weren't completely sure what it meant. Some Chinese commentators now say nothing short of an overhaul of the country's higher education system is necessary. They are arguing that universities place too much emphasis on rewarding scientists who publish in prestigious journals—and that officials and administrators should pay more attention to enabling students and scientists to safely carry out their research.</p>	U	Science	https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2011/09/chinese-university-fires-administrators-offers-compensation-after-lab-accident
4/2/2012	Patient Mr Guo, Mal, 45 years old, begins two weeks of work in in Mojiang cave	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-

4/22/2012	Patient Li, male, 32 year old, started to work in the Mojiang cave... for a total of 4 days	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
4/22/2012	Patient, Mr. Wu, male, 30 years old started work in Mojiang cave	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
4/25/2012	<p>Patient Lu, Male, 42 years old, was admitted to the hospital on April 25, 2012. He had fever and been coughing for half of a month and for the past three days had difficulties in breathing. He worked in the mining hole before and was exposed to large amount of feces of bats. Half of month ago, he started to have fever. His body temperature was 38.5 Celsius at first. Occasionally, when he coughed, there was rusty colored mucus with blood clots. Felt bloated in the stomach, loss of appetite and hiccup. He initially went to the small clinic for transfusion but it was not helpful. Then, he was transferred to Yu Xi People's Hospital for treatment. During hospitalization, his body temperature was 40 Celsius and the fever did not follow any pattern. No sign of chills before the fever. Still coughed with rusty-colored mucus and blood clots. Difficulty in breathing for three days, especially after moving around. Chest tightness but no chest pain. No problem lying down. No sign of paroxysmal dyspnea at night. No abdominal pain.</p>	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/

4/26/2012	<p>Patient Li, male, 32 year old, has been admitted to the hospital on 2012/4/26. He had sign of coughing, coughing with mucus, fever and difficulty in breathing for four days. He worked in the mining well four days ago. There were many bats and their feces in the well. Four days ago, he started to show sign of coughing, coughing with mucus (white and slimy) and fever. It smelled really bad in the well. His temperature went up to 39 Celsius. When he coughed, he had difficulties in breathing. No chest pain or coughing up blood. No sign of paroxysmal dyspnea at night. No stomach ache or diarrhea. He went to the local hospital for treatment but no documentation. His symptom had improved but wanted further treatment. He was healthy.</p>	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/
4/26/2012	<p>Patient Zhou, male, age 63, was admitted to the hospital on April 26, 2012. He had signs of fever, coughing, difficulty in breathing, chest pain, and hiccups for more than ten days. 24 days prior to the hospitalization, he was working in the mining well for half of a month. He worked 7 hours a day. After exposing to the mining well where there were many bats and bats' feces, he started to show signs of coughing and fever and had a 38 Celsius body temperature. He immediately went to the local hospital. His fever went on and off in the next five consecutive days. The actual treatment remained unknown. The highest body temperature was 40 Celsius and the lower is 37 Celsius. He also experienced headache, dizziness, ear congestion and dry cough. There was no pattern of his illness in daytime or night time, along with chest pain. Difficulty in breathing was getting worse. Occasionally, having hiccups. No sign of nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.</p>	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/

<p>4/26/2012</p>	<p>Patient, Mr. Liu, male, 46 years old. He had sign of coughing, coughing with mucus, fever for 10 days and difficulty in breathing for three days and was admitted to the hospital on 2012/4/26. He worked in the mining well 10 days ago and was exposed to large amount of bats and their feces. He had cough, productive cough and hemoptysis (small amount), fever (highest to 39 Celsius) 10 days ago. He denied chest pain. He started to feel difficulty in breathing three days ago and went to the local hospital for treatment. The actual prescription remained unknown. For further treatment, he was admitted to our hospital.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Independent Science News</p>	<p>https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/</p>
<p>4/27/2012</p>	<p>Patient, Mr. Guo, male, 45 years old, was admitted to the hospital. He had signs of coughing, productive cough, shortness of breath, and fever for two weeks. The patient went into a 150 meter deep cave 24 days ago. He continuously inhaled some unknown gas for 10 days. About two weeks ago, started having signs of coughing, tightness in chest, shortness of breath, fever, yellow and greenish mucus (about 2-3 times a day, about 5 ml each time). When he rests, he feels tightness in chest, shortness of breath and fever around 39 – 40 Celsius. Before the fever, there are no chills. Along with headache and soreness in limbs. After taking some antipyretics (not sure what kind), the body temp went back to normal. 10 days ago, the mucus turned white and with some blood string (light red, 2-3 times a day). Went to the local clinic for treatment and was prescribed antibiotics (not sure what kind). The coughing with blood stopped three days after but other symptoms remained the same. 2 days ago came to the emergency and was admitted by us.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Independent Science News</p>	<p>https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/</p>

5/2/2012	Patient, Mr. Wu, male, 30 year old, was admitted to the hospital on May 2, 2012. He had signs of coughing, coughing with mucus, fever, chest tightness and shortness of breath for five days. Dry cough most of the time, sometimes with white slimy mucus and the mucus came out easily. Chills and fever. There was no observable pattern for the fever. The highest is 39.0 Celsius, accompany with headache, soreness in limbs, chest tightness and short of breath after some light exercise. No symptom of hemoptysis, dizziness and palpitation. Sweating, dizziness, loss of strength, sign of paroxysmal dyspnea at night and edema. No specific treatment after onset of illness. Admitted to our ER last night for further treatment.	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-for-sars-cov-2-and-the-covid-19-pandemic/
5/7/2012	Patient Zhou, male, age 63 dies of "severe lung infection, sepsis, septic shock and infection in abdominal cavity, and asytole and stop breathing"	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
5/28/2012	Patient Li, male, 32 year old, discharged from hospital after 24 days. Cause of recovery: "the patient was young and with a stronger immune system. He did not spend a long time in the mining well. The [anti-infection, anti-inflammation, and antiviral] treatment was immediate and effective.	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
5/28/2012	Patient, Mr. Wu, male, 30 years old released from hospital after 26 days. Cause of recovery: "The patient is younger with stronger immune system. In addition, he did not spend a long time in the mining field, the [anti-fungal medication and hormones] was immediate and effective."	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentsciencenews.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
6/1/2012	In June 2012, in Mojiang Hani Autonomous County, Yunnan Province, China, severe pneumonia without a known cause was diagnosed in 3 persons who had been working in an abandoned mine; all 3 patients died.	U	Emerging Infectious Diseases	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4036791/#_ffn_sect

6/12/2012	Patient Lu, Male, 42 years old dies of "Asystole and stop breathing, severe pneumonia, type I respiration failure, sepsis, and hepatitis B"	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentscience.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
6/27/2012	Patient, Mr. Liu, male 46 years old was subject to a thymectomy	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentscience.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
8/13/2012	Patient, Mr. Guo, Male, 45 years old, dies after bring hospitalized for 109 days of "Severe pneumonia, multiple organs failue, ARDS, inhaling lung impairment, interstitial pneumonia, and invsasive pulmonary aspergillosis (secondary infection)"	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentscience.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
9/10/2012	Patient, Mr. Liu, male, 46 years old released from the hospital after 107 days	U	Independent Science News	https://www.independentscience.org/commentaries/a-proposed-origin-
12/1/2012	"Half a year later, we investigated the presence of novel zoonotic pathogens in natural hosts in this cave. For the investigation, we collected anal swab samples from 20 bats (<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>), 9 rats (<i>R. flavipectus</i>), and 5 musk shrews (<i>Crocidura dracula</i>) from the mine for virome analysis."	U	CDC EID	wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/20/6/13-1022_article

12/31/2012	<p>(U) Within a decade, international experts praised China for its revamped pandemic emergency response system that demonstrated enhanced risk communication, infection prevention, control measures, and clinical management, particularly in its response to the 2013 H7N9 epidemic. From 2003 to 2012, Chinese government annual public health funding increased more than 10-fold from \$1.28 billion to \$17.46 billion RMB. In those 10 years, the PRC established a nationwide infectious disease surveillance system with over 3,000 outposts, including Chinese Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) branches, disease prevention and control laboratories, and public health supervision institutions throughout the country. The PRC's 2006 "National Contingency Plan for Public Health Emergency Response" created an emergency management system that streamlined information flow, promoted interagency coordination, and required timely public notification.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 476
2/7/2013	<p>WHCDC scientist TIAN Junhua was one of multiple scientists affiliated with other Chinese labs that published a study on phylogeny and origins of hantaviruses harbored by bats, insectivores, and rodents. "A total of 450 bats of eight different species were captured in Longquan city and Wenzhou city, Zhejiang Province in the spring of 2011. Similarly, 155 bats representing eight species were captured in Hubei Province in the spring of 2012. A total of 81 insectivores (representing two species – Anourosorex squamipes and Suncus murinus) were captured in Lianghe county, Yunnan Province in the spring of 2010 and autumn of 2011. In 2006, two shrews (from the species Sorex isodon and Suncus murinus) were collected from Yakeshi city, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.</p>	U	PLOS	https://journals.plos.org/plospathogens/article?id=10.1371/journal.ppat.1003159#s4

1/1/2014	WIV BSL-4 Lab reportedly completed in 2014 (National Bio Safety Lab, Wuhan)	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s
2/1/2014	LI Xu publishes thesis titled " Analysis of 6 patients with Severe Pneumonia Caused by Unknown Viruses" The abstract reads: "In April and May 2012, our hospital admitted 6 patients with severe pneumonia caused by unknown virus. The 6 patients were all workers in the same mine, and they were exposed to a lot of bats and bat droppings in the working environment. In the final outcome, 3 patients died and 3 patients survived. According to the identification of the Kunming Institute of Zoology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the bats in the working mines of the 6 patients are Chinese chrysanthemum bats. However, Chinese scientists have extracted SARS-like coronaviruses from the Chinese chrysanthemum bats in the process of searching for the SARS pathogen (SARS-like-CoV). This article inferred and analyzed the diagnosis and treatment process of 6 patients with unknown virus-related severe pneumonia and the possible causes and etiology."	U	CNKI	https://archive.vn/KJ78N#selection-287.0-303.167

6/1/2014	<p>Start of six-year NIH/NIAID-funded study: Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence project timeline. EcoHealth Alliance Inc. Project description: Novel zoonotic, bat origin CoVs are a significant threat to global health and food security, as the cause of SARS in China in 2002, the ongoing outbreak of MERS, and of a newly emerged Swine Acute Diarrhea Syndrome in China. In a previous R01 we found that bats in southern China harbor an extraordinary diversity of SARSr-CoVs, some of which can use human ACE2 to enter cells, infect humanized mouse models causing SARS-like illness, and evade available therapies or vaccines. We found that people living close to bat habitats are the primary risk groups for spillover, that at one site diverse SARSr-CoVs exist that contain every genetic element of the SARS-CoV genome, and identified serological evidence of human exposure among people living nearby. These findings have led to 18 published peer-reviewed papers, including two papers in Nature, and a review in Cell. Yet salient questions remain on the origin, diversity, capacity to cause illness, and risk of spillover of these viruses.</p>	U	Grantome	https://grantome.com/grant/NIH/R01-AI110964-06
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12/31/2014	<p>(SBU) China is a member of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), a global partnership effort started in 2014 to assess countries' capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease threats. The GHSA's Biosafety and Biosecurity action package emphasizes: 1) whole-of-government biosafety and biosecurity systems for human, animal, and agricultural facilities, and 2) biosafety and biosecurity training and practices. The GHSA also encourages members to use the World Health Organization (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE) tool to determine their gaps and weaknesses in preparing for and responding to infectious disease risks. The JEE is a useful tool for ensuring full compliance with global biosafety and biosecurity standards, which is a key aspect of implementing the International Health Regulations (IHR). The PRC, however, has not participated in a WHO JEE despite U.S. efforts to encourage it to do so. China has only participated as a technical observer to other country JEEs and has yet to agree to conduct its own.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
12/31/2014	<p>(SBU) Additionally, the U.S. CDC's Global Disease Detection Program supported virology and epidemiology training in the United States and China for more than 2,500 China CDC specialists and supported annual laboratory quality assessments to strengthen quality assurance of PRC laboratory networks from 2004 to 2014.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
1/1/2015	<p>[The WIV BSL-4] facility opened in 2015 after being built in partnership with France, which was meant to supply the technical expertise with 50 high-level French researchers due to work there between 2017 and 2022. They did not do so as the Chinese came to dominate the arrangements, according to the officials.</p>	U	The Times	https://t.co/rvaRQTMwEd https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/coronavirus-china-bars-

2015	<p>In a 2015 paper, WIV documented how they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -> found a virus in bats called SHC014-CoV that is similar to SARS. -> constructed a chimera virus using SHC014-CoV as a basis that could also infect mice cells. -> found the same virus can infect "human airway cells" and impact them the same way as "epidemic strains of SARS-CoV" in vitro. (paraphrased: "it's as bad as SARS") -> tested the same virus on real mice ("in vivo"), and found it could infect their lungs. -> tried to fight the virus using antibodies and vaccines that help fight SARS, and couldn't find anything that helped. ("poor efficacy") -> synthetically cloned this chimera virus and tested it both in vitro and in vivo, and found it works well. 	U	UNC, WIV, et al	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26552008
1/1/2015	<p>In the same year Alain Mérieux, the French pharmaceutical tycoon, resigned from the joint chairmanship of the committee heading the [WIV BSL-4] project.</p>	U	The Times	https://t.co/rvaRQTMwEd https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/coronavi
10/1/2015	<p>End of five year longitudinal study of SARSr-CoVs in bats from a single habitat in proximity to Kunming city, Yunnan province, China, which was mainly inhabited by horseshoe bats. A total of 602 alimentary specimens (anal swabs or feces) were collected. 84 tested positive for CoV</p>	U	PLOS	https://archive.is/zBH2

11/9/2015	<p>Researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology and several U.S. labs (including the FDA's National Center for Toxicological Research) publish a study in Nature Medicine entitled "A SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows potential for human emergence." It stated: "To examine the emergence potential (that is, the potential to infect humans) of circulating bat CoVs, we built a chimeric virus encoding a novel, zoonotic CoV spike protein—from the RsSHC014-CoV sequence that was isolated from Chinese horseshoe bats—in the context of the SARS-CoV mouse-adapted backbone."</p>	U	Nature Medicine	<p>Shi Zhengli-Li et al., "A SARS-like cluster of circulating bat coronaviruses shows potential for human emergence," Nature Medicine, online Nov. 9,</p>
11/9/2015	<p>Two WIV scientists (GE Xingyi and SHI Zhengli), along with colleagues UNC Chapel Hill, Harvard, the US FDA, and Bellinzona Institute for Microbiology, publish study on SHC014-CoV which was circulating in horseshoe bat population at the time of publication. WIV was able to synthetically re-derive an infectious full length SHC014 recombinant virus that demonstrated robust viral replication in-vivo and in-vitro</p>	U	Nature	<p>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26552008</p>
11/12/2015	<p>Virologists question whether the information gleaned from WIV's experiment justifies the potential risk. A virologist at the Pasteur Institute in Paris, points out that the researchers have created a novel virus that "grows remarkably well" in human cells. "If the virus escaped, nobody could predict the trajectory," he says. WIV authors, in their paper, concede that funders may think twice about allowing such experiments in the future. "Scientific review panels may deem similar studies building chimeric viruses based on circulating strains too risky to pursue," they write, adding that discussion is needed as to "whether these types of chimeric virus studies warrant further investigation versus the inherent risks involved".</p>	U	Nature	<p>https://www.nature.com/news/engineered-bat-virus-stirs-debate-over-risky-research-1.18787</p>
2/18/2016	<p>Article "Coexistence of Multiple coronaviruses in several bat colonies in an abandoned mineshaft" appears in Virologica Sinica article</p>	U	NCBI	<p>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nucleotide/983856042</p>

2/18/2016	WIV affiliated scientists publish peer-reviewed study on BtCoV/4991 titled "Coexistence of multiple coronaviruses in several bat colonies in an abandoned mineshaft." They identified that "RaBtCoV/4991 showed more divergence from human SARS-CoV than other bat SL-CoVs and could be considered as a new strain of this virus lineage"	U	Virologica Sinica	https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26920708/
3/2/2016	WIV publishes "Rhinolophus bat coronavirus BtCoV/4991 RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) gene, partial cds" in GenBank referenced in article "Coexistence of Multiple coronaviruses in several bat colonies in an abandoned mineshaft" 2016 Virologica Sinica article	U	NCBI	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nucleotide/983856042
2/22/2017	WIV poised to study world's most dangerous pathogens in its BSL-4 lab. It will focus on the control of emerging diseases, store purified viruses and act as a World Health Organization 'reference laboratory' linked to similar labs around the world. "It will be a key node in the global biosafety-lab network," says lab director Yuan Zhiming.	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/news/inside-the-chinese-lab-poised-to-study-world-s-most-dangerous-
5/3/2017	A 3 May 2017 Changjiang Times article describes TIAN Junhua (YOB: 1980-1999), a WHCDC based expert that has captured almost 10,000 bats for research, began research on bats. Due to his lacking knowledge he didn't take protective measures and "urine of the bat dripped like raindrops [on to] his head." "The big bat is easy to spray blood after being injured by the clip; several times the bat blood is directly sprayed on Tian Junhua's skin. If it is infected, the consequences will be unimaginable. But Tian Junhua did not flinch at all, and fortunately he escaped the infection. These bats were used in the study published on 2/7/2013 by PLOS.	U	Changjiang Times	https://archive.is/ruSFu http://www.changjiangtimes.com/2017/05/567037.html
11/30/2017	12 WIV scientists, including SHI Zhengli and GE Xingyi, and one scientist from Yunnan Institute of Endemic Diseases Control and Prevention publish findings of 5 year longitudinal observation of Yunnan cave finding that 3 variants of SARSr-CoVs in the cave that can bind to ACE2 receptors (human transmission)	U	PLOS	https://archive.is/zBHz2

<p>12/31/2017</p>	<p>(SBU) From 2013 to 2017, the Galveston National Laboratory (GNL) of the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), part of the NIH Biodefense Laboratory Network, provided DoD- funded laboratory safety and security training for high-level biocontainment facilities in China, including the Wuhan Institute of Virology (Ref 18 BEIJING 138<http://repository.state.sgov.gov/archive/2018/01/19/5aeb41c6-b16e-4367-ba71-b6665fc5cbb2/18-BEIJING-138.eml.pdf>, 18 WUHAN 38<http://repository.state.sgov.gov/archive/2018/04/19/4e300e30-90ad-4936-a517-b9525ae306a7/18-WUHAN-38.eml.pdf>). This training has been facilitated since 2015 through ongoing dialogue and regular collaboration meetings cosponsored by the Chinese Academies of Science and the U.S. National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine with cooperation from China CDC and others. According to GNL leadership, the relationship with the Wuhan Institute of Virology included the provision of training to scientists and biosafety and engineering professionals from Wuhan, as well as from other biocontainment labs in China and the China CDC. The UTMB National Biocontainment Training Program included operations training as the Wuhan Institute of Virology prepared to open their BSL-4 facility. This UTMB training engagement ended in 2016 when DoD funding was exhausted and not replenished. Nevertheless, U.S. CDC continues to provide technical assistance in tuberculosis laboratories in six provinces in the PRC, focusing on laboratory quality management, including biosafety, through helping China CDC implement the Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA) program.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 365</p>
<p>1/19/2018</p>	<p>State Department cable, drafted by two officials from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing's Environment, Science, and Health Section who met with WIV scientists, allegedly reports that "During interactions with scientists at the WIV laboratory, they noted the new lab has a serious shortage of appropriately trained technicians and investigators needed to safely operate this high-containment laboratory,"</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Washington Post (Opinions)</p>	<p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/14/state-department-cables-warned-safety-issues-</p>

3/5/2018	"Using bat severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-like coronavirus (CoV) WIV1 as a surrogate pathogen, [WIV] extensively evaluated the disinfection efficacy of 5% MCP in the first BSL-4 laboratory in China." - i.e., WIV used a SARS-like coronavirus to test lab disinfectant.	U	Applied Biosafety	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1535676018758891
3/5/2018	WIV affiliated scientists publish study on research into the efficacy of Micro-Chem Plus as a disinfectant for BSL-4 labs. "Using bat severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)-like coronavirus (CoV) WIV1 as a surrogate pathogen, we extensively evaluated the disinfection efficacy of 5% MCP in the first BSL-4 laboratory in China."	U	Applied Biosafety	https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1535676018758891
4/3/2018	On March 27th, Mr. Rick Switzer, Counselor of Environment, Science, Technology and Health Section of Embassy of the United States in China, accompanied by the U.S. Consul General in Wuhan, Mr. Jamison Fouss, visited Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). Prof. Yanyi WANG, the Deputy Director General of the WIV, met with the U.S. delegation. Prof. Zhengli SHI, Director of Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases and Deputy Director of Wuhan P4 Laboratory, and Prof. Zhihong HU, Director of Center for Bacteria and Virus Resources and Application, participated the meeting.	U	Wuhan Institute of Virology	web.archive.org/web/20200404102012/english.who.int/cas.cn/Exchange2016/Foreign_Visits/201804/t20180403_191334.html#pq=Mfykh
4/4/2018	WIV paper documents their research involving live animals and bat coronaviruses	U	NIH	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC709

<p>12/31/2018</p>	<p>(SBU) During discussions with U.S. Department of Health and Human Services officials in 2018, NHC Director General of the Health Emergency Response Office Xu Shuqiang admitted that China needed to improve its diagnostic and treatment capabilities. Yet, he confidently asserted that China centered its emergency response system on joint prevention and control mechanisms, web-based reporting, rapid testing, human capacity, and strong interagency coordination. Publishing their own assessment, however, NHC-affiliated medical experts from the Chinese Preventive Medicine Association (CPMA) complained that China had excessively focused on improving medical treatment while failing to develop preventative measures against infectious diseases.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 476</p>
<p>12/31/2018</p>	<p>(U) After the government reshuffle in 2018, the National Health Commission (NHC) was reorganized and granted clear authority over the formulation of infectious disease control and prevention policy to optimize China's response to public health emergencies. Chinese government ministries and provincial authorities were expected to implement NHC guidance at the local and regional level. In contrast, the newly created Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM) assumed responsibility for emergency responses to natural disasters, but also took over workplace safety and certain health functions that slightly overlapped with NHC's responsibilities. According to the "National Contingency Plan for Public Health Emergency Response," however, NHC retained responsibility to lead and coordinate interagency responses to epidemics.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 476</p>

1/1/2019	<p>(SBU) Publishing his assessment in the Journal of Biosafety and Biosecurity in 2019, CCP Secretary for the Wuhan Institute of Virology and lab director Yuan Zhiming provided a general overview of PRC biocontainment facilities. He wrote that the majority of PRC biomedical facilities are basic BSL-1 and 2 laboratories attached to China CDC branches, scientific research institutions, and public health universities with biocontainment equipment appropriate only for handling non-lethal pathogenic agents and human disease. According to Director Yuan, China has 42 accredited BSL-3 laboratories designed to contain lethal pathogens and diseases with high individual risk for which treatment is often available. The Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory remains China's first and only BSL-4 laboratory. In late 2019, China CDC announced the PRC's intention to construct 5 to 7 new BSL-4 laboratories by 2025.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
2/20/2019	<p>Researchers at Hong Kong University publish a study of bat coronaviruses, warning: "bat-animal and bat-human interactions, such as the presence of live bats in wildlife wet markets and restaurants in Southern China, are important for interspecies transmission of [coronaviruses] and may lead to devastating global outbreaks."</p>	U	NIH	Patrick Woo et al, "Global Epidemiology of Bat Coronaviruses," Viruses (journal), Feb. 2019, published online Feb. 20, 2019
3/2/2019	<p>Researchers from the Wuhan Institute of Virology publish a study in the medical journal Viruses noting that "it is highly likely that future SARS- or MERS-like coronavirus outbreaks will originate from bats, and there is an increased probability that this will occur in China."</p>	U	Viruses	Yi Fan et al., "Bat Coronaviruses in China," Viruses, March 2019, online March 2,
3/5/2019	<p>Gao Fu, director of the PRC's CDC, says in a speech: "Viruses like SARS could emerge anytime, but there'll never be another SARS incident. That's thanks to how well our national contagious disease surveillance system works."</p>	U	NYT	Steven Lee Myers, "China Created a Fail-Safe System to Track Contagions.

<p>7/24/2019</p>	<p>Understanding the Risk of Bat Coronavirus Emergence Budgeted period start. Project description: Novel zoonotic, bat-origin CoVs are a significant threat to global health and food security, as the cause of SARS in China in 2002, the ongoing outbreak of MERS, and of a newly emerged Swine Acute Diarrhea Syndrome in China. In a previous R01 we found that bats in southern China harbor an extraordinary diversity of SARSr-CoVs, some of which can use human ACE2 to enter cells, infect humanized mouse models causing SARS-like illness, and evade available therapies or vaccines. We found that people living close to bat habitats are the primary risk groups for spillover, that at one site diverse SARSr-CoVs exist that contain every genetic element of the SARS-CoV genome, and identified serological evidence of human exposure among people living nearby. These findings have led to 18 published peer-reviewed papers, including two papers in Nature, and a review in Cell. Yet salient questions remain on the origin, diversity, capacity to cause illness, and risk of spillover of these viruses.... Aim 3. In vitro and in vivo characterization of SARSr-CoV spillover risk, coupled with spatial and phylogenetic analyses to identify the regions and viruses of public health concern. We will use S protein sequence data, infectious clone technology, in vitro and in vivo infection experiments and analysis of receptor binding to test the hypothesis that % divergence thresholds in S protein sequences predict spillover potential. We will combine these data with bat host distribution, viral diversity and phylogeny, human survey of risk behaviors and illness, and serology to identify SARSr-CoV spillover risk hotspots across southern China. Together these data and analyses will be critical for the future development of public health interventions and enhanced surveillance to prevent the re-emergence of SARS or the emergence of a novel SARSr-CoV.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Grantome</p>	<p>https://grantome.com/grant/NIH/R01-AI110964-06</p>
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10/1/2019	<p>(SBU) In 2019, the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security released its Global Health Security Index (GHSI) assessing global emergency preparedness for catastrophic biological risks. The GHSI classified China as "more prepared" for a pandemic than most nations, ranking it 51 out of 195 countries evaluated for health security capabilities. China scored slightly below average in its ability to prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases. [Note: Most Chinese and international experts agree that COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. The source remains unknown, but some data have suggested bats or pangolins as the possible origin and intermediary. End Note.] However, China received the lowest possible score in the following public health areas that hold major implications for its emergency response during the current COVID-19 outbreak:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Conducting emergency preparedness and response exercises. * Linking public health and security authorities for rapid response. * Overseeing dual-use research involving dangerous pathogens with pandemic potential. * Carrying out a WHO Joint External Evaluation (JEE) to highlight critical gaps in capacity preparedness. [Note: China has not participated in a JEE, a process which enables countries to determine their gaps and weaknesses in preparing for and responding to infectious disease risks. More than 100 countries, including the United States, have voluntarily completed a JEE. The JEE is a key aspect of implementing the International Health Regulations (IHR), an agreement signed by all WHO member states, including China, to work together for global health security. The United States has encouraged China to conduct a JEE since 2005 but China has only participated as a technical observer to other country JEEs and has never agreed to conduct their own. End note.] 	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 476
11/1/2019	As recently as November 2019, WIV was conducting research on MERS-CoV, which is a direct relative to SARS-CoV-1.	U	Journal of Virology	https://jvi.asm.org/content/94/5/e
11/18/2019	WIV advertises to postdoctoral candidates for "Taking bat as the research object , answer the molecular mechanism that can coexist with Ebola andSARS- related coronavirus for a long time without disease, and its relationship with flight andlongevity. Virology, immunology, cell biology and multiple omics are used to compare the differencesbetween humans and other mammals."	U	WIV Website	http://www.whiov.cas.cn/105341/201911/t20191118_5438006.html (archived)

11/18/2019	WIV job posting for "Postdoctoral Recruitment Notice of Zhou Peng Discipline Group of Wuhan Virus ResearchInstitute" describes responsibilities as: "Taking bat as the research object , answer the molecular mechanism that can coexist with Ebola and SARS-related coronavirus for a long time without disease, and its relationship with flight and longevity. Virology, immunology, cell biology and multiple omics are used to compare the differences between humans and other mammals."	U	WIV Website	http://www.whio.v.cas.cn/105341/201911/t20191118_5438006.html https://archive.is/QU22i
11/27/2019	Brazilian Researchers from the Federal University of Santa Catarina detected "SARS-CoV-2 in two samples collected independently on 27th November 2019 (5.49 ± 0.02 log genome copies/L). Subsequent samplings were positive until 4th March 2020 (coinciding with the first COVID-19 case reported in Santa Catalina), with a SARS-CoV-2 RNA increase of one log (6.68 ± 0.02 log genome copies/L). Our results show that SARS-CoV-2 has been circulating in Brazil since late November 2019, much earlier than the first reported case in the Americas (21st January 2020, USA)."	U	medRxiv	https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.06.26.20140731v1
11/30/2019	US intelligence agencies alerted Israel to the coronavirus outbreak in China already in November, Israeli television reported Thursday. According to Channel 12 news, the US intelligence community became aware of the emerging disease in Wuhan in the second week of that month and drew up a classified document. Information on the disease outbreak was not in the public domain at that stage — and was known only apparently to the Chinese government. The network said Israeli military officials later in November discussed the possibility of the spread of the virus to the region and how it would affect Israel and neighboring countries.	U	The Times of Israel	https://www.timesofisrael.com/us-alerted-israel-nato-to-disease-outbreak-in-china-in-november-report/
12/1/2019	"First patient" symptom onset date identified as 1 DEC 2020. No epidemiological link identified between "first patient" and later patients	U	The Lancet	https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article
12/1/2019	First documented case of SARS-CoV-2. No epidemiological link was found between the first patient and the later cases.	U	Lancet	Lancet

12/6/2019	Five days after a man linked to Wuhan's seafood market presented pneumonia-like symptoms, his wife also presents with pneumonia and is hospitalized in an isolation ward. The wife had no connection to the market, suggesting human-human transmission.	U	Lancet	Chaolin Huang et al., "Clinical features of patients infected with 2019 novel
12/7/2019	The Lanzhou Veterinary Research Institute in central China confirmed on 7 December that 96 staff and students have tested positive for the infection. In a statement, the institute said most of the infected people are not experiencing signs of brucellosis, the illness caused by the bacterium, which can include fever and flu-like symptoms.	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03863-z
12/9/2019	"On December 9, 2019, Dr. Li Wenliang was transferred from the ophthalmology clinic to the ophthalmology ward."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
12/10/2019	On 10 December, the health commission for the province of Heilongjiang confirmed that 13 students at the Harbin Veterinary Research Institute, around 2,600 kilometres to the northeast of Lanzhou, also had the infection. The 13 students were among 49 students who had previously worked as interns at the Lanzhou institute. The Harbin institute says it is also investigating the outbreak.	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03863-z

12/10/2019	<p>Surprisingly the earliest genomic cluster has been identified as four patients associated with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Central Theater Command Hospital in the Wuchang District of Wuhan. The ENA archive file creation date (stamped by the ENA server in the EU) for these four patient's specimens was on December 10, 2019, which is over two weeks before the specimens were actually collected. At this early date, according to Chinese authorities, there were only four reported cases anywhere in China. A random selection of other COVID-19 patient ENA files shows no examples of a file creation date before a sample collection date. One conclusion from this observation is that the specimens were actually collected before December 10th. The minimal base substitutions within this cluster mimics the substitutions seen in known family clusters and is consistent with direct transmission among them. This cluster contains both the first Clade A virus, which shares T8782 and C28144 with the three bat coronaviruses, RaTG13, Bat-SL-CoVZC45, and Bat-SL-CoVZXC21. The current Reference Sequence, in fact, is a Clade B virus and differs at these two variants.</p>	U	SCRIBD	<p>scribd.com/document/482084555/Covid-Pandemic-Began-at-PLA-Hospital-in-Wuhan</p>
12/10/2019	Wei Guixian, one of the earliest known coronavirus patients, starts feeling ill.	U	Wall Street Journal	<p>https://archive.vn/Ha7ZI https://www.wsj.com/articles/how</p>
12/11/2019	<p>Two WIV affiliated scientists (SHE Zhengli and CHEN Jing), along with numerous U.S. based scientists published a study that "investigated how a neutralizing monoclonal antibody (MAb), which targets the receptor-binding domain (RBD) of Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) coronavirus spike, mediates viral entry using pseudovirus entry and biochemical assays.... Our study reveals a novel molecular mechanism for antibody-enhanced viral entry and can guide future vaccination and antiviral strategies."</p>	U	American Society of Microbiology, Journal of Virology	<p>https://jvi.asm.org/content/94/5/e02015-19</p>

12/14/2019	A 14 December 2019 The Paper/Guangdong Communist Youth League Article describes TIAN Junhua as a "Vector Biological Control Technician at the WHCDC. The paper notes that "bat excrement [often containing] large ammounts of unknown virus [fell] on TIAN Junhua's body like rain." The article notes that TIAN's team "identified the Jingmen and Huangpi viruses.	U	The Paper	https://archive.is/PiqJt
12/16/2019	Patient admitted to Wuhan Central Hospital with infection in both lungs but resistant to anti-flu drugs. Staff later learned he worked at a wildlife market connected to the outbreak.	U	Wall Street Journal	https://archive.vn/Ha7ZI https://www.wsj.com/articles/how
12/17/2019	Two Chinese agriculture research institutions are investigating how more than 100 students and staff became infected with the bacterium Brucella, strains of which are typically found in farm animals but can also trigger potentially fatal complications in people.... The Beijing News also reported that students at the institute often forgo wearing masks and taking other precautions. The research institutes in Harbin and Lanzhou did not respond to Nature's questions about how the outbreak occurred, or their lab's safety procedures.	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03863-z
12/18/2019	Sewage samples taken in Milan and Turin on 18 DEC 2019 showed the presense of SARS-CoV-2 virus.	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-italy-
12/20/2019	Patient admitted to Wuhan Central Hospital on 26 DEC 2019 "six days after the onset of symptoms." Indicating he fist became symptomatic on 20 DEC 2019.	U	ScienceDirect	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S
12/21/2019	Four lower respiratory tract samples, including bronchoalveolar-lavage fluid, were collected from patients with pneumonia of unknown cause who were identified in Wuhan on December 21, 2019, or later and who had been present at the Huanan Seafood Market close to the time of their clinical presentation.	U	New England Journal of Medicine	https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMoa2001017

12/24/2019	WIV advertises to postdoctoral candidates for research on "bat virus cross-species infection and its pathogenicity"	U	WIV Website	http://www.whiov.cas.cn/105341/201912/t20191224_5471634.html
12/24/2019	<p>WIV job posting for "Postdoctoral Recruitment Notice of Shi Zhengli Discipline Group of Wuhan Virology Institute" describes responsibilities as "1. Recruitment positions: 1-2 postdoctors; Proposed recruitment direction 1: Ecological study of bat migration and virus transmission; Prospective direction 2: bat virus cross-species infection and its pathogenicity.... Shi Zhengli, Ph.D., researcher, team leader of the Department of Emerging Viruses, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, director of the Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, director of the Key Laboratory of Pathogenic Biology and Biosafety, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Editor-in-chief of "Virologica Sinica" magazine.</p> <p>Long-term research on the pathogenic biology of bats carrying important viruses has confirmed the origin of bats for major human and animal infectious diseases such as SARS and SADS, and discovered and identified a large number of new viruses in bats and rodents.... The New Virus Discipline Group focuses on the etiology of new viruses and their infection mechanisms, including bat and rodent virus discovery, early warning and transmission rules research, cross-species infection mechanism and pathogenicity of coronavirus and other important bat virus Research, new virus serology and molecular diagnostic technology."</p>	U	WIV Website	http://www.whiov.cas.cn/105341/201912/t20191224_5471634.html https://archive.is/g4GQi

12/25/2019	"Many worked or lived near Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market, which experts believe is the source of the outbreak, with the virus jumping from wild animals on sale there. The market was shut down in late December at the start of the outbreak and is now under surveillance by security staff... The market is the biggest wholesale outlet of its kind in central China and sells vegetables, fruit, seafood and agricultural by-products. But one of the vendors, Duan, who mainly sells salmon, said he had never heard about wild animals being traded in the market. There was also no obvious sign of live poultry or wildlife for sale 1,000km away at a wet market in Yuexiu district in Guangzhou, a city known for adventurous diners."	U	OSC	"Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China's Coronavirus Outbreak", Hong Kong South China Morning Post Online in English 1345 GMT 22 Jan 20
12/27/2019	"On December 27, Zhang Jixian, director of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine of Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine, reported to the hospital that he had received 3 cases of pneumonia of unknown cause, and the hospital reported the situation to the Wuhan Jiangnan District Center for Disease Control and Prevention."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIreO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS
12/27/2019	"the Wuhan Municipal Center for Disease Control and Prevention arranged epidemiological investigation and testing for these 3 patients."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIreO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
12/27/2019	Evidence of new virus emerges from Wuhan patient data sent to multiple Chinese genomics companies.	U	Caixin Global	Gao Yu et al., "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread,
12/27/2019	Wuhan health officials are told that a new coronavirus is causing the illness.	U	Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-likely-allowed-

12/27/2019	Zhang Jixian, a doctor from Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Chinese and Western Medicine, tells China's health authorities that a novel disease (then affecting some 180 patients) was caused by a new coronavirus.	U	SCMP	Josephine Ma, "Coronavirus: China's first confirmed Covid-19 case traced back to
12/29/2019	"On December 29, Hubei Provincial Hospital of Integrated Traditional Chinese and Western Medicine reported four cases of unexplained pneumonia from the South China Seafood Market. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission organized a team of experts to investigate, and the relevant patients were referred to Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital that evening."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.v
12/30/2019	"At around 17:30 on December 30, 2019, Dr. Li Wenliang received a message from his colleague. At 17:43, Dr. Li Wenliang forwarded it in the WeChat group "Wuhan University Clinical Level 04" under the nickname of "Li Wenliang Wuhan Ophthalmology". Published text messages such as "7 cases of SARS confirmed in the South China Fruit and Seafood Market", "Isolated in the emergency department of our hospital's Houhu District" and a clinical copy with the words "SARS coronavirus detected <high confidence> positive indicators" Pathogen screening result picture, a 11-second lung CT video. At 18:42, "The latest news is that the coronavirus infection has been confirmed, and virus typing is in progress." "Don't spread it outside, let your family and relatives take precautions." At the same time, similar information also appeared in other WeChat groups. The two departmental documents of the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission that were uploaded to the Internet, and the information forwarded and released by Dr. Li Wenliang and others have aroused concern and discussion."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS

12/30/2019	"Taking into account the discovery of similar cases in many hospitals in the city, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued a departmental document "Emergency Notice on Reporting the Treatment of Unexplained Pneumonia" at 15:10 and 18:50 on December 30th. The "Emergency Notice on Doing a Good Job in the Treatment of Pneumonia of Unexplained Cause" requires that the treatment of pneumonia of unknown cause be done well, and a comprehensive search and retrospective investigation of pneumonia cases related to the South China Seafood Market should be carried out. The two notices were uploaded to the Internet at 15:22 and 19:00 respectively."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS
12/30/2019	Ai Fen, a senior doctor at Wuhan Central Hospital, posts information on WeChat about the new virus and is reprimanded by superiors. Ai subsequently instructs her staff to wear protective clothing and masks, despite official instructions not to. "I knew there must be human-to-human transmission," she said in a later interview.	U	The Guardian	Lily Kuo, "Coronavirus: Wuhan doctor speaks out against authorities," The
12/30/2019	Ai Fen, a top director at Wuhan Central Hospital, posts information on WeChat about the new virus. She was reprimanded for doing so and told not to spread information about it. Wuhan doctor Li Wenliang also shares information on WeChat about the new SARS-like virus. He is called in for questioning shortly afterward.	U	The Guardian	www.theguardian.com .
12/30/2019	Ai Fen, a top director at Wuhan Central Hospital, posts information on WeChat about the new virus. She was reprimanded for doing so and told not to spread information about it.	U	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/11/coronavirus-wuhan-doctor-ai-fen-speaks-out-

12/30/2019	<p>BEIJING—The mysterious patient samples arrived at Wuhan Institute of Virology at 7 P.M. on December 30, 2019. Moments later, Shi Zhengli’s cell phone rang. It was her boss, the institute’s director. The Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention had detected a novel coronavirus in two hospital patients with atypical pneumonia, and it wanted Shi’s renowned laboratory to investigate. Shi... walked out of the conference she was attending in Shanghai and hopped on the next train back to Wuhan. “I wondered if [the municipal health authority] got it wrong,” she says. “I had never expected this kind of thing to happen inWuhan, in central China.” Her studies had shown that the southern, subtropical areas of Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan have the greatest risk of coronaviruses jumping to humans from animals—particularly bats, a known reservoir for many viruses. If corona viruses were the culprit, she re- members thinking, “could they have come from our lab?”</p>	U	Scientific American	<p>scientificamerican.com/article/how-chinas-bat-woman-hunted-down-viruses-from-sars-to-the-new-caronavirus</p>
12/30/2019	<p>SHE Zhengli called by WIV director telling her novel coronavirus had been detected in two hospital patients with atypical pneumonia.... Her studies had shown that the southern, subtropical areas of Guangdong, Guangxi and Yunnan have the greatest risk of coronaviruses jumping to humans from animals—particularly bats, a known reservoir for many viruses. If coronaviruses were the culprit, she remembers thinking, “could they have come from our lab?”</p>	U	Scientific America	<p>https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-chinas-bat-woman-hunted-down-viruses-from-sars-to-the-new-</p>
12/30/2019	<p>Wuhan doctor Li Wenliang also shares information about the virus on WeChat, including a photo of lab results initially shared by Ai Fen.</p>	U	The Guardian	<p>Lily Kuo, “Coronavirus: Wuhan doctor speaks out</p>

12/30/2019	Wuhan doctor Li Wenliang also shares information on WeChat about the new SARS-like virus. He is called in for questioning shortly afterward.	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-
12/30/2019	Wuhan health commission notifies hospitals of a "pneumonia of unclear cause" and orders them to report any related information.	U	Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-
12/30/2019	Wuhan Institute of Virology researcher Shi Zhengli (known as "bat-woman" for her research) is called by the Institute's director and summoned back to Wuhan from a conference in Shanghai to study samples of the novel coronavirus. "Could they have come from our lab?" Shi feared.	U	Scientific American	Jane Qui, "How's China's 'Bat Woman' Hunted Down Viruses
12/31/2019	"after Dr. Li Wenliang's messages in the WeChat group were reposted on the Internet in large numbers, on the morning of December 31, 2019, relevant leaders of Wuhan Central Hospital had a conversation with Dr. Li Wenliang. During the conversation, Dr. Li Wenliang stated that he forwarded unverified SARS and other information to the group of students, with the purpose of reminding the students in the group to take precautions. The hospital asked Dr. Li Wenliang to write an understanding material."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS

12/31/2019	<p>"At 13:38 on December 31, 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued a "Notice on the Current Situation of Pneumonia in Our City", stating that "27 cases have been found" and "the above cases are viral pneumonia", and said "to The investigation so far has not found obvious human-to-human transmission, and no medical staff infection has been found." Many media have reported on this. In accordance with Wuhan's work arrangements for the prevention and control of pneumonia of unknown causes, the public security organs of Wuhan City, in accordance with laws and regulations on the prevention and control of infectious diseases and public security management, as well as notifications from the Municipal Health Commission, will forward and publish SARS and other infectious disease information that appears on the Internet. "</p>	U	CCTV	<p>http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS</p>
12/31/2019	<p>(SBU) Taiwan has implemented a series of control measures, including onboard inspections of all direct flights from Wuhan since December 31, 2019. According to Taiwan CDC, there are no confirmed related cases.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
12/31/2019	<p>(SBU) ... In December 2019, a factory producing animal brucellosis vaccines used expired disinfectant to decontaminate its facilities, leading to the infection of 181 lab workers, students, and faculty at the nearby Lanzhou Veterinary Research Institute. [Note: Brucellosis is classified as a Class B infectious disease, the second most serious level in China's three-tier infectious disease classification system. End Note].</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365

<p>12/31/2019</p>	<p>China is investigating an outbreak of atypical pneumonia that is suspected of being linked to SARS, the flu-like virus that killed hundreds of people a decade ago, state media reported Tuesday.</p> <p>A team of experts from the National Health Commission were dispatched Tuesday to Wuhan, in central China's Hubei province, and are "currently conducting relevant inspection and verification work," state broadcaster CCTV reported.</p> <p>An emergency notification issued Monday by the Wuhan municipal health committee said hospitals in the city have treated a "successive series of patients with unexplained pneumonia," without offering details.</p> <p>Chinese news site The Paper reported 27 cases of viral pneumonia in Wuhan in December, citing unnamed health officials from the city.</p> <p>"Of the 27 cases, seven were critical, the rest were under control, and two patients are expected to be discharged from hospital in near future," The Paper said.</p> <p>It is unclear whether all these patients are suspected of having contracted Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, a highly contagious respiratory disease.</p> <p>The emergency notification has urged hospitals to offer treatment and report cases in a "timely manner".</p>	<p>U//FOUO</p>	<p>Paris AFP</p>	<p>EUW2019123123764442</p>
<p>12/31/2019</p>	<p>China tells the World Health Organization's China office about the cases of an unknown illness.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Washington Post</p>	<p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-likely-allowed-</p>

12/31/2019	China tells the World Health Organization's China office about the cases of an unknown illness. [4 days after Wuhan officials were told.]	U	Washington Post	washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-
12/31/2019	Chinese internet authorities begin censoring terms from social media such: Wuhan Unknown Pneumonia, SARS Variation, Wuhan Seafood Market, and keywords critical of the government's handling of the infection.	U	Citizen Lab	Lotus Ruan et al., "Censored Contagion: How Information on the Coronavirus is Managed on
12/31/2019	Chinese officials alert the World Health Organization (WHO) China Country Office of several cases of pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, claiming erroneously that "the disease is preventable and controllable."	U	NYT	Gao Yu et al., "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread, and Throttled," Caixin Global, February 29,
12/31/2019	Officials in Taiwan report to the World Health Organization (WHO) that "news resources today indicate that at least seven atypical pneumonia cases were reported in Wuhan, China. Their health authorities replied to the media that the cases were believed not SARS; however the samples are still under examination, and cases have been isolated for treatment," signaling human-to-human transmission. But Taiwan's information is not published on the WHO platform for data-exchange among 196 countries. Taiwan officials also alert PRC authorities.	U	Financial Times	15. Vandana Rambaran, "Taiwan releases December email to WHO warning about unheeded warning about coronavirus," FoxNews, April 11, 2020. 16. "Taiwan says

12/31/2019	The 27 pneumonia cases in Wuhan have been identified as viral pneumonia, according to the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission. The patients, including seven in serious condition, reported symptoms including fever and difficulty breathing. All the patients have been put in quarantined treatment.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
12/31/2019	Wuhan health officials confirm 27 cases of illness and close a market they think is related to the virus' spread.	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-
1/1/2020	(SBU) An editor of China CDC Weekly last week told an Embassy Beijing CDC Officer (refs A-B) that an investigator had been assigned to write a report on the cases, but the report did not appear in the January 10 edition. The next edition of China CDC Weekly is scheduled for publication on January 17.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/1/2020	(SBU) A report from Xinhua on January 1 cautioned that false information about the illness was circulating online and warned that spreading rumors and disrupting social order would not be tolerated. The article also stated that eight people were being investigated by public security for spreading rumors.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 74
1/1/2020	An official at the Hubei Provincial Health Commission orders labs, which had already determined that the novelvirus was similar to SARS, to stop testing samples and to destroy existing samples.	U	The Straits Times	https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/how-early-signs-of-the-coronavirus-were-spotted-spread-
1/1/2020	Chinese state media reports, Experts from the National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention under the China CDC allegedly take "environmental samples" with the Wuhan Seafood Market	U	Xinhua Net	http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/27/c_138735

1/1/2020	Eight doctors in Wuhan who warned about new virus reports via social media in late December, including Dr. Li Wenliang, are detained and condemned for "making false statements on the Internet." Li is forced to write a self-criticism saying his warnings "had a negative impact."	U	WSJ	Yong Xiong and Nectar Gan, "This Chinese doctor tried to save lives, but was silenced. Now he has coronavirus," CNN, February 4, 2020.
1/1/2020	Hubei health commission orders genomics companies to stop testing and destroy all samples.	U	Caixin Global	Gao Yu et al., "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread,
1/1/2020	On Feb. 1, Washington Post cited Chinese surgeon and writer Wang Guangbao recalling that while speculation about a SARS-like virus was rampant within medical circles around Jan. 1, the detentions of the Wuhan doctors chilled open discussion. "The eight posters getting seized made all of us doctors feel we were at risk," Wang said.	U	WP	Gerry Shih et al., "Early missteps and state secrecy in China probably allowed the coronavirus to
1/1/2020	Wuhan authorities close the city's seafood market, then disinfect it without swabbing individual animals and cages or drawing blood from workers, eliminating evidence of what animal might have been the source of the coronavirus and which people had become infected but survived.	U	NYT	Editorial, "Stop the Wuhan Virus," Nature, January 21, 2020. Also Donald G. McNeil Jr. and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, "C.D.C.
1/1/2020	Wuhan Public Security Bureau brings in for questioning eight doctors who had posted information about the illness on WeChat. An official at the Hubei Provincial Health Commission orders labs, which had already determined that the novel virus was similar to SARS, to stop testing samples and to destroy existing samples.	U	Washington Post	washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-

1/1/2020	Wuhan Public Security Bureau brings in for questioning eight doctors who had posted information about the illness on WeChat.	U	Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-likely-allowed-
1/2/2020	"yet-unidentified source of the outbreak has led to rumors, mainly on social media, about a possible severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak and speculation about the possible emergence of a new zoonotic virus... senior advisor to the WHO's China office, told [SCMP] that investigations are still underway and authorities haven't yet confirmed the pathogen that's causing the illness."	U	UMN Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy - News & Perspective	https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/no-answers-yet-chinas-pneumonia-outbreak
1/2/2020	Chinese researchers map the new coronavirus's complete genetic information. This information is not made public until Jan. 9.	U	Wall Street Journal	wsj.com/articles/how-it-all-started-chinas-early-coronavirus-
1/2/2020	Chinese researchers map the new coronavirus's complete genetic information. This information is not made public until Jan. 9.	U	Wall Street Journal	https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-it-all-started-chinas-early-coronavirus-
1/2/2020	Li Ning, a leading expert at transgenic technologies at China Agricultural University, was sentenced to 12 years in prison on January 2 for grafting 37.56 million yuan	U	ECNS.cn	http://www.ecns.cn/news/sci-tech/2020-02-

1/2/2020	<p>PRC state media aggressively highlight the detentions of the Wuhan doctors. Top national TV news program Xinwen Lianbo reports the detentions while Xinhua publishes a call from Wuhan police for “all netizens to not fabricate rumors, not spread rumors, not believe rumors.” Global Times tweets that “Police in Central China’s Wuhan arrested 8 people spreading rumors about local outbreak of unidentifiable #pneumonia. Previous online posts said it was SARS.”</p>	U	Global Times	<p>Gerry Shih et al., “Early missteps and state secrecy in China probably allowed the coronavirus to spread farther and faster,” Washington Post, Feb. 1, 2020. Global Times</p>
1/2/2020	<p>three travelers from Wuhan have been admitted to the hospital in Hong Kong... According to a transcript, Sophia Chan, secretary for food and health, said Hong Kong hasn't received any Wuhan-related severe pneumonia cases and that the three patients admitted to hospitals in Hong Kong had not visited the Wuhan market... "Taiwan's Center for Disease Control announced ... details about one of the patients hospitalized in Hong Kong after travel to Wuhan, according to a government statement ... The patient had upper-respiratory symptoms and is isolated in stable condition. Rapid screening tests for seasonal flu, SARS, and avian flu were negative."</p>	U	<p>UMN Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy - News & Perspective</p>	<p>https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/no-answers-yet-chinas-pneumonia-outbreak</p>
1/2/2020	<p>Wuhan Institute of Virology completes mapping of the novel coronavirus genome, but this breakthrough is not made public by Chinese authorities.</p>	U	WSJ	<p>Jeremy Page et al., “How It All Started: China’s Early Coronavirus</p>

<p>1/3/2020</p>	<p>"At about 13:30 on January 3, 2020, the Zhongnan Road Police Station of Wuchang Branch of Wuhan Public Security Bureau contacted Dr. Li Wenliang, and Dr. Li Wenliang accompanied his colleagues to the police station. Yang, deputy director of the police station, arranged for Hu, the policeman in charge of internal services, to talk to Dr. Li Wenliang. After the interview was verified, the interviewer made a transcript on the spot. Dr. Li Wenliang said that it is wrong to post information about SARS in the WeChat group and will pay attention to it in the future. The interviewer made a letter of admonition for Dr. Li Wenliang. Dr. Li Wenliang also had a copy of admonition and left the police station at 14:30. The interlocutors were Hu Mou and an auxiliary policeman. Hu signed his name and Xu Mou's name on the admonition letter. In fact, Xu did not participate in the conversation."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>CCTV</p>	<p>http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS</p>
<p>1/3/2020</p>	<p>A total of 44 viral pneumonia cases have been reported in Wuhan. All the patients have been put in quarantine, with 11 in serious condition and the others in stable condition as of 8 am on Jan 3.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>

1/3/2020	<p>According to Taiwan-based "The Storm Media," the National Health Commission publishes "Notice on Strengthening the Management of Biological Sample Resources and Related Scientific Research Activities in the Prevention and Control of Major Infectious Diseases" ...[this document] was not published on the official website of the National Health Commission. There are several important provisions in the No. 3 document obtained from this journal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All relevant agencies shall, in accordance with the requirements of the health administrative department at or above the provincial level, provide biological samples to the designated pathogen testing agency to carry out pathogenic testing and complete the handover procedures. 2. Without approval, biological samples and related information shall not be provided to other institutions and individuals. 3. Institutions and individuals that have obtained biological samples of relevant cases from relevant medical and health institutions shall immediately destroy the samples on the spot or send them to the state-designated depository for safekeeping. 4. During the epidemic prevention and control work period, no institution or individual may publish information about pathogen testing or experimental results without authorization. 	U	The Storm Media	https://archive.is/kOulv https://www.storm.mg/article/2526880
1/3/2020	<p>China's top health authority, the National Health Commission, follows the Hubei Health Commission by issuing a gag order directing that Wuhan pneumonia samples be moved to designated testing facilities or destroyed. The National Health Commission also orders institutions not to publish any information related to the unknown disease.</p>	U	Caixin Global	<p>Gao Yu et al., "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread, and Throttled,"</p>

1/3/2020	The Wuhan Health Commission sets narrow criteria for confirming that a case is officially part of the outbreak, saying patients can be counted only if they had ties to the Huanan seafood market, excluding the growing number of cases with no such ties. An official from a district disease control center in Wuhan also tells a hospital doctor handling infection reports that "this was a special contagious disease and we should report only after superiors had notified us."	U	NYT	Steven Lee Myers, "China Ousts 2 Party Officials Amid Outrage About Coronavirus Response," New York Times,
1/4/2020	Another expert outside mainland China begins to sound alarms over human-to-human transmission. The head of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for Infection, Ho Pak-leung, warns that Hong Kong "should implement the strictest possible monitoring system for a mystery new viral pneumonia that has infected dozens of people on the mainland, as it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human."	U	RTHK	"Wuhan virus is probably spreading between people," RTHK, January 4, 2020.
1/5/2020	"Fortunately, next-generation meta-transcriptomic sequencing enabled [ZHANG Yongzhen and his team at Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center and School of Life Science] to obtain a complete viral genome from this patient on January 5, 2020. Initial analysis revealed that the virus was closely related to those of SARS-like viruses (family Coronaviridae). This result was immediately reported to the relevant authorities, and an annotated version of the genome sequence (strain Wuhan-Hu-1) was submitted to NCBI/GenBank on the same day. Although the GenBank sequence (GenBank: MN908947) was the first of SARS-CoV-2 available, it was subsequently corrected to ensure its accuracy."	U	ScienceDirect	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0092867420303287
1/5/2020	[ZHANG Yongzhen's team at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre Shanghai] reported its discovery to the National Health Commission on the same day and recommended "relevant prevention and control measures" be taken in public places, because the patient from whom the sample was collected had suffered very severe symptoms and the virus resembled a group previously found in bats.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-shared-coronavirus-

1/5/2020	A total of 59 viral pneumonia cases of unknown cause had been reported in Wuhan by the Morning of Jan 5.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/5/2020	The Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center, a research lab, alerts National Health Commission that one of its professors has identified a SARS-like coronavirus and mapped its genome. The lab also recommends "appropriate prevention and control measures in public places."	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus Missteps," Wall
1/5/2020	WHO releases statement characterizing PRC's initial Dec. 31 notice about "pneumonia of unknown etiology." WHO states: "Based on the preliminary information from the Chinese investigation team, no evidence of significant human-to-human transmission and no health care worker infections have been reported." This continues to ignore Taiwan's warnings of Dec. 31.	U	WHO	"Pneumonia of unknown cause – China," WHO, January 5, 2020 (https://www.who.int/csr/don/05-january-2020-
1/5/2020	Wuhan Municipal Health Commission stops releasing daily updates on new cases. This continued until Jan. 18.	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus
1/5/2020	ZHANG Yongzhen's team [at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre Shanghai] isolated and finished the genome sequence of the then-unknown virus on January 5, two days before China's official announcement that mysterious pneumonia cases in Wuhan were caused by a hitherto unknown coronavirus.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-
1/6/2020	"On January 6, 2020, Dr. Li Wenliang admitted an 82-year-old patient with eye disease."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
1/6/2020	The head of an expert team sent to Wuhan from Beijing, Xu Jianguo, reports that "China has many years of disease control, there's absolutely no chance that this will spread widely because of Spring Festival travel," and there is "no evidence of human-to-human transmission."	U	AP	"China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days," The Associated

1/6/2020	US CDC offers Beijing technical expertise to help with the virus. Beijing ignores this offer for more than a month, along with repeated additional offers from HHS Secretary Alex Azar and other senior U.S. officials.	U	NYT	Donald G. McNeil Jr. and Zolan Kanno-Youngs, "C.D.C. and W.H.O. Offers to Help China Have
1/7/2020	"Hong Kong continues to flag more sick travelers, though there's no sign any of the patients are linked to the Wuhan cluster, which is focused around a seafood market that also sold live animals such as chicken, bats, marmots, and other wild animals... Wuhan's health department hasn't announced any new cases since Jan 5, keeping the total at 59, and so far there are no announcements about a pathogen, thought to be viral. So far tests have ruled out influenza, avian influenza, adenovirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV). The city is home to one of China's top labs, the Wuhan Institute of Virology. Some experts wonder if a novel coronavirus might be the cause of the outbreak... Hong Kong has identified 9 more sick travelers who recently visited Wuhan, and tests have already identified common respiratory viruses in four of them. According to the administrative region's Centre for Health Protection (CHP), 30 sick travelers have been evaluated since Dec 31, and 13 have been discharged."	U	UMN Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy - News & Perspective	https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/nations-step-screening-and-await-word-chinas-pneumonia-outbreak
1/7/2020	"The patient had a fever on January 7 and was later diagnosed with the new coronavirus,"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM

<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>"US Embassy & Consulates in China today posted a health alert about Wuhan's unidentified pneumonia outbreak, following a US Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) alert yesterday.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>UMN Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy - News & Perspective</p>	<p>https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/nations-step-screening-and-await-word-chinas-</p>
<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) On January 7, CDC headquarters established an incident management structure to prepare for potential U.S. cases and to support the investigation in China or other countries if requested.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>
<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) As of January 7, the Wuhan Health Commission has reported 59 local cases of pneumonia with unknown cause. (Note: Wuhan, a city of approximately 11 million people, is the capital of Central Chinas Hubei Province. End note.) According to the Health Commission, some patients are vendors who work in the Huanan Seafood Market, which also sells live exotic animals, including beaver, snakes, porcupines, and deer. The market, which has been sanitized and closed since January 1, 2020, is approximately one square mile in size and located near the Hankou train station, which serves as a transportation hub at the center of Chinas domestic train routes.</p> <p>(SBU) Patients began showing symptoms between December 12 and 29. Seven patients remain hospitalized in serious condition; the remainder have stable vital signs and there have been no deaths. 163 contacts are under medical observation with no symptoms. Health officials state there has been no confirmed human-to-human transmission of the disease, and no cases among health workers. Laboratory investigations have ruled out influenza, avian influenza, SARS, MERS, and other common respiratory pathogens, and are awaiting final pathogen results. Continued investigation using nucleic acid testing, virus isolation, and culture is under way. Symptoms include fever, difficulty breathing and chest x-rays showing bilateral lung infiltrates. During an interview with a reporter for the Yanjiang Daily on January 6, the Director of the Wuhan Center for Disease Control and Prevention said they are conducting active and retrospective case finding in medical institutions throughout Wuhan. It is believed that that active case finding and retrospective investigation since the outbreak was reported on December 31 is the primary reason for the increase in the reported cases over the last week from 27 to 59.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 74</p>

<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan and Embassy health contacts have indicated they have been instructed not to discuss the outbreak, beyond normal government information control, and have expressed frustration regarding the lack of internal communication among the medical community. According to a local virologist, authorities will not be permitted to talk about the outbreak and have to rely on international media.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 74</p>
<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) ConGen Officers observed no additional medical screening at metro, train stations, or airports. Aside from the closed market, all observations and reports are that the city is operating normally.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 74</p>
<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) In response to the outbreak, U.S. CDC Director Robert Redfield called China CDC Director George Gao. Director Redfield offered U.S. CDC technical support; however, China CDC has not yet responded to the offer. WHO's China office told us they have daily calls with WHO Geneva and the WHO Western Pacific Regional office to share information on the outbreak. WHO is also preparing to provide technical support to the PRC if requested.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 74</p>
<p>1/7/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) PRC officials on December 31, 2019 alerted WHO to the pneumonia outbreak. WHO contacts told Embassy officials that PRC health departments continue to provide information about the outbreak in accordance with WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR). While China has been forthcoming with standard information, WHO contacts note they have not received more detailed and potentially useful information, such as epi curves or other epidemiological data. The flow of official PRC information on this outbreak is limited to that coming from the Wuhan Health Commission and National Health Commission. China CDC is referring queries to the three official notices issued to-date by the Wuhan Health Commission.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 74</p>

1/7/2020	<p>(SBU) The PRCs release of information during the early stages of the outbreak has been regular and stands in contrast to past outbreaks, such as the 2003 SARS epidemic, where officials publicly denied the epidemic despite mounting infections and deaths. In the seven days since the notification to WHO of the current outbreak, the Wuhan Health Commission has issued three official notices, and the interview with the Wuhan CDC Director is publicly available. Additionally, an editor of the China CDC Weekly (launched in November 2019 and modeled after the U.S. CDCs Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) informed a U.S. CDC officer that an investigator has been assigned to write a report on the outbreak. Such a report could provide additional epidemiologic data that will be useful for global public health officials to understand the cluster of cases.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 74
1/7/2020	<p>Shi Zhengli of the Wuhan Institute of Virology recalled in a March 11 interview with Scientific American that by January 7 her team found that the novel coronavirus's sequence did not match any of the viruses her team had sampled from bat caves. "That really took a load off my mind," she said. But the novel sequence was 96% identical to one her team had sampled previously in Yunnan.</p>	U	Scientific American	Jane Qui, "How's China's 'Bat Woman' Hunted Down Viruses from SARS to the New
1/7/2020	<p>Wall Street Journal reports for the first time that Chinese scientists have tied the mystery illnesses to a new strain of coronavirus.</p>	U	WSJ	Natasha Khan, "New Virus Discovered by Chinese Scientists Investigating Pneumonia
1/7/2020	<p>Xi Jinping becomes involved in the response.</p>	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-

1/8/2020	Eight patients with viral pneumonia of unknown causes in Wuhan have been cured of the disease and were discharged from hospital.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/9/2020	In response to Beijing's confirmation, international scientists urge Chinese authorities to quickly share data on the virus, the disease it causes, and how it spreads.	U	Science	Dennis Normile, et al., "Scientists urge China to quickly share data on virus linked to
1/9/2020	"As of noon on Thursday local time, 10 patients -- five of whom are under seven years old -- had been admitted to hospital in Hong Kong with flu-like symptoms or pneumonia who had been to Wuhan during the past two weeks, Hong Kong's Hospital Authority said in a statement."The patients concerned had not visited [fresh food] markets in Wuhan before the onset of symptoms," the statement said"	U	Radio Free Asia	Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc., "Experts Cast Doubts on Chinese Official Claims Around
1/9/2020	"Chinese health authorities had said the virus -- which first struck in Wuhan among employees of a now-shuttered seafood market -- wasn't SARS, and no human-to-human transmission has yet been reported.But health experts have cast doubt on the claims about human-to-human transmission.Ho Pak-leung, head of the University of Hong Kong's Centre for Infection, has warned that it is highly possible that the illness is spreading from human to human, given the sheer number of cases that have mushroomed in a short period of time.Hong Kong authorities appear to be taking the possibility seriously, with health screening of all passengers coming into the city from mainland China already in place"	U	Radio Free Asia	Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc., "Experts Cast Doubts on Chinese Official Claims Around 'New' Wuhan Coronavirus" 2020-01-09
1/9/2020	"Repeated calls to various numbers listed for the Wuhan Institute of Virology under the Chinese Academy of Sciences rang unanswered.However, an employee who identified herself as a senior engineer said she knew nothing about the virus."Sorry, I ... I don't know about this," the employee said."	U	Radio Free Asia	Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc., "Experts Cast Doubts on

<p>1/9/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Following the release of the January 9 CCTV article, U.S. CDC Director Robert Redfield spoke again with China CDC Director George Gao and reiterated U.S. CDC's offer of technical assistance. Embassy Beijing HHS continues to follow up on this with PRC health and quarantine authorities.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>
<p>1/9/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) A January 9 WHO statement (link<https://www.who.int/china/news/detail/09-01-2020-who-statement-regarding-cluster-of-pneumonia-cases-in-wuhan-china>) marked the first official confirmation that PRC authorities had preliminarily identified a novel coronavirus as the cause of the pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan (ref A)... The WHO statement lauded China's capabilities in identifying the new virus, along with its strong public health capacities and resources to respond to and manage the outbreak. However, Embassy Beijing discussions with WHO contacts in Beijing indicate that while the statement highlighted the PRC's information sharing, only the limited epidemiological information already released publicly in the Wuhan Health Commission statements was likely shared. Contacts added that WHO has also pressed PRC authorities in private meetings to release the genetic sequence data into a publicly available genetic sequence database (e.g. GenBank) as soon as possible, and also release other comprehensive epidemiological information over the next weeks in order to allow for better assessment of the clinical situation and current status of the outbreak. WHO guidance under the International Health Regulations (IHR) for events that may constitute a public health emergency of international concern require WHO Member States to make timely and transparent notifications and provide information, but does not refer to an exact timeline.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>

1/9/2020	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan personnel visited Wuhan's airport and its three passenger train stations on January 9. They did not observe any type of exit screening (e.g., fever checks) beyond the normal security screening measures (x-ray, metal detector, and manual pat down for all departing passengers). In a January 10 meeting, Wuhan's Public Security Bureau (PSB) told CG Wuhan RSO that any information they share will be limited to what is announced publicly. When pressed about controls at transportation centers, Wuhan PSB said that while they have the capability to do so, there is no need for health screening at this time, indicating they are not concerned about the pneumonia outbreak. PRC Customs contacts confirmed on January 10 that screening procedures at the airport for departing passengers continued as normal, with no augmented check for illness. Consulate personnel arriving via train and plane on January 8 and 9 did not observe any additional screening for arriving passengers and the airport's permanent temperature screening devices were not in service.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 108
1/9/2020	China announces it has mapped the coronavirus genome	U	Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-likely-allowed-
1/9/2020	China announces it has mapped the coronavirus genome. [The genome itself is not published until 1/11.]	U	Washington Post	washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-
1/9/2020	Chinese authorities identify a novel coronavirus as the likely cause of the outbreak in Wuhan, two days after the Wall Street Journal reported on Chinese scientists discovering the novel strain.	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus

1/9/2020	Preliminary lab results showed a new-type coronavirus had caused viral pneumonia in Wuhan, according to Xu Jianguo, a Chinese expert who led a team to evaluate the pathogen test results.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/9/2020	WHO releases a statement: "Preliminary identification of a novel virus in a short period of time is a notable achievement and demonstrates China's increased capacity to manage new outbreaks. . . . According to Chinese authorities, the virus in question can cause severe illness in some patients and does not transmit readily between people. . . . WHO does not recommend any specific measures for travellers. WHO advises against the application of any travel or trade restrictions on China based on the information currently available."	U	WHO	WHO Statement Regarding Cluster of Pneumonia Cases in Wuhan, China, January 9, 2020.
1/9/2020	WHO representative Galea said "people with symptoms of pneumonia and reported travel history to Wuhan have been identified at international airports," but no travel advisories have been issued for China as hundreds of millions get ready to travel across the country to spend Lunar New Year with their families on Jan. 25. People living in Wuhan have said there is scant information in the media about the outbreak, in a country where media outlets are strictly controlled by the ruling Chinese Communist Party. An employee who answered the phone at Wuhan's Jinyintan Hospital declined to comment when contacted by RFA on Thursday. "We don't give interviews here," the employee said. "The only official channel for this matter is the Wuhan municipal health commission, so ... you can contact them directly to find out more." However, calls to the Wuhan municipal health commission rang unanswered during office hours on Thursday.	U	Radio Free Asia	Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc., "Experts Cast Doubts on Chinese Official Claims Around 'New' Wuhan Coronavirus" 2020-01-09
1/10/2020	"On January 10, Dr. Li Wenliang began to have a fever and went to the fever clinic of Wuhan Central Hospital for treatment."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM

<p>1/10/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) PRC media reports indicate that Xu Jianguo is leading the laboratory investigation. Mr. Xu is currently an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering and was the former Director of the State Key Laboratory for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control in the National Institute for Communicable Disease Control and Prevention of China CDC. He continues to serve as a senior expert for the National Health Commission and China CDC.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>
<p>1/10/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) As of close of business in Beijing, January 10, no additional official statements related to the outbreak have been issued by the Wuhan Health Commission since January 5, nor by the National Health Commission. The three official statements issued to-date by PRC authorities have all come from the Wuhan Health Commission (ref A).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>

<p>1/10/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan personnel visited the Huanan market and confirmed it remained closed. The only people present were private security guards, all wearing surgical masks. Locals speculated the market would remain closed at least until after the upcoming Lunar New Year holiday, which ends in February. Consulate personnel also visited three additional markets where live animals are at least occasionally sold. While vendors at these markets were evasive when asked what they thought happened to the products for sale in the Huanan market, Consulate personnel did not observe any live animals for sale other than fish and one cage of snakes. A vendor at the largest market said some wild-caught fowl and goats were normally available at the market but that authorities had prohibited those sales following the pneumonia outbreak. At a different market, a large section normally reserved for pork sales was nearly vacant. One of the few remaining vendors said there was a lack of customers, so the other vendors had departed, suggesting no pork from the closed Huanan market had been diverted to that market. CG Wuhan personnel observed that vendors, shoppers, and taxi drivers all said they were not worried about the outbreak. Consulate personnel did not observe anyone wearing surgical masks other than the guards at the closed Huanan market.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>
<p>1/10/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan's healthcare provider contacts said PRC authorities forbade them from providing any information on the outbreak, telling Consulate personnel to "watch the news for updates."</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 108</p>

1/10/2020	<p>(SBU) China's National Health Commission has dispatched an expert group to Wuhan to support local health officials. The group's lead expert, Xu Jianguo (ref A), said in a January 10 interview with Science that the new coronavirus is similar to previous bat coronaviruses, but is not similar to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) or MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). He also emphasized the outbreak was different from and more controlled than the SARS outbreak, and that no new patients had appeared (since January 2). Xu also clarified that China CDC was leading the investigation.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/10/2020	<p>(SBU) Global health officials broadly agree that three areas of information are key to establishing diagnostic tools and risk assessments for the new virus: 1) Gene sequence data will permit countries and health officials to create diagnostic tools to identify (and rule out) cases; 2) Epidemiological data is necessary to understand the risk of human-to-human transmission, associated exposure risks, and a possible zoonotic source. At minimum, updated onset dates will allow determinations of whether the outbreak has been contained or is ongoing; 3) Animal data, given that the new virus is likely transmitted from an animal to humans, such as identifying the suspect species, where the animals were sourced, and other places at risk, can help prevent and/or contain further outbreak.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 108
1/10/2020	<p>(SBU) International virologic experts have also called publicly on PRC health authorities to quickly share data, including in a January 9 article in the influential magazine Science. As of close of business in Beijing, January 10, China CDC Weekly had yet to publish a report on the new virus. A China CDC Weekly editor informed a U.S. CDC officer earlier this week that an investigator had been assigned to write a report on the outbreak (ref A). Such a report could include epidemiologic data that would be useful for global public health officials. However, it is possible that Chinese scientists will preferentially publish an article including data on the outbreak in a high impact factor peer-reviewed scientific journal.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 108

1/10/2020	After leading a second expert team from Beijing to Wuhan, prominent PRC government expert Wang Guangfa tells state broadcaster CCTV that the Wuhan pneumonia was "under control" and mostly a "mild condition." His team reported no clear signs of human-to-human transmission, though more than half a dozen doctors already were ill. On March 15, Wang wrote on social media that he "always suspected it was human-to-human transmissible."	U	NYT, AP	Li Yuan, "China silences critics over deadly virus outbreak," New York times, January 25, 2020. "China didn't warn public of
1/10/2020	More international scientists and public-health experts call on China to share more information on the new coronavirus.	U	CIDRAP	Lisa Schnirring, "Pressure builds on China to share info on new
1/11/2020	"With the help of Dr. Andrew Rambaut (University of Edinburgh), [ZHANG Yongzhen and his team at Shanghai Public Health Clinical Center and School of Life Science] released the genome sequence of the virus on the open access Virological website (http://virological.org/) early on January 11, 2020."	U	ScienceDirect	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0092867420303287
1/11/2020	(SBU) China News Service (link<https://m.chinanews.com/wap/detail/zwsp/gn/2020/01-11/9056976.shtml>) quoted one expert stating that no new cases had been detected since January 3, 2020, and that no evidence of human-to-human transmission has been found.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/11/2020	(SBU) Chinese domestic press reporting on the pneumonia outbreak included interviews with medical experts. These interviews highlighted that the outbreak was under control, that information was being shared, and that the public should avoid wild animals and exercise regular precautions. Press (link<http://www.xinhuanet.com/2020-01/11/c_1125448549.htm>) reported the death of one pneumonia patient and detailed that the 61-year old male frequently purchased goods from the Huanan Market associated with the outbreak.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122

<p>1/11/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) On January 11, the PRC National Health Commission announced (link, in Chinese<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/gjhzs/s7952/202001/422796acaea746549f93e617ccc348a1.shtml>) it would share the novel coronavirus' (2019-nCoV) gene sequence (ref A) with WHO. Researchers reportedly uploaded the sequence to the U.S. National Institutes of Health's genetic sequence database GenBank (link<http://virological.org/t/initial-genome-release-of-novel-coronavirus/319>). Per the National Health Commission, the sequence has also been uploaded to GISAID (Note: The GISAID platform is usually used to share influenza data, but an exemption allowed PRC officials to submit the coronavirus information. Per Health Commission communication, GISAID is verifying information and will release it publicly once the verification is complete. The submitted sequence information is listed under the recent data submissions section on the GISAID webpage: https://www.gisaid.org. End Note.). WHO officials publicly thanked PRC health authorities for their commitment to sharing information, saying they were reassured by the quality of the ongoing investigation and response measures.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 122</p>
<p>1/11/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) U.S. CDC updated factual information in its Travel Health Notice (link<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>) on January 11, 2020. The recommendation remains unchanged (Watch - Level 1, Practice Usual Precautions).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 122</p>
<p>1/11/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) WHO released a technical package (link<https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>) on January 11, which included case definitions, lab guidance, and infection protection and control. As of close of business in Beijing on January 13, WHO had not issued any recommendations on specific health measures for travelers, nor any travel or trade restrictions.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 122</p>

1/11/2020	[ZHANG Yongzhen's team at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre Shanghai] made the finding public on January 11 after it saw that the authorities had taken no obvious action to warn the public about the coronavirus.... It shared the data on virological.org, an open platform for discussions, and GenBank, an open-access data repository, and said researchers were welcome to download, share, use and analyse the data.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-shared-coronavirus-
1/11/2020	1/11 - 1/17 Important prescheduled CCP meeting held in Wuhan as planned. During that time, the Wuhan Health Commission insists there are no new cases.	U	Washington Post	washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-
1/11/2020	11-17 Jan: Important prescheduled CCP meeting held in Wuhan. During that time, the Wuhan Health Commission insists there are no new cases.	U	Washington Post	https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-likely-allowed-
1/11/2020	Having provided the genomic sequence of the virus to national authorities on January 5 and seen no action from them, Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre Professor Zhang Yongzhen publishes the data on virological.org and GenBank, allowing teams around the world to begin work on testing methods.	U	SCMP	Zhuang Pinghui, "Chinese laboratory that first shared coronavirus genome with world ordered to close for
1/11/2020	Hong Kong's secretary for food and health announces, "According to the mainland authorities, there is no evidence of human to human transmission and there is also no healthcare professional being infected. . . . Also of note is after the closure of the concerned market in Wuhan, there is no new case since January 3."	U	HK press archives	David Webb tweet citing Hong Kong press archives, March 20, 2020 (https://twitter.c

1/11/2020	One patient with viral pneumonia has been confirmed dead in Wuhan, and seven others were in critical condition.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/11/2020	The NHC said that China would share with the WHO information on the genome sequence of a new-type coronavirus detected in viral pneumonia cases reported in Wuhan, after the pathogen was identified on Jan 7.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/11/2020	With the private Shanghai lab having already gone public, the PRC government's National Health Commission shares virus genomic information with the WHO for the first time.	U	Caixin Global	Gao Yu et al., "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread,
1/12/2020	"[Li Wenliang] admitted to the ophthalmology ward of Wuhan Central Hospital on January 12"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIreO6nz5
1/12/2020	"The laboratory at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre was ordered to close for "rectification" on January 12, a day after Professor Zhang Yongzhen's team published the genome sequence on open platforms. It closed temporarily the following day.".... "The centre was not given any specific reasons why the laboratory was closed for rectification. [We have submitted] four reports [asking for permission] to reopen but we have not received any replies," a source with the centre said, requesting anonymity because of the matter's sensitivity....It was not clear whether the closure was related to the publishing of the sequencing data before the authorities....China's National Health Commission announced hours after the release by Zhang's team that it would share the genome sequence with the World Health Organisation. It later emerged that the information had been sent through the officially designated Wuhan Institute of Virology.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-shared-coronavirus-genome-world-ordered

1/12/2020	<p>(SBU) AIT reports two Taiwan Centers for Disease Control medical officers arrived in Wuhan January 12 to carry out epidemiological investigations. Taiwan CDC confirmed to AIT on January 13 that they will conduct site visits and learn about detection, treatment, and preventative measures. The visit was prompted by a January 6 written request from Taiwan CDC to the China National Health Commission, which was approved via a January 11 phone call. Taiwan CDC will hold a press conference to announce the results of the investigation when the medical officers return from Wuhan.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/12/2020	<p>(SBU) Separately, media reported January 12 that Hong Kong's Food and Health Bureau Undersecretary Dr. Chui Tak-yi (the bureau's number two official) would travel to Wuhan to receive information about the outbreak. Dr. Chuang Shuk-kwan, head of the Communicable Disease Branch of the Centre for Health Protection, and Dr. Raymond Lai Wai-man, Chief Infection Control Officer at the Hospital Authority, planned to accompany him, the report said.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/12/2020	<p>(SBU) While WHO announced in its January 12 statement that PRC health officials have shared additional epidemiological data, officials have yet to release the information publicly, and investigators continued to seek zoonotic information to identify the source of the outbreak.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122

1/12/2020	<p>Chinese laboratory that first shared coronavirus genome with world was ordered to close for 'rectification', hindering its Covid-19 research. The laboratory at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre was ordered to close for "rectification" on January 12, a day after Professor Zhang Yongzhen's team published the genome sequence on open platforms. It closed temporarily the following day. Zhang's team isolated and finished the genome sequence of the then-unknown virus on January 5, two days before China's official announcement that mysterious pneumonia cases in Wuhan were caused by a hitherto unknown coronavirus.... The Shanghai centre reported its discovery to the National Health Commission on the same day and recommended "relevant prevention and control measures" be taken in public places, because the patient from whom the sample was collected had suffered very severe symptoms and the virus resembled a group previously found in bats. The team made the finding public on January 11 after it saw that the authorities had taken no obvious action to warn the public about the coronavirus.</p>	U	SCMP	<p>https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-shared-coronavirus-genome-world-ordered</p>
1/12/2020	<p>Chinese state media reports, Experts from the National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention under the China CDC allegedly take "environmental samples" with the Wuhan Seafood Market</p>	U	Xinhua Net	<p>http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/27/c_138735</p>

<p>1/12/2020</p>	<p>Professor Zhang Yongzhen’s lab in Shanghai is closed by authorities for “rectification,” one day after it shared genomic sequence data with the world for the first time. “The closure has greatly affected the scientists and their research when they should be racing against the clock to find the means to help put the novel coronavirus outbreak under control,” a lab source says.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>SCMP, Inkstone News</p>	<p>Zhuang Pinghui, “Chinese laboratory that first shared coronavirus genome with world ordered to close for ‘rectification’, hindering its Covid-19 research,” South China Morning</p>
<p>1/13/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Embassy Bangkok reported Thailand’s Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) announced on January 13 confirmation of the first detected case outside of Wuhan (link, in Thai<">https://pr.moph.go.th/?url=pr/detail/2/04/136970/>) (ref C). As of January 12, virus sequencing data from the specimens collected from the patient were reported to match the publicly available novel coronavirus sequence. This represents the first reported case of the novel coronavirus outside of Wuhan and outside of China. The 61-year-old woman reportedly traveled from Wuhan and was detected with a fever via thermo-scan at Suvarnabhumi Airport on January 8.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 122</p>
<p>1/13/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Information about the viral pneumonia continued to be available online from major news outlets through online portals such as Sina Weibo, however the online conversation was limited to specific topics and themes, and not present in any “trending topics” lists, indicating that content controls about the pneumonia were in place.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 122</p>

1/13/2020	(SBU) PRC Health Officials have told WHO there have been no new cases since January 3, and they are still reporting no evidence of human-to-human transmission. PRC officials expanded the symptom onset date range from December 8, 2019 (previously the onset date was December 12) to January 2, 2020 (previously the end-set date was December 31, 2019).	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/13/2020	(SBU) Wuhan's airport and its three passenger train stations continued to have no illness exit screening (e.g., fever checks) beyond the normal security screening measures (x-ray, metal detector, and manual pat down for all departing passengers). In a January 10 meeting (ref A), Wuhan's Public Security Bureau (PSB) told CG Wuhan RSO that while they had the capability to do so, there was still no need for health screening, indicating they were not concerned about the pneumonia outbreak. As of close of business in Beijing on January 13, the Huanan market remained closed.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 122
1/13/2020	First coronavirus case outside of China is reported in Bangkok when a 61-year-old woman from Wuhan tests positive four days after landing with a fever at the airport. The patient began exhibiting symptoms (fever, chills, sore throat, headache) three days before leaving Wuhan.	U	SCMP, WHO	Elizabeth Cheung, "Wuhan pneumonia: Thailand confirms first case outside of China," South China Morning Post, January 13,
1/13/2020	First coronavirus case reported in Thailand, the first known case outside China.	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-

1/14/2020	"[LI Wenliang] transferred to the third ward of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine on January 14"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
1/14/2020	In a confidential teleconference with provincial health officials, PRC National Health Commission chief Ma Xiaowei reportedly warns that the novel virus is "the most severe challenge since SARS in 2003, and is likely to develop into a major public health event," adding that "clustered cases suggest that human-to-human transmission is possible." Citing the case reported in Thailand the day prior, Ma warns of spread overseas and during China's coming Lunar New Year festivities. It would be another six days before any of these official concerns are made public.	U	AP	"China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days," The Associated Press, April 15, 2020.
1/14/2020	Official WHO twitter page announces: "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel #coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in #Wuhan, #China." This is more than five weeks after the first evidence of human-to-human transmission in Wuhan.	U	WHO	WHO tweet, January 14, 2020, 6:18am ET (https://twitter.com/WHO/status/12170432294277)
1/14/2020	Plainclothes police detain journalists trying to report from Wuhan's Jinyintan Hospital and force them to delete their TV footage and hand in phones and cameras for inspection.	U	Business Insider, NYT	Ashley Collman, "China spent the crucial first days of the Wuhan coronavirus outbreak arresting people who posted about it online and threatening journalists,"

1/14/2020	The chief of the WHO emerging diseases unit reports that "it is possible that there is limited human-to-human transmission, potentially among families, but it is very clear right now that we have no sustained human-to-human transmission."	U	Reuters	Stephanie Nebehay, "WHO says new China coronavirus could spread, warns"
1/14/2020	WHO announces Chinese authorities have seen "no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novelcoronavirus."	U	Twitter WHO Account	https://twitter.com/WHO/status/1217043229427761152?ref_src=twsrc^tfw twcamp^tweetembed&ref_url=https://www.foxnews.com/world/world-

<p>1/15/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission on January 15 announced (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020011509046>) that no new novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) patients had been identified in the city since Posts January 13 cable (ref A). The Municipal Health Commission has to-date reported 41 cases diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, of which 6 cases are in severe condition, and one death. The remaining patients are reported to be in stable condition. Authorities also reported a total of 763 close contacts of the patients have been monitored, with 313 still under medical observation. There are still no reported cases of the novel coronavirus among these close contacts of the patients or among healthcare workers. These numbers reported by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission do not seem to include the cases reported from Thailand and Japan... In a January 15 Q&A (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020011509040>) posted to the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission website, health authorities said that two of the 41 cases were clustered in the same family. A husband employed in the Huanan market (refs A-C) first developed the disease and his wife later showed symptoms. The wife said she had not visited the market. The health officials acknowledged the possibility of limited human-to-human transmission. In the same Q&A, officials noted that close contacts of the patients were placed under observation for 14 days. They also shared limited epidemiological information, noting that most patients were male, that most were middle-aged and/or elderly, and that older patients and those with underlying conditions were more likely to progress to severe conditions. The officials reported some patients said they had not been to the Huanan market; however, this was not quantified and there was no information on other potential exposures they may have had. Officials also said that investigators had not yet identified the source of the infection.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>
<p>1/15/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) A Western doctor practicing in Wuhan for over six years told CG Wuhan personnel on January 15 that his information regarding the novel coronavirus is consistent with what Chinese health officials had announced: All infected patients have been adults, most cases were connected to the Huanan market, some patients had pre-existing conditions, and some patients exhibited two-day incubation periods.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>

<p>1/15/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Embassy Beijing HHS and CDC officers continue to urge PRC health officials to share epidemiologic data to help the U.S. and global health experts assess the risk of human-to-human transmission and implement appropriate preparedness actions for this novel pathogen. On January 15, embassy officers submitted a detailed written request for epidemiological information to the National Health Commission. The Health Commission responded that it had passed the request to the appropriate experts and would respond in due course.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>
<p>1/15/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) On January 15, Embassy Beijing and Consulate General Wuhan officers notified the PRCs National Immigration Administration, along with health, quarantine, and Wuhan government officials, that the United States will enhance screening of passengers traveling from Wuhan to the three U.S. airports that receive the majority of passenger flights from Wuhan (SFO, LAX, and JFK). PRC counterparts requested that Mission China continue to notify them of any future related health notices. As a courtesy, CG Wuhan personnel notified Hubei Foreign Affairs Office American and Oceanian Affairs Division Chief Hu Jian of plans for increased health screening at the three U.S. airports. He had no substantive response.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>

<p>1/15/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The Chinese national (refs A, D) infected with the novel coronavirus who was discovered in Thailand has been interviewed by Thai Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) officials. As hospital officials did not have personnel at that time who could speak Chinese, Embassy Beijings CDC office provided translated questions, including Wuhan-specific questions, at the request of the CDC Thai office. The patient reported she had not been to the Huanan market, raising questions about the source of the virus and risk of human-to-human transmission. She also said she had begun to show symptoms in Wuhan on January 5 but proceeded to travel to Thailand on January 8. Suvarnabhumi Airport health screening detected her fever via thermo-scan. The woman said that while she had never shopped at the closed Huanan market, she had gone to two other markets. CG Wuhan personnel visited the two markets. Duoluokou Market is known for selling building supplies, fruit, and dry goods (grains). ConOff did not observe any live animals or fresh meat. Vendors told ConOff the market did not sell either, and that following the pneumonia outbreak, authorities had prohibited selling live animals in general. The second market, known locally known as Qiaokou Market, is frequented by a CG Wuhan employee who shops there regularly. He said it had no live or exotic animals. ConOff did not observe anyone at either markets wearing surgical masks or other protective clothing.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>
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1/15/2020	<p>(SBU) News<http://www.chinanews.com/tw/2020/01-15/9060881.shtml> reported on the visit of Taiwan health experts to Wuhan, quoting a spokesperson from the State Councils Taiwan Affairs Office during a press conference on January 15, stating that authorities attach great importance to maintaining the health and well-being of compatriots on both sides of the Strait. On social media, netizens joked that since it had not spread to other provinces in China even while reports of the virus had shown up in Thailand and Japan, the virus was patriotic. Others expressed caution and appealed for greater information sharing by authorities. On Weibo, the hashtag #<https://s.weibo.com/weibo?q=%23%E6%AD%A6%E6%B1%89%E8%82%BA%E7%82%8E%E4%B8%8D%E6%8E%92%E9%99%A4%E6%9C%89%E9%99%90%E4%BA%BA%E4%BC%A0%E4%BA%BA%E5%8F%AF%E8%83%BD%23> (#Human Transmission of Wuhan Pneumonia Cannot Be Ruled Out) had 120 million views and had generated 8,226 discussions.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142
1/15/2020	<p>A day after the confidential teleconference, China's CDC initiates the highest-level emergency response internally and the National Health Commission distributes 63 pages of instructions to provinces on identifying cases and equipping doctors with protective gear. These instructions are marked "internal," "not to be spread on the internet," and "not to be publicly disclosed."</p>	U	AP	"China didn't warn public of likely pandemic for 6 key days," The Associated Press, April 15,
1/15/2020	<p>Li Qun, head of the Chinese CDC's emergency center, plays down the human-to-human transmission threat on state television: "After careful screening and prudent judgment, we have reached the latest understanding that the risk of human-to-human transmission is low."</p>	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus Missteps," Wall
1/15/2020	<p>The patient who becomes the first confirmed U.S. case leaves Wuhan and arrives in the U.S., carrying the coronavirus.</p>	U	CDC	"First Travel-related Case of 2019 Novel Coronavirus

1/15/2020	The patient who becomes the first confirmed U.S. case leaves Wuhan and arrives in the U.S., carrying the coronavirus.	U	U.S. CDC Newsroom	https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0121-novel-
1/16/2020	(SBU) CG Wuhan personnel observed exit screening measures in place and active at Wuhan airport on January 16 (see Figure 1), in contrast to prior visits which showed no observable health exit screening. In a January 10 meeting (refs A-B), Wuhan Public Security Bureau (PSB) contacts told CG Wuhan RSO that while the PSB had the capability, there was no need at that time for health exit screening. CG Wuhan is working to confirm with the PSB whether additional exit health screening has been implemented.	U// SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142
1/16/2020	(SBU) Hankou Train Station, at least, still had no exit screening as of January 16.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142
1/16/2020	(SBU) Health officials in Japan reported a case of novel coronavirus (link, in Japanese< https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/newpage_08906.html >) on January 16. The case is a 30-year-old man who traveled to Wuhan and lives in Kanagawa Prefecture, which is adjacent to Tokyo. While in Wuhan, he developed a fever on January 3, traveled back to Japan on January 6, visited a hospital the same day, and was hospitalized with pneumonia on January 10. He did not report having visited the Huanan market, but did report contact with a patient with pneumonia. He was diagnosed with the novel coronavirus on January 15 and discharged from the hospital the same day as his condition had improved. The Thailand and Japan cases could be vital sources of biological and epidemiological data on the virus as they are the only cases outside the control of PRC authorities.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142

<p>1/16/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) State-controlled media<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/16/c_138709150.htm> continued to cover the story factually, including the January 16 announcement that an infected person had been treated in Japan after traveling to Wuhan. China Daily<https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/16/WS5e1fa998a31012821727143a.html> quoted an immunology professor at Peking University's Health Science Center in its report on how provincial authorities had responded to the situation, saying that despite the possibility of limited human-to-human transmission of the new virus, large-scale spreading of the disease is unlikely. "The existing control and prevention measures adopted by health authorities are very strict... the risk of the disease spreading is controllable and chances of massive, worldwide spread are not high."</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 142</p>
<p>1/16/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission on January 16 announced (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020011609057>) that no new patients have been identified in the city since Post's January 16 cable (ref B). Five additional patients were released from the hospital, bringing to 12 the total number of discharged patients. The Municipal Health Commission has to-date reported 41 cases diagnosed with the novel coronavirus, of which five are in severe condition and two have died. The remaining patients are in stable condition. Authorities reported 763 close contacts of the patients have been monitored in total, with 119 (down from yesterday's 313) still under medical observation. The Municipal Health Commission's numbers do not include the three patients reported in Thailand and Japan (refs A-C, F).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 164</p>

1/16/2020	(SBU) WHO contacts on January 16 confirmed to Embassy Beijing that PRC health officials had provided some information to WHO within the framework of International Health Regulations (IHR) reporting. However, the information was limited in scope and additional epidemiological data would be necessary to answer persistent questions related to the source of the novel coronavirus and the risk of human-to-human transmission.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142
1/16/2020	(SBU) Wuhan health authorities reported that there are preliminary positive environmental specimens from the Huanan market. According to a media briefing (link<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/second-family-cluster-found-wuhan-novel-coronavirus-outbreak>) with a Hong Kong expert (ref A), samples collected from the seafood section of the market tested positive. However, per this expert, seafood is an unlikely source and experts are therefore exploring other animal sources. The extent of environmental sampling occurring in other markets in Wuhan is unknown.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 142
1/17/2020	(SBU) Thailand's Ministry of Public Health announced January 17 that it had confirmed a second patient, a 74-year-old Chinese National who arrived in Thailand January 12, was infected with the novel coronavirus (ref A). Media reported January 17 additional suspected cases in Vietnam (link<https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/3rd-suspected-wuhan-virus-case-detected-singapore-man-isolated-precaution>) and Singapore (link<https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/3rd-suspected-wuhan-virus-case-detected-singapore-man-isolated-precaution>). None have been confirmed.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 164
1/17/2020	A second patient with coronavirus-related pneumonia has been confirmed dead in Wuhan.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

1/18/2020	(SBU) A CG Wuhan Officer flying internationally out of Wuhan's airport January 18 observed automated health checkpoints that were monitored by one person (figure 1). A medical team near the entrance to the airport is also in place, although ConGenOff observed the personnel sleeping (figure 2). Aboard the flight to San Francisco, passengers received U.S. medical forms. Once landed, U.S. personnel at the airport checked passenger temperatures on the gangway.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 166
1/18/2020	Annual Wuhan Lunar New Year banquet. Tens of thousands of people gathered for a potluck.	U	The Star	 https://archive.v
1/18/2020	The Wuhan Health Commission announces four new cases.	U	Axios	https://archive.v n/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-
1/18/2020	Wuhan hosts mass "potluck" banquet of 40,000 families in attempt to break world record.	U	NYT	Li Yuan, "China silences critics over deadly virus outbreak," New
1/18/2020	Wuhan Municipal Health Commission announces new cases of the virus for the first time since before January 5. The announcement comes after the close of the five-day meeting of Wuhan's Communist Party-controlled People's Congress, during which officials made daily claims of no new cases, no human-human transmission, and no infected medical workers.	U	WSJ, NYT	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus Missteps," Wall Street Journal, March 6, 2020. Amy Qin, "China's Leader,

<p>1/19/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Guangdong Province's Health Commission announced January 19 one new confirmed case has been identified in the province (link, in Chinese<http://wsjkw.gd.gov.cn/zwyw_yqxx/content/post_2876057.html>). The patient is a 66-year-old male who lives in Shenzhen city and had visited Wuhan. He developed a fever January 3 in Wuhan, returned to Shenzhen January 4, and was admitted to the hospital January 11. Shenzhen health officials sent specimens to the China CDC January 18 and confirmed the infection January 19. Shenzhen health officials sent specimens to the China CDC January 18 and confirmed the infection January 19. The patient was reported in stable condition. The Beijing Daxing District Municipal Health Commission announced January 20 on its official WeiBo account that two cases had been confirmed in Beijing (link, in Chinese<https://www.weibo.com/dxwsjs?is_hot=1>). NHC officials also confirmed the cases to Embassy Beijing CDC officers. The Beijing patients had also travelled to Wuhan. The Daxing District Health Commission statement said that the patients showed no respiratory symptoms and were reported in stable condition. The Shenzhen and Beijing cases mark the first reported cases in China located outside Wuhan.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 166</p>
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1/19/2020	<p>(SBU) The PRC National Health Commission (NHC) in a January 19 statement (link, in Chinese<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202001/de5f07afe8054af3ab2a25a61d19ac70.shtml>) announced measures that it had taken since January 1 to contain the spread of the virus and said it would step up efforts as the travel season around Lunar New Year begins. The statement confirmed that NHC Minister Ma Xiaowei is overseeing the national response, which includes an expert committee, along with working and technical groups dispatched to Wuhan/Hubei Province. The NHC statement continued that the China CDC, Chinese Academy of Medical Science, Chinese Academy of Science, and the Chinese Military Academy of Science identified the novel coronavirus January 8. NHC then organized a nation-wide teleconference to deploy epidemic prevention and control measures. It also distributed case diagnosis, prevention and control guidance (surveillance, epidemiological investigation, close contact monitoring and management, lab testing, etc.) and established a daily reporting mechanism. NHC also distributed diagnostic kits and directed provinces to strengthen testing and to publish confirmed cases and relevant information. NHC recently deployed working groups to other provinces. The NHC statement also emphasized that the PRC had strengthened international cooperation, and had shared information with Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, WHO, and other countries in a timely manner. In its statement, NHC also emphasized that its expert committee assessed that the epidemic is thus far preventable and controllable. However, it conceded that the source and transmission mode of the coronavirus have yet to be identified and the possibility of virus mutation should be closely monitored.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 166
1/19/2020	Beijing sends epidemiologists to Wuhan.	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-
1/19/2020	Wuhan reported 17 new coronavirus-related pneumonia cases. Among the infected patients, 12 are male and five are female. They are aged between 30 and 79, and three of them were in critical condition.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

1/20/2020	<p>"Zhong Nanshan, director of the China State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Disease and a world expert on the Sars virus, said after a visit to Wuhan that the source of the new type coronavirus was probably from wildlife, such as bamboo rats or badgers. "The outbreak concentrated in two districts in Wuhan, where there are big seafood markets," Zhong said in an interview with state broadcaster CCTV on Monday. "While they are called seafood markets, many vendors are selling game. According to preliminary epidemiological analysis, the virus is probably transmitted from wildlife [at the markets] to humans." "</p>	U	OSC	<p>"Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China's Coronavirus Outbreak", Hong Kong South China Morning Post Online in English 1345 GMT 22 Jan</p>
1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) Embassy Beijing HHS has requested a meeting for January 20 with the National Health Commission (NHC) to discuss the PRC releasing additional epidemiological data. This follows a January 15 written request to the NHC for detailed epidemiological information (ref B). Responses from NHC to the written request and meeting request are pending.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 164
1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) Embassy Beijing HHS had previously requested a meeting for January 20 with the NHC to discuss the PRC releasing additional epidemiological data (ref A). The request followed a January 15 written request to the NHC for detailed epidemiological information (refs A-B). The NHC responded January 20 that they were too busy addressing the outbreak to have a meeting with Embassy personnel on January 20, but NHC did expect WHO to hold a meeting to disseminate information to the United States and other countries this week in Beijing. Embassy officers noted that the inability to meet is understandable given the newly developing circumstances related to the outbreak. NHC suggested that the U.S. Embassy engage with WHO to learn details of the outbreak. (Note: The newly implemented U.S. screening and potential for confirmed cases in the United States may allow coordination with PRC health investigators on epidemiological data, contact tracing, etc. End Note.)</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 166

<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Embassy Beijing is preparing a DipNote to the MFA requesting the PRC to provide all available outbreak information to WHO and to support WHO making the information available to all member states. The DipNote will acknowledge that the NHC has shared epidemiologic data with WHO according to the International Health Regulations, but will note that publicly available epidemiological data is currently insufficient to properly assess risk. The DipNote will also note that in the event a case of 2019n-CoV infection is identified in a Chinese national through U.S. airport screening, the United States will promptly notify the NHC, and also request that Embassy Beijing be notified should the NHC identify a U.S. citizen infected with 2019n-CoV in China.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 166</p>
<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Global Times<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/20/c_138721535.htm> promised that the Chinese government will react to this outbreak in a more timely manner than it did with SARS, and advised<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1177345.shtml> the Chinese public to look to Chinese media sources-and avoid getting caught up in foreign media sources' hyperbole.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>

1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) In a January 20 China CCTV<http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/01/20/ARTIF4FI7LEu8TRqIsnde93B200120.shtml> interview with members of the High-level Experts Group of the China National Health Commission advising on the outbreak, Dr. Zhong Nanshan said human-to-human transmission of 2019-nCoV has been confirmed in cases in Guangdong Province (Note: Dr. Zhong is famous in China for being one of the leading medical figures during the 2003 SARS epidemic, when he spoke out against the Chinese government response at the time. CG Wuhan local staff employees note that many Chinese citizens trust Dr. Zhong more than they trust government reports. End note). Dr. Zhong confirmed that health care workers were among those infected. He also said that there is currently no specific antiviral treatment for the infection, but that he did not believe the outbreak is as serious as SARS. A video of Dr. Zhong's interview<https://weibo.com/2656274875/lqp3R7HRV> was the second-most popular post on Weibo on Monday.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 174
1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) MFA Spokesperson Geng Shuang said at the January 20 MFA press briefing that the PRC is in close communication with Japan, Thailand, and South Korea regarding cases reported in those countries and had shared the genetic sequence information of the new coronavirus with the WHO in a timely manner. He also emphasized that Wuhan's municipal government had implemented exit control health screening measures, and that China sought close coordination with all parties to address the epidemic.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 166
1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) Over the weekend, Xinhua<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/20/c_138721535.htm> reported that President Xi Jinping ordered resolute efforts to curb the spread of 2019-nCoV. Xi stressed that people's safety and health is the top priority. He ordered heightened attention and all-out prevention and control efforts to be deployed.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 174

1/20/2020	<p>(SBU) The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission January 20 announced (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020012009077>) that 136 new confirmed cases were identified in the city over the weekend. 59 cases were confirmed January 18 and 77 cases were confirmed January 19. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission has to-date reported 198 cases diagnosed with the novel coronavirus. Three patients have died and 170 patients remain in the hospital, with nine critically ill, 35 in severe condition, and 126 with mild cases... Of the 136 new cases, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission noted 66 were male and 70 female, with ages ranged from 25 through 80 years old. Illness onset dates were reported to be before January 18, but no additional information on the distribution of illness was provided. Three of the 136 new cases were classified as critical (including the new death), with 33 in severe condition, and 100 mild cases.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 166
1/20/2020	<p>A high-level expert team of China's National Health Commission (NHC) confirmed people-to-people transmission of the novel coronavirus and infections among medical staff. Zhong Nanshan, a renowned respiratory expert and head of the team, said the geographical distribution of Wuhan's infection cases indicated a close relationship between the epidemic and a local seafood market.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/20/2020	<p>Dr. Zhong Nanshan, a leading authority on respiratory health well-known for his role in fighting SARS, confirms in a TV interview that the disease is spreading from person-to-person, a fact first identified by doctors in Wuhan in December. He later said that if the government had taken action earlier, in December or even early January, "the number of sick would have been greatly reduced."</p>	U	Caixin Global, WSJ	Gao Yu, "In Depth: How Early Signs of a SARS-Like Virus Were Spotted, Spread, and Throttled," Caixin Global, February 29, 2020.

<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>PRC state media publish first public remarks from Xi Jinping about the virus, ordering officials to contain it.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>WSJ</p>	<p>Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus</p>
<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>Shi Zhengli, a researcher with the Wuhan Institute of Virology at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said the real problem was in people's behaviour, rather than with the animals. "The simplest way to prevent such infectious diseases is to stay away from wildlife, say no to game, avoid their habitats and livestock and farms mixing with wildlife," Shi said.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>OSC</p>	<p>"Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China's Coronavirus Outbreak", Hong</p>
<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>The first case announced in South Korea.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Axios</p>	<p>https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-</p>
<p>1/20/2020</p>	<p>Zhong Nanshan, a top Chinese doctor who is helping to coordinate the coronavirus response, announces the virus can be passed between people</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Axios</p>	<p>https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) On social media, it appeared that censorship controls placed on topics related to the virus were lifted on Sina Weibo, and three of the top five topics on the Weibo Hot Topics page were related to the Wuhan Coronavirus. In total, the three topics generated 145 million views and 362,000 conversations. Comments on social media conveyed concern about the new coronavirus and appealed to others to practice safe habits and to protect themselves and others.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>

<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CDC stated that although the Chinese media has reported that there are documented cases of novel (2019-nCoV) coronaviruses being transmitted from human to human contact, based on the currently available data, CDC characterizes the situation as limited human to human transmission and it is unclear how efficiently this virus is spreading. CDC has mobilized their Emergency Operations Center and issued a level 1 travel health watch which recommends that individuals to be aware of the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus, avoid contact with animals alive or dead, animal markets, and contact with sick people, use good hygiene practices, but does not recommend avoiding travel to China. CDC stated that airports in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City, which handle 75% of all Wuhan passengers entering the U.S., are monitoring persons coming into the U.S. from Wuhan. CDC stated that with only 4 deaths out of 218 cases, the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus has a lower mortality rate compared to other respiratory infections such as SARS or influenza and that severe infection with the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus has been observed more frequently in elderly persons with multiple medical comorbidities.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 172</p>
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<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan reported the video of Dr. Zhong discussing the human-to-human transmissions had gone viral in the city and caused a much higher level of concern among the population. CG Wuhan personnel observed significantly higher percentages of travelers on the metro wearing masks after the video's release. Universities in Wuhan began January 20 sending out English language guides to students on how to avoid contracting the virus. Prices of n95 masks in the city have risen 500 percent over normal prices since the outbreak began. MFA Spokesperson Geng Shuang said January 21 that the, "Wuhan government has taken measures to control the flow of people leaving the city." The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission published an order January 21 announcing that Wuhan city will bar group tours from travelling outside of Wuhan. The Public Security Traffic Management Department will conduct random checks on private vehicles entering and leaving Wuhan to check whether the vehicles are carrying live birds or wild animals. CG Wuhan reported Consulate LE staff went to Wuhan Station (the largest high-speed train station in Wuhan) January 21 and noted several temperature-check stations just prior to the security scanners (figures 1-2). CG Wuhan direct-hire American staff traveling January 21 on domestic flights noted no visual indication of temperatures checks, though there were signs saying that temperature checks were being done. All check-in staff and security staff wore masks.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) China CDC Weekly (launched in November 2019 and modeled after the U.S. CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report) published a "Notes from the Field" January 21 that focused on the virology of the pathogen (link<http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/en/article/id/a3907201-f64f-4154-a19e-4253b453d10c>). A second report was published on January 22 that included epidemiologic information (link<http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/en/article/id/e3c63ca9-dedb-4fb6-9c1c-d057adb77b57>)</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 188</p>

1/21/2020	(FOUO) China Daily< https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/21/WS5e25f5bea310128217272565.html > reported that Premier Li Keqiang issued instructions on Monday urging local governments to identify, report, isolate, and treat patients in a timely manner and to promptly and objectively release information about disease prevention and control.	U//FOUO	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 174
1/21/2020	(FOUO) Dr. Zhong Nanshan (ref B), famous among the Chinese public for his work during the 2003 SARS epidemic and for speaking out against the PRC response at the time, said at a January 21 press conference (link< https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3047087/china-has-been-transparent-about-wuhan-outbreak-virus-expert >) that he did not believe the PRC had concealed information regarding the outbreak.	U//FOUO	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 188
1/21/2020	(FOUO) Embassy Beijing delivered a DipNote January 21 to the MFA requesting the PRC to provide all available outbreak information to WHO and to support WHO making the information available to all member states (ref A). The DipNote acknowledged that the NHC has shared epidemiologic data with WHO according to the International Health Regulations, but noted that publicly available epidemiological data is currently insufficient to properly assess risk. The DipNote also addressed notification procedures for notifying the Embassy should U.S. citizens be identified as infected with 2019-nCoV in China and vice versa.	U//FOUO	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 174
1/21/2020	(FOUO) Media also reported about the eight task forces< https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/21/WS5e2663f7a31012821727278a.html > set up in Wuhan, pledging that the city would promptly and objectively release information about disease prevention and control.	U//FOUO	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 174

<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Responding to a question about the outbreak on Monday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said that China had informed the WHO and organizations in relevant countries and regions about the disease in a timely manner and had been in close communication with them.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission January 21 announced (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020012109083>) 60 new confirmed cases had been identified in the city since Post's January 20 cable (ref A). Of the 60 new patients, 33 were male and 27 female, with ages ranged 15 to 88 years old. Among the 60 new cases, 17 patients were severely ill and three critically ill. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission reported one patient who died January 19 had been admitted to the hospital January 18 for severe breathing problems. The 89-year-old male patient had reported underlying conditions, including hypertension, diabetes, and coronary heart disease. Two additional patients died on January 20: a 66-year-old man who had been admitted to the hospital January 16 and had underlying diseases, including hypertension, diabetes, and chronic renal problems; and a 48-year-old woman who had fallen ill December 20, 2019. She had reported underlying conditions, including diabetes, cerebral infarction, and gallstones. In total, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission has to-date reported 258 cases diagnosed with the novel coronavirus. Six patients have died, and 227 patients remain in the hospital, with 12 critically ill, and 51 in serious condition. 25 cases have been discharged from the hospital. The Wuhan Municipal Health Commission also released a list January 21 of designated medical hospitals and outpatient facilities (link, in Chinese<http://wjw.wuhan.gov.cn/front/web/showDetail/2020012009078>).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>

<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Wuhan EAC reiterated that the Chinese Lunar Year period starts on 01/24/2020 at which time hundreds of millions of persons in China will travel... Beijing and Wuhan EACs reviewed all relevant decision points and agreed that so far, no decision points have been crossed related to the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus or post's ability to safely operate... Beijing and Wuhan EACs agreed that the current situation is fluid and likely to change on a regular basis. The large number of travelers in China during the Chinese New Year will likely help spread the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus and that the number of cases will increase. There have been no reports of any Americans or COM personnel who have contracted the novel (2019-nCoV) coronavirus.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>CCP flagship newspaper People's Daily mentions the coronavirus epidemic and Xi's actions to fight it for the first time.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Washington Post</p>	<p>https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/02/01/early-missteps-state-secrecy-china-</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>China vowed to take preventive and control measures of category A infectious diseases to effectively fight against the pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus. The pneumonia has been classified as the category B infectious diseases and a quarantinable disease at the border.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>China's top political commission in charge of law and order warns that "anyone who deliberately delays and hides the reporting of [virus] cases out of his or her own self-interest will be nailed on the pillar of shame for eternity."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>South China Morning Post</p>	<p>https://archive.vn/33gxN https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3046984/china-</p>
<p>1/21/2020</p>	<p>The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirms the first coronavirus case in the United States.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>U.S. CDC Newsroom</p>	<p>https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0121-</p>

1/21/2020	WHO delegation concludes a two-day field visit to Wuhan, notes that "Data collected through detailed epidemiological investigation and through the deployment of the new test kit nationally suggests that human-to-human transmission is taking place in Wuhan."	U	WHO	"Mission summary: WHO Field Visit to Wuhan, China 20-21 January
1/22/2020	"According to official reports, as of 11pm Wednesday, the previously unknown coronavirus had killed 17 people and infected 541 others. Most of the infections and all of the deaths were in Hubei province where Wuhan is located, including 375 in the city itself. Many worked or lived near Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market, which experts believe is the source of the outbreak, with the virus jumping from wild animals on sale there."	U	OSC	"Why Wild Animals Are A Key Ingredient In China's Coronavirus Outbreak", Hong Kong South China Morning Post
1/22/2020	(SBU) HHS stated that on the morning of January 22, the World Health Organization (WHO) will convene an Emergency Committee meeting to determine whether the outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). CDC expert personnel will participate in this meeting. HHS has previously requested epidemiological information on the Novel (2019-nCoV) Coronavirus and hope the Chinese government will provide it at today's WHO meeting. CDC stated the Chinese government has increased its reporting of Novel (2019-nCoV) Coronavirus information and that each province is now publishing daily the number of suspected or confirmed Novel (2019-nCoV) Coronavirus cases.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 186

<p>1/22/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Vice Minister Li Bin said NHC's leadership team holds epidemic prevention and control meetings daily. He said NHC's Experts Committee attributed the recent large rise in confirmed cases to better understanding of the disease and improved diagnostic capabilities. He noted the NHC's Experts Committee judges that the cases are mainly limited to Wuhan; that human-to-human transmission and medical staff infections have occurred; and that community transmission has occurred. Li said the main transmission mode is respiratory transmission and that virus mutation is possible. Li also said that Wuhan has implemented severe prevention and control measures, including management of farmers' markets, prohibiting the sale of live poultry, and prohibiting the entry of wild animals and live poultry into Wuhan. Wuhan has also implemented temperature screening at airports, train stations, bus stations, and ferry stations, and has established isolation and observation measures for patients with fever and close contacts. Li said that while the novel coronavirus is classified as a class B infectious disease, the nationwide response is "A level." He said case diagnosis, and treatment, prevention and control plans have been issued nationwide and that daily reports, including a zero report system, are mandatory (Note: zero report system means officials are required to file a report even if the number of cases is zero. End note.) Li said efforts to find the source of transmission and transmission mode will be increased, along with targeted research and development of antiviral drugs. He said health officials will strengthen medical personnel in the health system during the Lunar New Year holiday and will ensure that there is sufficient staff at medical institutions and at CDCs nationwide.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 188</p>
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<p>1/22/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CDC and HHS briefed both EACs and stated that CDC raised their travel watch from a Level 1 to alert Level 2. The Level 2 travel alert does not warn persons to avoid travel to China, but does encourage elderly or those with underlying medical conditions people to consult with their healthcare providers prior to coming to Wuhan and stresses that persons avoid contact with dead animals and use good hygiene habits. CDC did state in their warning that Novel (2019-nCoV) Coronavirus is spreading from human to human contact, but is unclear how easily the virus spreads between people. CDC stated that airport monitoring of persons coming to the U.S. from Wuhan will expand to five U.S. airports (San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and Atlanta) by the end of the week and that all passengers coming to the U.S. from Wuhan will be channeled into one of these airports as their first arrival point into the U.S. Passengers coming to the U.S. on non-direct flights from Wuhan will be re-routed so they will enter via one of these five airports. CDC stated that unlike influenza, coronaviruses in general are transmittable after symptoms arise, not before. More data on the transmission dynamics of 2019-nCoV is needed to confirm whether that is true for this virus.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 186</p>
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<p>1/22/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) CG Wuhan reported Wuhan now has nine designated hospitals for treating the coronavirus. The city previously had three designated hospitals. Media reports say that one hospital (#7 Hospital) will be completely closed to regular patients. CCTV reported that 800 beds had been specifically set up for coronavirus patients and that 1200 more beds are on the way. Treatment of the coronavirus will be centered on these hospitals and experts and specialized staff will be sent there. Besides the identified hospitals where specialized treatment will be carried out, other hospitals in Wuhan will play a supporting role. At a January 22 press conference, the Deputy Director of the National Health Commission said that experienced medical staff across China will be sent to Wuhan and that sanitation and increased ventilation will be put into place at transit hubs, including subway stations and bus stops.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 188</p>
<p>1/22/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Embassy CDC Officers met with the WHO Representative to China who shared observations of a WHO site visit to Wuhan January 20-21. The PRC National Health Commission encouraged WHO to share this information with U.S. CDC. Observations regarding hospital visits, including reviewing cases of infections among health care workers, were shared. Final conclusions will be shared at today's WHO emergency committee meeting.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 188</p>
<p>1/22/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) In a January 22 meeting with PRC Politburo Member Yang Jiechi, Ambassador Branstad reaffirmed that the United States continues its offer of technical assistance. He also noted that the HHS Secretary is fully up to date on the situation and is providing updates to President Trump. The Ambassador emphasized that it is vital the PRC provide all available outbreak information to the World Health Organization, and that it is equally important that the information be shared fully with all WHO Member States. He also requested that Embassy Beijing be notified promptly should any U.S. citizens become infected in China, and that the United States would do the same with the PRC for any infected Chinese citizens identified in the United States.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 188</p>

1/22/2020	(SBU) In a January 22 press conference organized by the PRC State Council and carried live on China CCTV and streamed online (link<http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/xwfbh/wqfbh/42311/42470/wz42472/Document/1672422/1672422.htm>), PRC health officials leading the nation's response to the coronavirus outbreak pledged to provide information transparently and to step up prevention and control measures as the Lunar New Year migration begins.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 188
1/22/2020	(SBU) PRC health officials are expected to share more epidemiological information at the January 22 WHO emergency committee of experts meeting convened to determine whether the 2019-nCoV outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). WHO January 21 issued its first Situation Report on the 2019-nCoV outbreak. The report included general surveillance data, details on WHO and China responses, as well as action in Thailand, Japan, and ROK.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 188
1/22/2020	WHO holds emergency committee meeting, decides not to declare the novel coronavirus a "public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC)." WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says afterward that declaring a PHEIC is a decision he takes "extremely seriously" and is "only prepared to make with appropriate consideration of all the evidence." As usual, Taiwan and its reporting was excluded from the deliberations of the committee.	U	Robert Delaney	Robert Delaney, "China coronavirus: World Health Organization delays declaring virus' spread an international
1/23/2020	"[LI Wenliang] transferred to Respiratory and Critical Care on January 23 In the Medical Intensive Care Unit"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
1/23/2020	"[Patient admitted on 6 January and treated by LI Wenliang] died on January 23"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM

<p>1/23/2020</p>	<p>"Nearly all 2019-nCoV cases in China have links to Wuhan, as do all cases exported to other countries, which yesterday prompted China to take the unprecedented aggressive step to ban all travel in and out of Wuhan. Today similar bans were ordered for five more Chinese cities, all of them also located in Hubei province. They are Huanggang, Ezhou, Chibi, Lichuan, and Xiantao, according to a BBC report. The cities under lockdown—excluding Wuhan—have a total population of more than 10 million people, and the move comes just days before China's Lunar New Year holiday... It noted that Chinese officials have banned all movement in and out of Wuhan, which is one of the country's major transportation hubs."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy</p>	<p>https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/who-holds-ncov-emergency-declaration-cases-soar</p>
<p>1/23/2020</p>	<p>"The World Health Organization (WHO) today, in another split decision, held off on declaring a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) in response to China's novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak, as lockdowns were ordered for five more Chinese cities, part of an unprecedented step to slow the spread of the virus... The WHO's emergency committee met yesterday but delayed making a PHEIC recommendation after learning about China's Wuhan travel ban. The group also said they needed more information about disease severity and transmission among humans. Also in its deliberations today, the experts made some temporary recommendations, including an international expert mission to China to review and support the investigation that will probe, among other key factors, the animal source of the outbreak."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy</p>	<p>https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/who-holds-ncov-emergency-declaration-cases-soar</p>

<p>1/23/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) China received mixed reviews over its initial emergency response to COVID-19, ranging from praise from the World Health Organization (WHO) for its "unprecedented" containment efforts, to domestic criticism over delayed risk communication. In reference to the Wuhan lockdown, a senior official at an international humanitarian aid organization told ESTHOff that the PRC initially reacted like it had never dealt with an epidemic, suggesting the primary reasons for its stunted response were a lack of clarity on areas of responsibility following the government reshuffle, and central government intervention. The aid official said the PRC decision to seal off Wuhan on January 23 came too late as 5 million people had already left the city for the Chinese New Year. [Note: Other health officials noted that the containment measures helped slow transmission. Prominent Chinese epidemiologist Zhong Nanshan publicly claimed the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases would have tripled if China had not implemented these severe control measures. The WHO stated that PRC containment measures were "buying the world time" to handle the outbreak. End Note.]</p> <p>(SBU) At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, Chinese government ministries appeared slightly confused about their emergency response functions, noted the aid official. NHC and MEM were still adjusting to their new responsibilities, the official observed, and fell short in emergency preparedness and response capabilities. Although the PRC was actively seeking supplies and aid needed to respond to the outbreak, the aid organization said that the NGOs the government designated to receive international donations appeared to be completely oblivious to international standards for making such requests. The aid organization worked closely with the designated NGOs to develop standards for requesting contributions, such as including the type, quantity, and expected expiration dates for medicine and other emergency supplies. The aid official was surprised to find NHC initially scrambling to create clear standard operating procedures for their emergency response. NHC also rushed in setting nationwide standards for personal protective equipment (PPE), medicine, medical equipment, and consumable goods, lamented the aid official.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 476</p>
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1/23/2020	<p>(SBU) Wuhan's mayor announced January 23 that he had ordered all mass transit in the city to be closed. This includes train stations and the airport. The government said residents should not leave the city unless they had a "special reason." The announcement provided no timeline for the duration of the closures... CG Wuhan staff confirmed closures at the airport, a train station, and a bus depot (fig. 1). Some DiDi cars (a ride-hailing service similar to Uber) and taxis were available, but CG Wuhan staff reported the wait times exceeded an hour and that fees for DiDi cars were exorbitant. CG Wuhan Officers traveling by vehicle from the airport before its 10 AM closure (figs. 2-3) noted all cars were stopped and checked for live animals.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 200
1/23/2020	<p>A pair of new studies confirm that 2019-nCoV can enter human cells through the ACE2 receptor, a finding that will help scientists explore the transmissibility of the virus. Both were published in the preprint server bioRxiv. The authors of the first study are Michael Letko, PhD, and Vincent Munster, PhD, both from NIAID labs. The other study is from a team based at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in China.</p>	U	Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy	https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/who-holds-ncov-emergency-declaration-cases-
1/23/2020	<p>China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) said today that, as of yesterday there were 571 confirmed cases, up sharply from the 440 it reported yesterday. The number of affected provinces also rose steeply, rising from 13 to 25. It said 95 patients have severe infections and that the number of deaths held steady at 17.</p> <p>Throughout the day today, more cases were reported from across the country, with an online medical community tracking system from China reporting 644 cases and an additional death. The latest death appears to be the first reported outside of Hubei province, according to a report translated and posted by FluTrackers, an infectious disease news message board.</p>	U	Center for Infectious Disease Research & Policy	https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/01/who-holds-ncov-emergency-declaration-cases-soar

1/23/2020	Chinese authorities lock down Wuhan, after letting some five million people leave the city without screening in the weeks prior, amid the growing outbreak.	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus
1/23/2020	NYT estimates seven million people left between Jan. 1 and Jan. 23. Before the lockdown, some 900 people flew from Wuhan to New York City per month on average, while some 2,200 flew to Sydney and 15,000 to Bangkok (site of the first overseas case of the novel coronavirus in mid-January). Some 85% of infected travelers went undetected.	U	NYT	Jin Wu et al., "How the Virus Got Out," The New York Times, March 22, 2020.
1/23/2020	Wuhan and three other cities are put on lockdown. Right around this time, approximately 5 million people leave the city without being screened for the illness.	U	Axios	https://archive.vn/Bpnyq https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-
1/24/2020	(SBU) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported that as of January 24, 444 new cases had been confirmed, with the total number of confirmed cases now up to 1,287 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202001/a7cf0437d1324aed9cc1b890b8ee29e6.shtml >, in Chinese). Thirty of Chinas 31 provincial-level territories now have confirmed cases. The number of reported deaths is 41.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 204

<p>1/24/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) In a January 24 briefing for diplomats and health attaches, WHO Representative for China Dr. Gauden Galea said that he believed the PRC was providing complete data on the coronavirus and was not concealing information. Galea said that the WHO emergency committee had been impressed by the openness and completeness of the PRCs presentation in Geneva, which included a line listing of every case identified up to January 23. Regardless of whether the emergency committee declares the 2019-nCoV a Public Health Event of International Concern (PHEIC), Galea said there is unquestionably a public health emergency in China. He said that WHO Director General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and National Health Commission Minister Ma Xiaowei had in a phone call discussed conducting a joint WHO assessment with PRC health authorities to assess the situation in China.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 202</p>
<p>1/24/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Mission China will be officially closed January 24-29 for Lunar New Year. Embassy Beijing has established points of responsibility within the Mission to continue coordination of Mission China's response during the holiday.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 174</p>
<p>1/24/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Reports of clustered cases among individuals with no history of travel to Hubei raised concerns of sustained human-to-human transmission. In Guangdong, Chinas Peoples Daily and other news outlets reported a case of 13 family members confirmed with 2019-nCoV on January 25. The patients were believed to have been infected at a family New Years get-together. [Note: No additional information was available from the Guangdong Health Commission as to whether anyone in the family had a connection to someone from Hubei. End note.]</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 204</p>
<p>1/24/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) WHO reported the first case of person-to-person transmission outside China involving a patient in Vietnam who had no history of travel to Hubei Province (link<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/20200124-sitrep-4-2019-ncov.pdf>). The patients family member had visited Wuhan.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 206</p>

1/24/2020	24-30 Jan: China celebrates the Lunar New Year holiday. Hundreds of millions of people are in transit around the country as they visit relatives.	U	The Star	https://www.thestar.com.my/news/regional/2020/02/06/wuhan-neighbourhood-
1/24/2020	China extends the lockdown to cover 36 million people and starts to rapidly build a new hospital in Wuhan. From this point, very strict measures continue to be implemented around the country for the rest of the epidemic.	U	Chicago Tribune	https://www.chicagotribune.com/nation-world/ct-nw-china-coronavirus-wuhan-china-20200124-
1/24/2020	Hubei upgraded its public health emergency response from Level II to Level I. Other provincial-level regions, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Hunan, and Anhui have also activated the top-level response to the epidemic situation.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/24/2020	Officials in Beijing prevent the Wuhan Institute of Virology from sharing sample isolates of the novel coronavirus with the University of Texas biocontainment lab, overruling an initial agreement by the Wuhan lab to share these samples.	U	WP	Yasmeen Abutaleb et al, "The U.S. was beset by denial and dysfunction as the
1/24/2020	The country is mobilizing medical resources nationwide to aid Wuhan and control the epidemic. The first group of 135 medical workers from hospitals in Shanghai flew to Wuhan on the night of Jan 17.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/24/2020	The Lancet publishes a study noting that the first novel coronavirus case in Wuhan had no connection to the Huanan seafood market.	U	Lancet	Chaolin Huang et al., "Clinical features of patients infected

1/24/2020	Wuhan decided to build two makeshift hospitals Huoshenshan with 1,000 beds and Leishenshan with a capacity of 1,600 beds to treat the new pneumonia patients. The Huoshenshan and Leishenshan hospitals would be put into use on Feb 3 and Feb 5, respectively.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/24/2020	Wuhan rolled out unprecedented measures to curb the spread of the deadly novel coronavirus. From 10 am on Jan 23, all public transportation, including city buses, subways, ferries, and long-distance coaches have been suspended, and outbound channels at airports and railway stations have also been closed. Citizens should not leave the megacity without specific reasons and should wear masks in public places.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/25/2020	(SBU) By mid-day January 25, there were 20 provincial-level territories in total with declared level-1 emergencies in place. Level-1 emergencies are the most severe on the four-level scale established by national regulations. Declaration of a level-1 emergency gives local governments the authority to impose quarantines on affected communities, block off major transportation arteries, and restrict travel. Local governments may prohibit large gatherings of people in affected areas, and schools and offices may be closed. The local government may also requisition buses, taxis, and other means of transport.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 204
1/25/2020	(SBU) Chinas CCTV and Peoples Daily reported that as of January 25, 30 of Chinas 31 provincial-level territories had declared level-one public health emergencies, the highest level on the scale. [Note: Tibet is the only region that has not declared an emergency, and the only province/territory without any confirmed cases. End note.] Per national regulations, a level-one emergency gives local governments authority to impose quarantines, block roads, restrict travel, close public sites, and suspend large gatherings or public events, among other measures.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 206

1/25/2020	The Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee held a meeting on the prevention and control of the outbreak of pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus. The meeting decided to set up a CPC Central Committee leading group to oversee the work. Groups would also be sent to Hubei province to direct work on the ground.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/26/2020	(SBU) CG Wuhan LE staff January 26 observed a fever clinic in the city. While everyone at the clinic wore masks, they would remove the mask when talking to each other. Outside the clinic, LE staff noticed people begging and crying for treatment. A nurse at the clinic told LE staff that the clinic is turning away people and that people are wandering from one hospital or clinic to another. The nurse noted that those people had likely been told they do not have the novel coronavirus, but do not believe the diagnosis. Medical staff also said that the clinics masks and goggles supplies are running low... CG Wuhan reported January 26 temperature checks are taking place all over Wuhan and the city is using a 37.3 Celsius temperature reading as the standard for a fever. (Note: U.S. and international standards usually use 38.0 Celsius as a baseline. End note.). If a person fails the temperature check once, they will be asked to sit for a short period, then tested again. If they fail a temperature check twice, the person will be placed into an ambulance and sent to a hospital.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 206
1/26/2020	(SBU) China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported that 769 new cases had been confirmed on January 26 as of 2400 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202001/3882fdcdbfdc4b4fa4e3a829b62d518e.shtml > in Chinese). Total confirmed cases increased to 2,744, with 461 patients in serious or critical condition, and currently suspected cases rose to 5,794. Total deaths increased to 80 from 56 the previous day, while the number of patients who had been treated and released from the hospital rose to 54.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 214

1/26/2020	(SBU) China's State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA), and National Forest and Grassland Administration (NFGA) have prohibiting sales of wild animals. The order prohibits the sale of wild animals in any form or by any means at markets, restaurants, and online platforms. The order also requires that farms raising wild animals be closed and quarantined until further notice (Xinhua< http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-01/26/c_1125503539.htm >).	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 214
1/26/2020	(SBU) Chinese media widely covered Premier Li Keqiang's trip to Wuhan as well as "strict control measures to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus." A CPC Standing Committee chaired by Li on January 26 was also widely covered and stressed the need to "focus and strengthen prevention work." Many newspapers and news outlets have created special news information pages online. An interview with the Wuhan mayor was broadcast on CCTV and amplified as well. The Mayor was quoted as saying he will resign if needed and "admitting that information was not disclosed in a timely manner at the preliminary stage of the outbreak."	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 214
1/26/2020	(SBU) The Beijing Health Commission issued a statement January 26 responding to reports circulating online that drugs used to treat HIV/AIDS were also effective against 2019-nCoV (link< http://wjw.beijing.gov.cn/wjwh/ztzl/xgzxbd/202001/t20200126_1621354.html > in Chinese). The commission said that drugs for treating HIV such as Lopinavir and Ritonavir had been recommended in guidance issued by NHC and that Beijing city had available reserves of such medication. According to the commission, three locally designated hospitals in Beijing are currently treating 2019-nCoV patients in accordance with the NHC recommended protocol.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 206
1/26/2020	Chinese authorities announced that trading of wild animals would be suspended nationwide to curb the spreading of COVID-19.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

1/26/2020	<p>Chinese state media reports, Experts of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have successfully isolated the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) in the environmental samples of a seafood market in Wuhan, indicating that the virus stems from wild animals on sale at the market. Thirty-three of the 585 environmental samples collected from the Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market were found to contain the nucleic acid of the novel coronavirus, according to the National Institute for Viral Disease Control and Prevention under the China CDC. Earlier reports quoted experts as saying that the geographical distribution of the cases indicated a close relationship between the epidemic and the seafood market. Experts of the institute took the samples on Jan. 1 and Jan. 12 on instruction of the Chinese CDC. Thirty-one of the 33 positive samples were collected from the western zone of the market, where booths of wildlife trading concentrated. The result suggests that the novel coronavirus outbreak is highly relevant to the trading of the wild animals, experts said. The successful isolation of the novel coronavirus further substantiates that the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market contains a large quantity of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV), according to the experts.</p>	U	Xinhua Net	<p>http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/27/c_138735677.htm https://archive.is/Z2cNI</p>
1/26/2020	<p>Major General Chen Wei, the Chinese military's top epidemiologist and virologist, assumes a senior position at the Wuhan Institute of Virology overseeing coronavirus vaccine research.</p>	U	SCMP WP	<p>Anna Fifield, " 'Wolf Warrior' strives to make China first with coronavirus vaccine," Washington Post, March 22, 2020. Also Minnie Chan and William</p>

1/27/2020	(SBU) China CDC Vice-Director Feng Zijian said during a January 27 TV news appearance that persons infected 2019-nCoV are estimated to infect more persons than those infected with SARS virus in 2003 (link< http://www.caixin.com/2020-01-28/101508973.html >). Feng estimated the Ro for 2019-nCoV at between 2 and 3 [Note: This Ro indicates that on average an infected person is estimated to transmit the virus to 2-3 others. In the early stages of an outbreak, the estimated Ro can be overestimated because of challenges with establishing an accurate population denominator. End note.]. Feng also noted that people of all ages are susceptible to infection.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 216
1/27/2020	(SBU) The NHC, NHC Bureau of Disease Control and Prevention, China CDC, and MFA briefed the diplomatic community and representatives of international organizations January 27. The briefers said that the PRC had provided information openly and timely to WHO and that beginning January 27 the NHC will broadcast daily live press briefings.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 214
1/27/2020	(U) President Xi's remarks that China will "rely on the people to win the battle against the novel coronavirus" were widely amplified on major outlets such as Xinhua<http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-01/27/c_138737539.htm> and People's Daily<http://politics.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0128/c1024-31563377.html>. Xi said all must "firm up confidence, stay united and take scientific and targeted measures in epidemic prevention and control to allow the Party flag 'fly high at the frontline of the battleground.'" The remarks from Xi were described as an instruction to all CPC members and officials.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 216
1/27/2020	China extended the Spring Festival holiday to Feb 2 and postponed school openings, while transport restrictions were adopted in various areas to further contain the coronavirus epidemic.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

<p>1/27/2020</p>	<p>China's top economic planner allocated a total of 300 million yuan to support Wuhan's battle against the novel coronavirus. Chinese authorities also boosted financial aid for medical treatment of confirmed or suspected coronavirus-infected patients.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>
<p>1/27/2020</p>	<p>Premier Li Keqiang called for speeding up the construction of the makeshift hospital of Huoshenshan for treating patients infected with the novel coronavirus in his inspection to Wuhan.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>
<p>1/27/2020</p>	<p>Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang says that rules imposed by Beijing limited what he could disclose about the threat posed by the virus: "As a local government official, after I get this kind of information I still have to wait for authorization before I can release it."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>WSJ</p>	<p>Josh Chin, "Wuhan Mayor Says Beijing Rules Partially Responsible for</p>
<p>1/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) An Embassy Beijing CDC officer met informally late January 28 with the visiting WHO delegation led by Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus following his meeting with President Xi. The WHO delegation reported that the meeting with President Xi went well and that there is full support for WHO engagement with China to help stop the 2019-nCoV outbreak. WHO leaders plan to coordinate international expert involvement in the effort and expressed strong interest in having U.S. CDC experts be part of the effort. The PRC National Health Commission January 29 contacted HHS to extend their welcome to U.S. experts joining WHO in the expert group to work together with Chinese counterparts in the ongoing 2019-nCoV prevention and control effort. More details are forthcoming, and Post will report developments in future cables.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 218</p>

1/28/2020	<p>(SBU) China National Health Commissioner Ma Xiaowei said on January 28 that recent clinical evidence has shown that transmissibility of the 2019-nCoV virus "appears to be strengthening." Ma said further clinical analysis is needed to evaluate the pathogenicity of the virus. Meanwhile, Dr. Zhong Nanshan told People's Daily in an interview that he predicted the outbreak would reach its peak within one week to 10 days (">link<https://m.weibo.cn/status/4465858610785750?>). [Note: Dr. Zhong is renowned among the Chinese public for his work during the 2003 SARS epidemic and was formerly president of the Chinese Medical Association (CMA). End note.]</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 218
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<p>1/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) China's government has not put out a formal request for donations or assistance, although there are signs that the PRC could be willing to request the assistance of U.S. CDC, perhaps under the direction of the WHO. Prior to the 2019-nCoV outbreak, the PRC does not appear to have had a system in place to manage international donations of medical supplies. The Chinese government is requiring all international donations to be channeled through the Red Cross Society of China (RSRC) and/or Wuhan Red Cross, which are responsible for facilitating logistics, including: clearing customs, distribution, and tracking. (Note: A local contact expressed doubts that the Wuhan Red Cross has the bandwidth and English language fluency to manage international donations of this magnitude. End note.) About six U.S. companies contacted FCS Beijing to express interest in contributing to relief efforts. FedEx told Post that, working with a U.S.-based NGO partner, Direct Relief International, it was sending a flight to Guangzhou on January 27 with supplies that meet China's National Health Commission guidelines. FedEx said that the Wuhan Red Cross was too overwhelmed to coordinate delivery of supplies, so FedEx had worked with the RSRC to arrange delivery. FedEx said that the RCSC has been extremely helpful and that contacts there had excellent English-language skills. The RCSC has a specialist to assist with customs clearance on arrival and Chinese customs has assured FedEx that the supplies will be able to enter China duty free and unimpeded.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 216</p>
<p>1/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Consulate Wuhan closed its facility at 12:58 PM January 28.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 216</p>
<p>1/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Dean of the Institute of Pathogenic Biology at the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, Jin Qi, said on January 28, "There is already substantial research showing that bats are the source of 2019-nCoV, but it is still unclear what the intermediate medium for transmitting the disease was" (link<http://www.sohu.com/a/369295948_162522>).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 218</p>

1/28/2020	<p>(SBU) HHS Secretary Azar called PRC NHC Health Minister Ma on January 28 to push for the PRC to allow U.S. CDC investigators to participate in the 2019-nCoV response in China. Secretary Azar separately gave the same message to WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who is currently in China for meetings with political and health leaders. [Note: It is possibly that the PRC may invite U.S. CDC assistance to China through a WHO response mechanism. End Note]. The offer for technical assistance follows up on previous offers made to the PRC by U.S. CDC Director Redfield January 6 (ref M) and Ambassador Branstad January 22 (ref E). Post will report any substantive responses.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 216
1/28/2020	<p>(U) Xinhua commentary<http://www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2020-01/28/c_1125506610.htm> on 1/28 stressed openness and transparency, calling out rumors, and that the CPC will step up efforts to share information. People's Daily commentary<http://opinion.people.com.cn/n1/2020/0128/c1003-31563376.html> on 1/28 said, "the safety of people's lives and their health shall come first" echoing the CPC central committee from over the weekend. China Daily<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202001/27/WS5e2ec097a31012821727365b.html> also amplified Xi's remarks and said Xi called for unity against the coronavirus.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 216
1/28/2020	<p>Over 190,000 police officers were dispatched across China to ensure road safety and transportation support to the epidemic prevention and control during the holiday.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/28/2020	<p>The traffic management bureau of the Ministry of Public Security released a notification, urging the public to limit road travel amid intensifying efforts to battle the novel coronavirus outbreak.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

1/28/2020	WHO Director-General Tedros visits Beijing and meets with Xi Jinping and other senior officials. "The two sides agreed that WHO will send international experts to visit China as soon as possible," said the WHO afterward, adding that "the WHO delegation highly appreciated the actions China has implemented in response to the outbreak, its speed in identifying the virus and openness to sharing information with WHO and other countries."	U	WHO	"WHO, China leaders discuss next steps in battle against coronavirus outbreak," WHO, January 28, 2020.
1/29/2020	(SBU) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 1,737 newly confirmed cases on January 29 as of 24:00, as total confirmed cases rose to 7,711, including 1,370 cases in serious or critical condition (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202001/e71bd2e7a0824ca69f87bbf1bef2a3c9.shtm >). Among the new cases is the first confirmed case in the TAR. NHC further reported 38 new deaths on January 29, including 37 in Hubei and one in Sichuan. The number of patients treated and released rose to 124. A total of 12,167 cases are currently suspected, with 81,947 close contacts in isolation under medical observation.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 226
1/29/2020	China had allocated 27.3 billion yuan to support the battle against the novel coronavirus in the country.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
1/29/2020	Lhasa, capital of Southwest China's Tibet autonomous region, reported the first suspected case of novel coronavirus pneumonia. The region then activated the top-level emergency response to the epidemic. By Jan 29, all the provincial-level regions on the Chinese mainland have launched the top-level response to contain the epidemic.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

1/30/2020	Article in Lancet notes that "despite the importance of bats, several facts suggest that another animal is acting as an intermediate host between bats and humans. First, the outbreak was first reported in late December, 2019, when most bat species in Wuhan are hibernating. Second, no bats were sold or found at the Huanan seafood market, whereas various non-aquatic animals (including mammals) were available for purchase."	U	Lancet	https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)30251-8/fulltext
1/30/2020	WHO declares a public-health emergency of international concern (PHEIC), after nearly 10,000 cases of the virus are confirmed, including in at least 18 countries outside of China. WHO special committee states that it "does not recommend any travel or trade restriction based on the current information available."	U	WSJ, The Nation, WHO	Lanhee Chen, "Lost in Beijing: The Story of the WHO," The Wall Street Journal, April 8, 2020. Wilfred Chan, "The WHO Ignores Taiwan. The World Pays the Price," The Nation, April 3, 2020. "Statement on the second meeting of the

<p>1/31/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Following NHC's signaling their welcome of CDC participation in the 2019-nCoV response through WHO, CDC China country office immediately engaged with the WHO China Country Office to establish a framework for adding CDC technical experts to the WHO China Country Team. One Beijing-based CDC expert is positioned to engage immediately and additional CDC headquarters experts are being identified and prepared for deployment. On January 31 Ambassador Branstad and HHS Secretary Azar had a phone call to discuss the situation on the ground in China. Secretary Azar noted the importance of U.S. experts being part of a WHO response team to China but also emphasized the need for more information to be provided by the Chinese government, especially related to the incubation period of the virus and human-to-human transmission data and any evidence of asymptomatic transmission. The Ambassador reiterated his continued dedication to raising these issues at the highest levels of the Chinese government and his focus on protecting the health and safety of all Mission China staff and American citizens in China.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 234</p>
<p>1/31/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) In January, renowned Chinese scientist Li Ning was sentenced to 12 years in prison for selling experimental animals in local markets for personal gain.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 365</p>
<p>1/31/2020</p>	<p>Acclaimed author and Wuhan resident Fang Fang writes online, "How many people have died in Wuhan and their families destroyed? . . . But so far not a single person has said sorry or taken responsibility. I've even seen a writer use the phrase 'complete victory'. What are they talking about?" Her "Wuhan Diary" writings become an increasing target of scorn online, backed by state media outlets, in a campaign she says recalls the Cultural Revolution.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>The Guardian</p>	<p>Helen Davidson, "Chinese writer faces online backlash over Wuhan lockdown diary," The Guardian, April</p>
<p>1/31/2020</p>	<p>In a direct interview with Dr. Li Wenliang conducted by the New York Times shortly before his death, Li stated, "If the officials had disclosed information about the epidemic earlier, I think it would have been a lot better. There should be more openness and transparency."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>NY Times</p>	<p>www.nytimes.com/2020/2/07/world/asia/L-Wenliang-china-coronavirus.html</p>

1/31/2020	PRC state media criticize the U.S. travel advisory urging citizens not to travel to China due to health concerns. PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims the U.S. action is "certainly not a gesture of goodwill."	U	Xinhua	"China criticizes 'unfriendly US comments' amid fight against novel coronavirus
1/31/2020	U.S. shuts down entry from China for non-Americans. By this time, outbreaks were already growing in at least 30 cities across 26 countries.	U	NYT	Jin Wu et al., "How the Virus Got Out," The
2/1/2020	Authorities in Hubei announced that the Spring Festival holiday in the province would be extended to Feb 13 to curb the virus spread. All schools in the province would postpone the opening of the new semester until further notice.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/1/2020	Premier Li Keqiang called for greater efforts to speed up the manufacturing and secure the supply of key medical products to help curb the epidemic caused by the novel coronavirus.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/1/2020	Referring to travel restrictions, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi tells his Indian counterpart that China "opposes certain countries' actions that are creating tension and causing panic."	U	CGTN	"China opposes some countries' actions that create tension
2/2/2020	A makeshift hospital of Huoshenshan Hospital was delivered after a 10-day construction in Wuhan to treat the infected.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/2/2020	China's finance authorities at all levels had allocated 47 billion yuan as of midnight Feb 2 for the coronavirus prevention and control work.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/2/2020	The headquarters for the control and treatment of the epidemic caused by the novel coronavirus in Hubei announced that it would conduct centralized isolation of all suspected infection cases.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

2/3/2020	(U) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 3,235 newly confirmed cases on February 3 as of 24:00, bringing the total number of confirmed cases to 20,438 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202002/bfebfb84fb88248e4a4eba61295e5882b.shtm >). A total of an additional 23,214 cases are currently suspected. NHC also reported 64 new deaths (all in Hubei), as the total number of deaths rose to 425. Another 157 patients were released from the hospital on February 3. Total patients treated and released now stands at 632. Currently, 171,329 close contacts are in isolation under medical supervision.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 248
2/3/2020	Full-length genome sequences were obtained from five patients at an early stage of the outbreak. The sequences are almost identical and share 79.6% sequence identity to SARS-CoV. Furthermore, we show that 2019-nCoV is 96% identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus identified in Yunnan Province (Bat CoV RaTG13)	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-2012-7#Sec13
2/3/2020	The findings by [ZHANG Yongzhen's team at the Shanghai Public Health Clinical Centre Shanghai] were published in the scientific journal Nature on February 3. The research said the virus sample was collected from a patient who showed symptoms of fever, dizziness and coughing and was admitted to a Wuhan hospital on December 26.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/society/article/3052966/chinese-laboratory-first-shared-
2/3/2020	WHO chief Tedros calls on countries not to take measures that "unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade," calling the spread outside of China "minimal and slow." He adds, "The chances of getting this going to anywhere outside China is very low, and even in China, when you go to other provinces, it's very low." These statements are amplified in PRC state media.	U	Rueters, Xinhua	Stephanie Nebehay, "WHO chief says widespread travel bans not necessary to beat China virus," Reuters, February 3, 2020.

2/3/2020	WIV study of full-length genome sequences from five patients at an early stage of the pandemic showed these sequences are almost identical and share 79.6% sequence identity to SARS-CoV. Furthermore, they showed that 2019-nCoV is 96% identical at the whole-genome level to a bat coronavirus from their previous work with Yunnan bat viruses.	U	NIH	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7095418/
2/3/2020	Wuhan planned to convert three existing venues, including a gymnasium and an exhibition center, into hospitals to receive patients infected with the novel coronavirus.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/4/2020	(SBU) HHS submitted names of experts to the World Health Organization to potentially serve on WHO's international senior technical mission being formed to work with Chinese public health counterparts to help improve understanding of 2019-nCoV, including learning more about the virus's transmissibility and severity. WHO Geneva compiled a full international experts list and transmitted it to the Government of China. WHO is now awaiting feedback on the list before finalizing the members of the mission.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 248
2/4/2020	(SBU) Duponts manufacturing facilities in Hefei and Shenzhen were commandeered by Chinese government officials in an effort to direct production and distribution of Duponts Tyvek-brand protective coveralls, according to Dupont contacts. Chinese government authorities required Dupont to ramp up production -- by 20 percent within the next 30 days and another 15 percent in the next 4-6 months. In order to meet this requirement, the company told us it will need to hire more workers, procure additional inputs, and install manufacturing equipment. Dupont may need to source inputs from its facilities in other Southeast Asian locations to continue to supply base business industrial clients in China.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 250

2/4/2020	<p>(SBU) In a February 4 call with Beijing FCS, Honeywell reported that the Shanghai Municipal Government had directed it to operate facilities that manufacture PPE for industrial use 24/7 with 3 shifts, and had not permitted one of its facilities to close over the CNY holidays. Honeywell said that the authorities are guiding distribution of product--working with vendors to prevent price gouging and to ensure that genuine products are entering the distribution channels. The government has also asked Honeywell to work with them to certify small non-certified manufacturers of face masks. Honeywell indicated that they will consider providing technical assistance to these factories once China has gotten through the crisis. Honeywell is also being approached by various cities to set up local manufacturing facilities--again, not practical at this time. In addition, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (which oversees national reserves of resources and goods) has inquired about Honeywells manufacturing facilities outside of China and has asked about procuring additional inventory from those facilities. Honeywell has made it clear that they do not have additional capacity at this time due to orders from other regions. Honeywell said that it believes the government has been very fair and reasonable in the actions taken in light of the national emergency and made clear that it has not been taken over by the government or lost control of its operations.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 250
2/4/2020	<p>(SBU) The World Health Organization (WHO) continues to work with the PRC National Health Commission (NHC) on forming an international senior technical mission to work with Chinese public health counterparts. WHO-Geneva compiled a full international experts list and transmitted it to the PRC National Health Commission February 4. WHO is waiting for NHC to approve the panel names. Post will report updates as they are available. MFA spokesperson Hua Chunying said February 5 that Chinas National Health Commission has confirmed that the U.S. will send experts to join a China-WHO joint expert group.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 250

<p>2/4/2020</p>	<p>(U) Another Xinhua commentary said that the novel coronavirus outbreak has put the world on alert. While many in the international community are joining China to battle the epidemic, prejudice and discrimination are playing a shameful role that could discourage the very collective campaign. Some U.S. politicians have chosen to shut their ears to WHO's advice of taking "measured and evidence-based response." Instead, they have ordered a ban on the entry of foreign nationals who have travelled in China in the past 14 days, and warned against "all travel to China." What is more jaw-dropping is that U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross blatantly claimed that the novel coronavirus outbreak could bode well for the U.S. job market. Those U.S. moves, which go against the WHO's recommendations, have set an unfavorable example that might distract resources from the anti-empidemic battle and embolden others to choose isolation when cooperation is badly needed (link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.xinhuanet.com%2Fenglish%2F2020-02%2F03%2Ffc_138752992.htm&data=02%7C01%7CSallCJ%40state.gov%7Cd505e79a90774423dd9708d7a94d6de5%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637164022323602369&sdata=Tv049xnYCDEOqldDCXXhTe8yWfc0vGzkZ3ZBMt3s3wg%3D&reserved=0>).</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 248</p>
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2/4/2020	<p>(U) China Daily noted that China said it hopes the assistance the U.S. announced it would provide to help tackle the novel coronavirus outbreak will take place as soon as possible. Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying made the remark on Tuesday, after Reuters quoted U.S. President Donald Trump as saying the US officials had offered China "tremendous help" in dealing with the epidemic. China has noticed that the U.S. has expressed several times its willingness to provide assistance, and hopes the assistance said will be extended as soon as possible, Hua said. The U.S. should view China's efforts objectively, fairly and calmly without overreaction, and respect and coordinate with such efforts, she said</p> <p>{link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.chinadaily.com.cn%2Fa%2F202002%2F04%2FW55e38d76ea310128217274aa5.html&data=02%7C01%7CSallCJ%40state.gov%7Cd505e79a90774423dd9708d7a94d6de5%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637164022323622354&sdata=sBgey342cdFoYsNmhN54cPcNYRyN5Q%2FQ0MWWVvS3cwc%3D&reserved=0>}.}</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 248
2/4/2020	<p>(U) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 3,887 newly confirmed cases on February 4 as of 24:00, as total confirmed cases rose to 24,324</p> <p>{link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yjb/s7860/202002/17a03704a99646ffad6807bc806f37a4.shtml>}. Additionally, the total number of currently suspected cases reached 23,260. Another 65 deaths (all in Hubei) were reported, bringing total deaths to 490. Hospitals have treated and released a total of 892 patients, and 185,555 close contacts are currently in isolation under medical observation.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 250

<p>2/5/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) MFA Vice-Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu and PRC representatives from the MFA, China CDC, and the National Health Commission briefed the Beijing diplomatic corps on February 5. The briefing was conducted virtually on WeChat due to the outbreak. Ma and the experts emphasized the novel coronavirus case fatality rate is 2 percent, far lower than other epidemics, specifically noting the 17.4 percent fatality rate of the H1N1 outbreak in the United States. The experts also noted that there are 170 cases of 2019-nCoV worldwide, comparing it to H1N1 in the U.S. which spread to 214 countries. China CDC noted the fatality rate outside of Wuhan is 0.8 percent and 0.14 percent outside of Hubei and that the number of cured cases has started to exceed the number of deaths. China CDC said there is no known effective cure or antiviral treatment, but that the Wuhan restrictions have curbed the rapid spread of the outbreak. China CDC also said there is no scientific evidence the virus has mutated.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 250</p>
<p>2/5/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Mission Geneva reported February 5 that Senior WHO staff have urged the PRC to get the joint WHO/NHC international senior technical mission on the ground by the end of this week (ref A). Mission Geneva also reported that an initial informal WHO translation of the PRC written response indicated apparent PRC approval for all proposed mission participants. [Note: The United States proposed 16 experts for the mission. It is unclear how many of those 16 were forwarded to the PRC. End note.] WHO's China office, as of February 6, had not yet notified Embassy Beijing CDC that WHO technical mission members had been approved.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 254</p>

<p>2/5/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The National Health Commission February 5 published the 5th edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia of Pneumonia from Novel Coronavirus (link, in Chinese<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/yzygj/s7652m/202002/e84bd30142ab4d8982326326e4db22ea.shtml>). The NHC document describes the possibility of asymptomatic infection, though provides no examples. The report describes the case definition for mild, standard, severe, and critical clinical status. Of note is that the case definition used in Hubei is not the same as the case definition in provinces outside of Hubei. The Hubei suspected cases do not seem to require radiographic evidence of pneumonia. In provinces outside of Hubei, the case definition for suspect cases still requires radiographic evidence of pneumonia. The report describes differences in the handling of suspect and confirmed cases in Hubei and provinces outside of Hubei. Additionally, it states that suspect cases need two negative samples 24 hours apart to be ruled out. The NHC also describes isolation and treatments, including Western (discusses use of interferon alpha and lopinavir/ritonavir +/- ribavirin) and Chinese medicine treatments that should be used. Lastly, the report describes the discharge criteria for patients.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 254</p>
<p>2/5/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Two aircraft departed Wuhan the morning of February 5, evacuating 347 U.S. citizens and family members, and are currently en route to Travis Air Force Base. The aircraft are scheduled to land in the United States at 06:50 ET and 07:20 ET, respectively. The two aircraft delivered 10.4 tons of PPE and other medical equipment collected from U.S. civil society organizations and companies. Mission China February 5 continued to contact U.S. citizens in Wuhan and coordinate with PRC authorities on the arrival of two additional aircraft, expected as early as the night of February 6. In total, the four aircraft will deliver 104 pallets of relief.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 250</p>

2/5/2020	<p>(U) Another Xinhua article notes that on Wednesday President Xi Jinping called for greater legislative, law enforcement, judicial and law observance efforts to strengthen the capacity to carry out law-based infection prevention and control. Xi spoke of the need to improve legislation related to epidemic prevention and control, strengthen the building of supporting institutions and improve punishment procedures. Xi stressed strict enforcement of law on prevention and control of infectious diseases and the regulation regarding its implementation, laws on wildlife protection and animal quarantine, as well as the regulation on public health emergency response. Xi called for a severe crackdown on illegal activities and crimes ranging from resisting epidemic prevention and control efforts, assaulting medical workers, manufacturing and selling fake products, to rumormongering that undermines epidemic prevention and control efforts. Xi also stressed that donations and receiving donations should be carried out according to the law, noting that all donated funds and goods should be used for epidemic prevention and control in a timely manner. In addition, Xi stressed timely and accurate release of the epidemic information.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 254
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2/5/2020	<p>(U) China Daily reported President Trump said that the United States is coordinating with China, and will work closely to deal with new coronavirus outbreak. MFA spokesperson Hua Chunying said at the Feb 4 press conference that the U.S. side should respect and cooperate with China's prevention and control efforts and work with China and the international community to combat the outbreak of pneumonia. The U.S. repeatedly expressed readiness to offer China assistance. We hope such assistance will materialize at early date</p> <p>{link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fbajijiahao.baidu.com%2Fs%3Fid%3D1657664312466483881%26wfr%3Dspider%26for%3Dpc&data=02%7C01%7CHendonAJ%40state.gov%7C425acd5ac04c474d977c08d7aa02df5b%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637164801656622756&sdata=2N8y5jsANe553x%2B7hH943a6PegLUxXNEgbKcYra9a%2FA%3D&reserved=0>}</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 250
2/5/2020	<p>(U) Xinhua also reports that MFA spokesperson Hua Chunying expressed that we have also noted that for several days, media, think tanks, experts and scholars of many countries have voiced their concerns over the excessive restrictive measures taken by some countries. WHO has stressed many times that it does not recommend measures that unnecessarily interfere with international travel and trade and called on all countries to combat the spread of rumors, stick to science and take evidence-based measures. We hope that the relevant countries will respect WHO's recommendations and make rational and science-based response to the current situation instead of overreacting</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 254
2/5/2020	<p>The temporary hospital of Jiangnan, which was converted from the existing international exhibition center of Wuhan, started to take in virus-infected patients, providing over 1,500 beds.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

2/6/2020	(U) China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 3,143 newly confirmed cases and 4,833 newly suspected cases on February 6 as of 24:00 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqtb/202002/3db09278e3034f289841300ed09bd0e1.shtm >). Total confirmed cases climbed to 26,359, and currently suspected cases reached 26,359. An additional 73 deaths were reported, including 69 new deaths in Hubei, one in Jilin, one in Henan, one in Guangdong, and one in Hainan. Another 387 treated patients were released from the hospital, bringing the total to 1,540. Currently, 186,045 close contacts are in isolation under medical observation, about the same as the previous day.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 256
2/6/2020	China's internet watchdog tightens controls on social media platforms following Xi Jinping directive to strengthen online media control to maintain social stability.	U	SCMP	Iris Deng, "Coronavirus: China tightens social media censorship amid outbreak," South China Morning Post, February 6, 2020. Also Kristin Huang, "China
2/6/2020	Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang meets with Italy's ambassador to China and "requires" Italy to suspend its decision cancelling direct flights between Italy and China. PRC press release	U	PRC MFA	"Vice Foreign Minister Qin Gang Requires the Italian Side to Suspend the Decision to Cancel Direct Flights Between Italy and China; The Italian Side Agrees to

2/6/2020	Citizen journalist and former rights lawyer Chen Qiushi disappears in Wuhan after posting mobile-phone videos of packed hospitals and distraught families.	U	NYT	Vivian Wang, "They Documented the Coronavirus Crisis in Wuhan. Then
2/6/2020	<p>Researchers from South China University of Technology publish a study concluding that "the killer coronavirus probably originated from a laboratory in Wuhan. Safety level may need to be reinforced in high risk biohazardous laboratories."</p> <p>-- The paper is soon withdrawn because it "was not supported by direct proofs," according to author Botao Xiao.</p> <p>-- "No scientists have confirmed or refuted the paper's findings," scholar Yanzhong Huang wrote on March 5.</p>	U	Research Gate, WSJ, Foreign Affairs	Botao Xiao and Lei Xiao, "The possible origins of 2019-nCoV coronavirus," ResearchGate, Feb. 6, 2020. James Areddy, "Coronavirus Epidemic Draws Scrutiny to Labs Handling Deadly Pathogens," The Wall Street Journal, March 5,
2/6/2020	The leaders of the U.S. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine write to the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy on the importance of information-sharing and transparency "for managing the 2019-nCoV outbreak and for preventing future outbreaks." "Samples collected as early as possible in the outbreak in Wuhan and samples from wildlife would be particularly valuable," they write, adding that the president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences has indicated that the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory "is willing to share isolates of the 2019 nCov with the international community." This transfer apparently never happened.	U	NAS	Marcia McNutt, John L. Anderson and Victor J. Dzau to Kelvin Droegemeier, February 6, 2020, https://www.nationalacademies.org/news/2020/02/national-academies-

2/7/2020	"[LI Wenliang] passed away on February 7"	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM
2/7/2020	"Li Wenliang, male, Manchu, born in October 1985, from Jinzhou, Liaoning, member of the Communist Party of China, died on February 7, 2020 due to pneumonia caused by the novel coronavirus at work. He was an ophthalmologist at Wuhan Central Hospital during his lifetime."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ART1rEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml
2/7/2020	<p>(SBU) Li Wenliang, a 34-year-old doctor who became well-known in China after the government reprimanded him for voicing early concerns about the coronavirus to his colleagues, died from the illness early on February 7 at hospital in Wuhan. News of Dr. Li's death triggered a massive outpouring of grief and anger on Chinese social media platforms, with many users citing the hashtag "We demand freedom of speech." Contacts from a surprisingly wide range of backgrounds and professions, including Chinese journalists and others who often avoid sensitive political topics, posted tributes to Dr. Li, though many of these posts were censored quickly by the government. "Li has become a national hero - not only for elites, but for everyone," said one Beijing-based academic, a sentiment echoed among many contacts. Several western journalists told us they were shocked by the flood of frustration from their sources; one journalist shared that even his government contacts from local public security bureaus (PSBs) were eulogizing Dr. Li in their posts. As the situation develops, we will continue to monitor reactions to Li's death.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 256
2/7/2020	<p>(SBU) The remaining 7.4 tons of personal protecting equipment (PPE) were delivered to Wuhan on the two flights. Overall, 17.8 tons of PPE were delivered for use in Hubei in the four most recent flights.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 256

2/7/2020	(SBU) U.S. firms with operations in China including FedEx, Citadel, Tesla, General Electric, Google, and many others continued to provide and pledge further relief, many committing multi-million-dollar sums. Some firms also implemented other relief measures, for example, Tesla said all its customers would have free supercharging throughout the coronavirus epidemic.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 256
2/7/2020	Dr. Li Wenliang dies of the novel coronavirus contracted from a patient, five weeks after his police detention for trying to alert fellow doctors to the outbreak. His death triggers an outpouring of grief and anger at Chinese authorities.	U	WSJ	Jeremy Page et al., "How It All Started: China's Early Coronavirus
2/7/2020	PRC "State Supervision Commission established an investigation team to conduct investigations in accordance with the law on the situation reported by the masses involving Doctor Li Wenliang." They found that: Because the Zhongnan Road Police Station issued an improper admonition letter and irregular law enforcement procedures, the investigation team has recommended that the supervisory authority of Wuhan City, Hubei Province supervise and correct the matter, urge the public security agency to revoke the admonition letter and hold relevant personnel accountable, and promptly announce the results of the treatment to the public."	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIrEO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS
2/7/2020	The Wuhan municipal government mourned Li Wenliang, a doctor who died of the coronavirus. He was infected while working at a local hospital.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/7/2020	Wuhan combed communities to ensure every confirmed or suspected patient was located and attended to. A senior official vowed to nail any official deserter "to history's pillar of shame".	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/8/2020	The newly-built Leishenshan Hospital in Wuhan received the first batch of patients infected with the virus.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

2/9/2020	(SBU) PAS media contacts expressed gratitude for the U.S. governments donation of \$100 million to assist WHO and China in containing and combatting the coronavirus, while others criticized the Wuhan governments slow response in providing needed medical supplies.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 260
2/9/2020	(U) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 3,062 new confirmed cases and 4,008 new suspected cases on February 9 as of 24:00 (figure 1), as total confirmed cases to date increased to 40,171 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqtb/202002/167a0e01b2d24274b03b2ca961107929.shtm >). An additional 23,589 cases are currently suspected. Total deaths rose to 908, with 97 new deaths. Another 632 patients were released from the hospital, with the total number of patients treated and released now at 3,281. Meanwhile, the number of close contacts in isolation under medical observation declined slightly to 187,518.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 260
2/9/2020	(U) Chinese Academy of Social Science (CASS) fired professor Zhou Peiyi after she posted an angry comment on her social media about the death of Dr. Li Wenliang in Hunan writing, The social ills that have been created by the system cannot be solved with a few psychology classes. The death of he who has been wrongly persecuted will turn to hate in the hearts of us all. [Note: Dr. Li died early on February 7 in a Wuhan hospital after contracting 2019-nCoV, triggering widespread grief and outrage on Chinese social media. He became well-known after the government reprimanded him for voicing early concerns about the coronavirus to hospital colleagues in Wuhan (ref A). End note.]	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 260
2/9/2020	Citizen journalist and local businessman Fang Bin disappears after posting videos from Wuhan that circulated widely on Chinese social media.	U	NYT	Vivian Wang, "They Documented the Coronavirus Crisis in Wuhan. Then

<p>2/10/2020</p>	<p>"Pairing-up support for Hubei!" China stepped up its fight against the novel coronavirus as it released a plan for over half of provincial-level regions to aid cities in Hubei.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>
<p>2/10/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) A non-peer reviewed study published on February 10 (link<https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.02.06.20020974v1>) found that the incubation period of patients with 2019-nCoV ranged from 0 to 24 days. The median incubation period was three days, which was shorter than what other studies had found. The study examined 2019-nCoV case data from 1,099 patients across 31 provinces and 552 hospitals. The study also indicated that certain markers of disease severity predicted poor clinical outcomes, including oxygen saturation, respiratory rate, blood leukocyte and lymphocyte count, and chest X-ray or CT manifestations. The reports authors encouraged shifting the response focus to identifying and managing patients before disease progression. 1.18 percent of patients had a documented history of contact with wildlife, 31.3 percent had recently traveled to Wuhan, and 71.8 percent had contact with people from Wuhan. The study also noted that the low mortality rate in Guangdong province may be due to early isolation, early diagnosis, and early management. The study claimed that a dilution of [the] health workforce as a result of central management (i.e., Wuhan JinYinTan Hospital) may have led to the increased mortality rate in Wuhan city. (Note: This manuscript did not compare outcomes in Hubei province versus non-Hubei patients, which is a noticeable limitation for evaluating differences in outcomes in heavily affected areas versus non-heavily affected areas. Mission China will monitor additional studies on incubation periods and whether PRC authorities change quarantine or close contact monitoring guidelines based on these preliminary findings. End note.)</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 264</p>

2/10/2020	<p>(SBU) Several officials from local and provincial governments contacted the Embassy to solicit U.S. government messages of support, including praise for Chinese efforts to contain the virus. At least one Chinese government-affiliated organization did the same, seeking a video message from the Embassy that could be used to encourage the public. Given the close timing of these requests, it appears that central authorities have tasked entities to seek public displays of approval for China's efforts to combat the outbreak.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264
2/10/2020	<p>(SBU) WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said over the weekend that the WHO international expert technical mission had been assembled and that the head of the team, Dr. Bruce Aylward, a Canadian WHO epidemiologist and emergencies expert, would arrive in Beijing February 10. Responding to a reporter's question on U.S. CDC participation in the mission, Tedros said, "We hope so." [Note: As of COB February 10, HHS Beijing and HHS headquarters had not been notified by WHO on the status or composition of the expert mission. The United States proposed 16 HHS technical experts for the mission. It is unclear how many of those 16 were forwarded to the PRC by the WHO. Following DG Tedros' January 28 meeting with President Xi, the PRC National Health Commission January 29 contacted HHS to extend their welcome to U.S. experts joining WHO in the expert group. End note.]</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 260
2/10/2020	<p>(U) According to China's National Immigration Administration (NIA), 127 countries have enacted flight suspensions or immigration restrictions aimed at travelers from China due to the epidemic</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264

2/10/2020	<p>(U) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 2,478 newly confirmed cases and 3,536 newly suspected cases on February 10 as of 24:00 (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqtb/202002/4a611bc7fa20411f8ba1c8084426c0d4.shtml>), bringing the total to 42,638 confirmed cases with 37,626 confirmed patients who remained in hospital treatment. Additionally, the NHC reported 21,675 suspected cases. The death toll climbed to 1,016 after another 108 deaths were reported on February 10. The number of close contacts in isolation under medical observation remained mostly unchanged, at 187,728. The officially reported death rate for confirmed 2019-nCoV cases in Hubei Province increased to 3.07 percent, according to the Hubei Health Commission (link<http://wjw.hubei.gov.cn/fbjd/dtyw/202002/t20200211_2023520.shtml>).</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264
2/11/2020	<p>(U) Citing China CDC sources, media reported February 11 the mRNA vaccine co-developed by the China CDC, Shanghais Tongji University School of Medicine, and Stermirna Therapeutics Co., Ltd. had begun trials on February 9 on over 100 mice.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264

<p>2/11/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Downward Trend in New Officially Reported Cases Continues, Death Rate in Hubei Rises</p> <p>2. (U) Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 2,015 newly confirmed cases and 3,342 newly suspected cases on February 11 as of 24:00 (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdt/202002/395f075a5f3a411f80335766c65b0487.shtml>). To date, 44,653 confirmed cases have been reported, with 38,800 confirmed cases currently being treated. Additionally, 16,067 cases are currently suspected. Another 97 deaths were reported on February 11, including 94 in Hubei, as total deaths in Mainland China reached 1,113. The number of patients treated and released to date rose to 4,740, as the number of close contacts in isolation under medical observation dropped to 185,037. [Note: Media reported February 10 that Chinas NHC may be using revised case definitions that exclude non-symptomatic COVID-19 patients from confirmed case number counts. Embassy Beijing HHS and ESTH are confirming whether the policy has been changed and the potential effect on reported case numbers. Mission China previously reported that the case definition used in Hubei had changed from the case definition in provinces outside of Hubei (20 Beijing 254). End note.]</p> <p>(SBU) According to Hubei Health Commissions daily case report for February 11, the average case mortality rate for the province has risen to 3.2 percent (figure 2). The official case mortality rate ranges from 0.2 percent in Shiyan City to 5.6 percent in Qianjiang City. The rate for Wuhan City is currently 4.2 percent. Outside of Hubei, according to NHC data, the official case mortality rate as of February 11 is currently 0.4 percent.</p> <p>(U) Prominent Chinese medical expert Zhong Nanshan said on February 11 that according his assessment, the COVID-19 epidemic will reach a peak in mid to late February. Zhong cautioned that a rebound in cases was still possible (Peoples Daily<">https://m.weibo.cn/status/4470839414027388?>).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 276</p>
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2/11/2020	<p>(SBU) The WHO expert advance team led by Dr. Bruce Aylward arrived in Beijing February 10. The team met with the National Health Commission (NHC) on February 11 to finalize the plan for the mission, including selection and approval of subject matter experts, the missions scope, and where in China the expert mission would travel. WHO has said the mission size could range between 10-15 members, only some of whom will be the international experts, and the WHO China office expects to receive a green light very soon from NHC. In a February 10 press conference, WHO Geneva said mission priorities would be to understand the origin of the virus, severity of the disease, and to learn from and support China. As of COB February 11, neither WHO or NHC had notified HH5 Beijing or HHS headquarters on the status or composition of the expert mission.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264
2/11/2020	<p>(U) State television outlet CCTV reported on February 11 that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had removed Hubei Provincial Health Commissions party secretary Zhang Pu and the Commission Director Liu Yingzi. Zhang and Liu were the most senior officials to be removed since the public health crisis began. Wang Hesheng, who served as deputy of Chinas National Health Commission since 2016, was tapped to assume both roles. The Hubei CCP appointed Wang to the provincial standing committee on February 8, and Wang was a member of the emergency response group that first traveled to Wuhan after the outbreak of the virus. He previously served most of his career in Tianjin.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 264
2/11/2020	<p>The Standing Committee of the Provincial People's Congress of Hubei decided to appoint Wang Hesheng as the new director of the provincial health commission. Wang would replace Liu Yingzi, the former head of the provincial health commission.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

<p>2/12/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Embassy Beijing remains in contact with WHO and NHC regarding the WHO expert team, but as of COB February 12 had yet to receive additional information about the U.S. participation in the team. At the same time, the U.S. CDC COVID-19 Incident Manager February 11 held a first call with his China CDC counterpart, a well-known partner who previously spent a year working at CDC headquarters in Atlanta. The call provided an opportunity to hear conclusions and perspectives of the China CDC COVID-19 leader that may be informative to U.S. policy making on such issues as screening, quarantine, and case finding. Both sides expressed interest in holding future technical calls to share information and perspectives on those and other issues. HHS confirmed to the National Health Commission (NHC) February 11 that it will donate PPE supplies to China, including 500,000 N-95 medical respirators, 50,000 goggles, 100,000 protective suits, and 10,000 non-contact thermometers. HHS also proposed utilizing a current joint research platform to launch an immediate research task force focused on mitigating and ending the spread of the coronavirus. Post requests that Washington defer to HHS HQ to determine how or whether to include this information in Hill briefings.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 276</p>
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<p>2/12/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Commerce (MOFCOM) separately requested additional details this week on Secretary Pompeo's February 7 announcement of up to \$100 million in existing funds to assist China and other impacted countries to contain and combat the novel coronavirus. On February 12, MFA Division Director for the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs Zhou Zhiyong called Acting POL M/C and ECON M/C to ask for information on U.S. official assistance to China to combat the virus. The aid would be a bright spot in the U.S.-China relationship, Zhou asserted. He also reiterated MFA North American Director General Lu Kang's thanks to the A/DCM on February 8 for the U.S. assistance provided by private donors on the Wuhan evacuation flights on February 4 and 6. ECON M/C referred Zhou to the Secretary's announcement, as well as the joint op-ed in USA Today by Secretary Pompeo and HHS Secretary Azar, and said the Embassy would provide additional details when available.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 280</p>
<p>2/13/2020</p>	<p>"The political fallout from the outbreak also escalated on Thursday with the firing of party chief of Hubeiprovince, the party chief of Wuhan and the head of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs office. YingYong, the new party chief of Hubei, came up through the ranks in Zhejiang, where the president, XiJinping, previously served as party secretary and was also part of anti-corruption campaigns, the president's signature initiative."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>The Guardian</p>	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/13/coronavirus-china-purges-regional-leaders-hours-after-spike-in-</p>
<p>2/13/2020</p>	<p>China purges regional leaders hours after spike in deaths and new cases. The political fallout from the outbreak also escalated with the firing of party chief of Hubei province, the party chief of Wuhan and the head of China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs office. YingYong, the new party chief of Hubei, came up through the ranks in Zhejiang, where the president, XiJinping, previously served as party secretary and was also part of anti-corruption campaigns, the president's signature initiative.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>THEGUARDIAN</p>	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/13/coronavirus-china-purges-regional-leaders-hours-after-spike-in-deaths-and-new-</p>

2/13/2020	Hubei province reported 14,840 new confirmed cases and 242 new deaths, the highest daily increases, after the diagnosis criteria for confirmed COVID-19 cases were further loosened for timely treatment of more patients.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/13/2020	RNA-Seq of <i>Rhinolophus affinis</i> :Fecal swab (SRR11085797) published in the Sequence Read Archive. Note: This sample may be contrived given it has significant variations from other bat fecal samples collected by the WIV in Yunan. Additionally, KRONA analysis of this sample reveals 3% primate sequences in the RaTG13 sequence data which is allegedly consistent with contamination by the standard laboratory coronavirus cell culture system, the VERO monkey kidney cell line." See QUAY "RaTG13 Manuscript 31 AUG 2020".	U	NCBI	https://trace.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Traces/sra/?run=SRR11085797
2/13/2020	The city of Huanggang, hard hit by COVID-19 in Hubei, put all residential communities and areas on lockdown as the city upgraded virus prevention and control measures.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/13/2020	Two separate research groups led by China's top scientists said they had isolated novel coronavirus strains from samples of infected patient's feces.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/13/2020	WIV submits RNA-Seq of <i>Rhinolophus affinis</i> - Fecal swab " Total RNA was extracted from bronchoalveolar lavage fluid using the QIAamp Viral RNA Mini Kit following the manufacturers instructions. An RNA library was then constructed using the TruSeq Stranded mRNA Library Preparation Kit (Illumina, USA). Paired-end (150 bp) sequencing of the RNA library was performed on the HiSeq 3000 platform (Illumina)."	U	NCBI	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra/SRX7724752%5baccn
2/13/2020	Xi Jinping fires the Communist Party chiefs of Hubei Province and Wuhan, replacing both with proteges of his with extensive backgrounds in public security. ⁸⁹	U	NYT	Steven Lee Myers, "China Ousts 2 Party Officials Amid Outrage About

2/14/2020	(SBU) HHS Experts Invited to WHO Technical Mission: Two HHS technical experts (one from CDC and one from NIH) have been invited to participate in the joint WHO-led international technical mission to China. The mission is expected to be active from February 16 through February 23 and will likely include travel to other affected provinces. The mission terms of reference and full participation announcement had not been made public as of the close of business in Beijing, February 14.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 292
2/14/2020	(SBU) Possibly in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the PRC has begun to initiate enhancements to its biosafety system. President Xi Jinping called for new reforms during a February 14 CCP Central Committee meeting, saying that biosafety was a "national security issue." Following Xi's statement, the Ministry of Science and Technology issued new guidelines the next day requiring public health institutions throughout China to boost laboratory biosafety.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
2/14/2020	A gymnasium-converted makeshift hospital was put into use in Wuhan. It is the first makeshift hospital fully supported by doctors and medical workers of traditional Chinese medicine.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/14/2020	In a February 14 speech, President Xi Jinping proposed incorporating biosafety into the national security system to "comprehensively improve national biosafety governance capabilities."	U	State Department	AMEMBASSY BEIJING 181039Z FEB 20
2/15/2020	(SBU) Ministry of Emergency Management Requests Assistance: The Ministry of Emergency Management (MEM) contacted ESTH February 15 to request information on how the United States manages emergency stockpiles and reserves. Noting that President Xi had tasked relevant ministries to enhance management of emergency stockpiles, the MEM requested documents or guidance that would detail how U.S. agencies decide on which items should be stockpiled, where items should be stored, and how stockpiles are maintained and replenished. ESTH is working with the Department to respond to MEMs request.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 296

2/15/2020	Activist Xu Zhiyong arrested after nearly two months on the run, and after publishing a Feb. 4 essay calling on Xi Jinping to step down for suppressing information about the virus.	U	NPR	Emily Feng, "Rights Activist Xu Zhiyong Arrested in China Amid Crackdown
2/15/2020	Finance magazine Barron's finds that China's official coronavirus data fit a near-perfect model that is almost impossible to naturally occur, as the number of cumulative deaths reported could be predicted by a simple mathematical formula to a 99.99% accuracy.	U	Barron's	Lisa Beilfuss, "China's Coronavirus Figures Don't Add Up. 'This Never
2/15/2020	On February 15, Ministry of Science and Technology Social Development Director General Wu Yuanbin called for better management of China's laboratories and issued a statement of "Guiding Opinions on Strengthening the Biosafety Management of Novel Coronavirus Laboratories and High-Quality Virus and Microorganism Management."	U	State Department	AMEMBASSY BEIJING 181039Z FEB 20
2/15/2020	PRC state media publishes a speech, said to have been delivered by Xi Jinping to party leaders on Feb. 3, saying he had been leading the fight against the virus "at every moment" since Jan. 7. His first public comments on the epidemic had been Jan. 20.	U	NYT	Amy Qin, "China's Leader, Under Fire, Says He Led Coronavirus Fight
2/15/2020	Xi's published speech also urges tightened control over online discussion and increased policing to ensure "positive energy" and social stability.	U	AFP	"China's Xi urges more policing as virus toll rises,"
2/16/2020	A group of 12 WHO officials and 13 PRC officials begin a nine-day "WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019," led by Canadian Bruce Aylward of WHO and Wannian Liang of the PRC National Health Commission.	U	WHO	"Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus
2/16/2020	Institute researcher Shi Zhengli writes on social media that she "guaranteed with her own life" that the outbreak was unrelated to the lab. She instructs "those who believe and spread malicious media rumors to close their stinky mouths."	U	WSJ	James T. Areddy, "China Bat Expert Says Her Wuhan Lab Wasn't Source of New

2/16/2020	The Wuhan Institute of Virology issues a public denial that its former researcher Huang Yanling is "patient zero," as speculated on Chinese social media based on the disappearance of Huang's biographical information from the Institute's website and Huang's unknown whereabouts.	U	SCMP	Jun Mai, "Chinese research lab denies rumours of links to first coronavirus"
2/16/2020	Tsinghua University Professor Xu Zhangrun is placed under house arrest, barred from social media, and cut off from the Internet after publishing an essay declaring that "The coronavirus epidemic has revealed the rotten core of Chinese governance."	U	Guardian	Verna Yu and Emma Graham-Harrison, "This may be the last piece I write': Prominent Xi
2/16/2020	<p>WIV issues statement [translated using google translate]: "Recently, false information has been circulating on the Internet, claiming that our graduate Huang Yanling is the so-called "patient zero" who was the first to be infected with the new coronavirus. After verification, our firm solemnly declares as follows:</p> <p>Classmate Huang Yanling graduated from our institute in 2015 with a master's degree. During her studies, she studied the function and antibacterial broad-spectrum of phage lyase. After graduation, she has been working and living in other provinces and has never returned to Wuhan. Infection, good health. At this critical moment in the fight against the epidemic, related rumors have greatly interfered with the scientific research work of our institute. We reserve the right to pursue legal liabilities according to law. I sincerely thank all sectors of society for their care, support and help to me!</p>	U	WIV Official Website	https://archive.vn/1enEo#selection-539.2-571.80

<p>2/17/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Assessments by PRC health authorities and the WHO during the height of the COVID-19 epidemic in China in February reinforced the view that asymptomatic cases did not constitute a significant risk. The first large-scale epidemiological study by China's CDC of COVID-19 cases in China, published February 17 in China CDC Weekly and the Chinese Journal of Epidemiology, reported that asymptomatic cases represented only 1.2 percent of the 72,314 COVID-19 cases documented between December 31 and February 11 (link<http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/en/article/id/e53946e2-c6c4-41e9-9a9b-fea8db1a8f51>). The study sample included 44,672 lab-confirmed cases, 10,567 clinically diagnosed cases, 889 asymptomatic cases, and 16,186 suspected cases. [Note: The asymptomatic cases included in the studies were reportedly diagnosed based on nucleic acid tests. End note.] Shortly thereafter, the WHO noted in the summary report of the technical mission to China published February 28 that, "The proportion of truly asymptomatic infections is unclear but appears to be relatively rare and does not appear to be a major driver of transmission" (link<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/who-china-joint-mission-on-covid-19-final-report.pdf>). The WHO report lacked a critical assessment of the data provided to the WHO team by the PRC, including on asymptomatic cases. The WHO report also did not include a presentation or evaluation of laboratory testing data, despite WHO guidelines and requests for information about the total number of lab tests conducted and the number of laboratory tests positive for COVID-19 (Ref A).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 614</p>
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<p>2/17/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) China CDC Releases Largest Epidemiological Analysis: China CDC February 17 released the largest epidemiological analysis to-date from 72,314 COVID-19 cases across China. The analysis, published on China CDC Weekly and in the Chinese Journal of Epidemiology (ref attached and link<http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/en/article/id/e53946e2-c6c4-41e9-9a9b-fea8db1a8f51>), included cases from the initial outbreak through February 11. The analysis focused on 44,672 lab-confirmed cases and reported that such cases peaked between January 23-26. Patients were mostly older (87 percent aged 30-79 years) and nearly evenly split between men (51.4 percent) and women. Among the remaining non-laboratory confirmed cases, 10,567 were clinically diagnosed, 889 were asymptomatic, and 16,186 were suspected cases. [Note: Some of the suspected cases may subsequently be classified as laboratory confirmed or clinically diagnosed following the February 13 change of case-definition in Hubei Province. End Note.] The epidemic curve provided in the analysis shows a decline in cases both by date of symptom onset and date of diagnosis (figures A-B). [Note: The decline appears to coincide with severe closed-management measures implemented by PRC authorities in Wuhan on January 23. The China CDC analysis and data are insufficient to determine the effect of specific control measures on the outbreak. Moreover, since COVID-19 has a 6 to 7-day incubation period, the direct impact of such measures would not be expected immediately. Separately, the delay between date of symptom onset and date of diagnosis may indicate a case testing backlog. End Note.] The analysis shows the case fatality rate (CFR) decreasing over time, from 14.4% before December 31 to 0.8% after February 1. [Note: The decline in CFR is expected over time. In the early stages of an outbreak, the CFR may be overestimated because the health system typically first identifies severe cases or deaths. End note.] The CFR is higher among men than women (2.8 percent versus 1.7 percent) and among older age groups (60-69 years old (3.6 percent), 70-79 (8.0 percent) 80 and above (14.8 percent)). The China CDC reported that Wuhan had the highest rate of severe and critical cases among confirmed health care worker (HCW) cases (17.7 percent, 191 severe/critical out of 1,080 total HCW cases). The CFR for HCW in total was 0.3 percent (5 deaths/1,688 total cases). Three HCW deaths were reported in Wuhan, two elsewhere in Hubei, and zero outside of Hubei. [Note: The data do not include descriptions of HCW age, pre-existing conditions, or the type of HCW. End note.] The analysis did not report any super-spreader events but states specific causes of medical staff infection and protection failures require further investigation. Comment: The report provides the largest population dataset to-date and the first epidemic curve to include onset dates. The analysis is well-written and relatively up to date with reporting through February 11. However, future investigation and/or release of information by PRC health authorities is required to answer many important questions, including, the extent of testing that has been done throughout the country, the full burden of infection and disease, the duration of infectious period, viral load over time and by specimen type, transmissibility and routes of transmission, comparison of clinical status on infectiousness, disease severity, effective treatment options, and animal reservoir. End Comment.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 296</p>
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2/17/2020	<p>(SBU) Military Enforcing Wuhan Residential Quarantines: A contact of an evacuated CG Wuhan officer reported that the arrival of military guards at residential communities in Wuhan has resulted in stricter quarantine enforcement. The contact, a PRC citizen, said military guards augmented the housing developments private guard force on February 17. She previously could only leave her house once every three days but could still freely move from one part of the large housing development to another (the housing development was built in stages, with each stage housing thousands of people). However, starting February 17, the newly arrived military guards began strictly enforcing the rule on leaving your house once every three days.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 340
2/17/2020	<p>Chen Quanjiao, a researcher with the Wuhan Institute of Virology, has refuted an online rumor that claimed the novel coronavirus was leaked from the institute, according to a statement published on its official website on Monday evening. Someone faked her identity, she said. The statement came after a rumor went viral on Chinese social media platform Weibo, saying Chen reported Wang Yanyi, director of the institute, for leaking the virus. Her ID number was included in the fabricated post on Weibo. Chen has been working on influenza viruses at the institute since 2001, according to the official website.</p>	U	CGTN News	https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-02-17/Wuhan-based-researcher-refutes-rumor-about-COVID-19-source-OaemKa4hUI/index.html
2/17/2020	<p>ECNS published article on 2/17/2020 that referenced "A top academician at the Chinese Academy of Engineering earned 10.17 million yuan (\$1.46 million) by illegally selling off lab animals and experimental milk, according to a report in the Shanghai-based The Paper at an unknown date.</p>	U	ECNS.cn	http://www.ecns.cn/news/sci-tech/2020-02-17/detail-ifztrmvi9821649 .
2/17/2020	<p>PRC ambassador Cheng Jingye publicly pressures Australia to ease travel restrictions, saying: "We have expressed our strong wish and hope that the Australian government in their review will take a balanced approach and remove these harsh restrictions."</p>	U	Reuters	<p>"Coronavirus: Beijing urges Australia to ease travel ban on China travelers," Reuters, February</p>

2/17/2020	<p>Statement by CHEN Quanjiao: "Regarding the so-called whistle-blowing statements published in my name on the Internet today, Isolemnly declare: I have never released any relevant reporting information, and expressed great indignation at the act of using my identity to fabricate the reporting information. I will pursue the legal responsibility of the rumors according to law. Hereby declare. Recently, a series of rumors have affected our front-line researchers' scientific research. Please be careful to prevent related conspiracy and sabotage activities. Chen Quanjiao, Researcher, Wuhan Institute of Virology, Chinese Academy of Sciences</p>	U	WIV Website	http://www.whio.v.ac.cn/tzgg_105342/202002/t20200217_5500447.html
2/17/2020	<p>The Ministry of Science and Technology issued new rules over the weekend, requiring laboratories nationwide to boost their biosafety in a move that experts said could fix chronic inadequate management issues during the campaign against the coronavirus. The guideline stressed the importance of strengthening the management of bio labs, especially on viruses, to ensure biosafety, ministry official Wu Yuanbin said at a press conference on Saturday. The release of the guideline deals with chronic loopholes at laboratories, Yang Zhanqiu, a deputy director of the pathogen biology department at Wuhan University in Hubei Province, told the Global Times on Sunday. "The mention of biosafety at labs by the ministry has nothing to do with some saying that the coronavirus leaked from the Wuhan Institute of Virology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences," Yang said. Laboratories in China have paid insufficient attention to biological disposal, Yang said. Lab trash can contain man-made viruses, bacteria or microbes with a potentially deadly impact on human beings, animals or plants.</p>	U	ECNS.cn	http://www.ecns.cn/news/sci-tech/2020-02-17/detail-ifztrmvi9821649.shtml

2/18/2020	<p>(SBU) Online Narratives: Renewed focus is also being placed on controlling online narratives about Chinas efforts, careful to project predictions of success. The narratives seek to emphasize the collective sacrifices of Chinese heroes, especially health care workers in Hubei province. However, even that narrative is meeting with some resistance, as evidenced by online criticism of female healthcare workers crying while their heads were shaved to prevent spread of the virus while no such measures were employed for male healthcare workers. There has also been a concerted effort to retrofit President Xis involvement in leading the charge against the coronavirus. In a Qiushi article, one of the CCPs authoritative mouthpieces, Xis involvement was traced back to a January 7 meeting of the Politburo CPC Central Committee, an assertion somewhat at odds with President Xis notable public absence during the first few weeks of the epidemic.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 296
2/18/2020	<p>(U) Nationwide Cases: Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 1,749 new cases in Mainland China on February 18 as of 24:00, bringing the total number of officially reported cases to 74,185 (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdt/202002/8f2cfd17f4c040d89c69a4b29e99748c.shtml>). [Note: This includes clinically diagnosed cases in Hubei in addition to lab-confirmed cases in Hubei and the other provinces. Hubei Health Commission has stopped providing disaggregated figures for clinically diagnosed and lab-confirmed cases. End note.] Another 136 deaths were reported for February 18, including 132 in Hubei, as total reported deaths in Mainland China hit 2,004. The number of patients treated and released from the hospital, meanwhile, rose to 14,376. The total number of currently suspected cases (5,248) and close contacts under medical observation (135,881) continued to decline.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 308

2/18/2020	February 2020 Nature Paper authored by WIV scientists describes RaTG13 genome was identified by "We then found that a short region of RNA-dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp) from a bat coronavirus (BatCoV RaTG13)—which was previously detected in Rhinolophus affinis from Yunnan province—showed high sequence identity to 2019-nCoV. We carried out full-length sequencing on this RNA sample (GISAID accession number EPI_ISL_402131). Simplot analysis showed that 2019-nCoV was highly similar throughout the genome to RaTG13 (Fig. 1c), with an overall genome sequence identity of 96.2%."	U	Nature	https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-020-20127#Sec13
2/18/2020	On Monday, Wang Yanyi, director of the research center, denied allegations that animals used in lab experiments were resold at Huanan Seafood Market, which Chinese authorities have said is ground zero for COVID-19. The institute had previously denied the outbreak began among lab technicians, including a woman identified as Huang Yanling. Huang was rumored to be "patient zero" on Chinese social media. Wang's statement came after messages on Chinese social media claimed the director had been "frequently" reselling lab animals to Huanan market vendors. Chen Quanjiao was the named author of the social media messages, and the posts included photos of Chen, according to NTD Television and other Chinese dissident news services. Chen is a researcher at the lab. On Tuesday she made a public statement claiming her identity had been stolen. Chen may have been detained, according to Chinese-language news service Sound of Hope. Social media posts about the institute were scrubbed by Tuesday. Wang Gaofei, chief executive of social media platform Weibo, condemned the posts as "fake news" and said the messages originated from an overseas IP address, according to multiple press reports.	U	UPI	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2020/02/18/WHO-confirms-experts-presence-at-coronavirus-epicenter-in-China/8271582041808/
2/19/2020	(SBU) Domestic news outlets on February 19 also circulated a quote by World Health Organization (WHO) Health Emergencies Program Executive Director Dr. Michael Ryan on China's "correct, strategic, and tactical approach" to the COVID-19 response.	U/SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 169

<p>2/19/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) New Coronavirus Guidelines Released, Case Definition Changed Again. The PRC National Health Commission (NHC) and National Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine February 19 released the 6th Edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia from Novel Coronavirus (Trial Version). Under the updated guidelines, Hubei province will no longer include clinically diagnosed cases in its confirmed case count and will only include lab-confirmed cases, consistent with other provinces (figure 1). The Hubei Provincial Health Commission announced February 13 that it had amended case definitions for COVID-19 to include the new clinically diagnosed category which did not require lab-confirmation but did require clinical characteristics and radiographic evidence of pneumonia. As a result, the total number of confirmed cases reported from Hubei province initially increased significantly, with 14,840 new cases (of which 13,332 were clinically diagnosed and 1508 were laboratory confirmed) on February 13. The inclusion of clinically diagnosed cases for Hubei followed the guidelines set forth in the 5th Edition of the Diagnosis and Treatment Scheme for Pneumonia from Novel Coronavirus (Trial Version) issued February 5. The NHC said at the time that it had changed the case definition for Hubei to allow more patients to receive earlier treatment, as there was a lag in lab-tested confirmation. The NHC did not state in the new 6th Edition guidelines why they had changed the confirmed case definition for Hubei back to only including lab-confirmed cases. According to Professor Feng Zhanchun, of the School of Medicine and Health Management of Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, reasons for the change included considerations such as chest imaging alone not being the standard for diagnosis and limited availability of testing kits and testing capabilities in Hubei province [NOTE: It is unclear if he is speaking in a capacity as someone who had a role in the changing of these guidelines or if this is related to the official reason for the change].</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 340</p>
<p>2/19/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The WHO expert team began its field inspections on February 17. (Note: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed publicly and for the first time on February 17 that U.S. experts would participate on the WHO-China joint mission. The WHO expert group-with two U.S. Health and Human Services (HHS) experts-continued their joint mission February 19. The mission is divided into two teams: one in Shenzhen for three days and the other in Chengdu. The teams will meet up again in Guangzhou February 20 and conclude the mission on February 23. Embassy Beijing HHS reported that the WHO mission chose to not travel to Hubei province due to quarantine concerns for the experts when returning to their home countries. End Note.)</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 169</p>

2/19/2020	(SBU) Wuhan Making Detailed Reports of Disease: A local contact in Wuhan provided a picture of a detailed analysis of COVID-19 cases for a housing development of Wuhan called Golden Harbor (attached). The document showed detailed record keeping of how many cases are in each part of the housing development as of February 19th. It tracks confirmed cases, cases under observation, and possible cases as well as the number of people who have recovered and died. Several Consulate Wuhan families lived in Golden Harbor before the ordered departure.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 366
2/19/2020	Beijing revokes press credentials of three Wall Street Journal reporters who had widely covered the outbreak, including one that was reporting from Wuhan.	U	WST	"China Expels Three Wall Street Journal Reporters," Wall Street Journal.
2/19/2020	China's daily number of newly recovered novel coronavirus patients surpassed that of newly confirmed infections for the first time.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/19/2020	President Xi called for great attention to the protection and care for medical workers to make sure they are healthy and stay focused on winning the battle against the outbreak.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

<p>2/20/2020</p>	<p>(U) Wuhan Hospital Director Says Recovered Patients Can Still Be Infectious: In a February 20 interview, the Director of the Department of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine at Wuhans Tongji Hospital said that some recovered patients still had traces of the virus after discharge, similar to findings in Canada. Director Zhao Jianping said Wuhan did not have the capacity to keep the recovered patients in a hospital due to limited resources, despite the very dangerous situation and risk they would infect others. Zhao said the high mortality rate in Wuhan is due to the overwhelming number of patients and relatively insufficient medical resources. He said suspected cases in Wuhan previously were not admitted to hospitals and became a source of infection and transmission. He noted 80 percent of patients have mild symptoms and can be cured through general treatment, but that around 20 percent become severe or critical cases. Zhao said COVID-19 generally worsens within 7-10 days of onset. He said that since the January 23 quarantining of Wuhan and raised protection levels, health care workers (HCW) continued to acquire infections, but that 70 to 80 percent of the HCW cases were due to their own family clusters. Zhao also noted that timing of the use of hormones in treatment is important, and early use of hormones can cause accelerated virus replication. Zhao emphasized that while there is currently a downward trend in reported confirmed cases in Hubei, We cant relax ((link<http://www.infzm.com/contents/177141>, in Chinese).</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 360</p>
<p>2/20/2020</p>	<p>At a meeting with ASEAN foreign ministers, PRC Foreign Minister Wang Yi pressures countries to ease travel restrictions, saying: "In light of the conditions on the ground, countries need to resume people-to-people ties and cooperation."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>SCMP</p>	<p>Dewey Sim, "Coronavirus: China's top diplomat Wang Yi urges world to resume links with Beijing, says it's taken 'forceful action,'" South China Morning</p>

2/20/2020	<p>Non peer-reviewed study by ZHANG Zhigang, ZHANG Tao, and WU Qunfun from the State key Laboratory for Conservation and Utilization of Bio-Resources in Yunnan, School of Life Sciences, published paper identifying illegally imported pangolins as potential source of COVID 19. "Based on published metagenomic data, this study provides the first report on a potential closely related kin (Pangolin-CoV) of 2019-nCoV, which was discovered from dead Malayan Pangolins after extensive rescue efforts. Aside from RaTG13, the Pangolin-CoV is the most closely related to 2019-nCoV. Due to original sample unavailable, we did not perform further experiments to confirm our findings, including PCR validation, serological detection, and even the isolation of virus particle etc. However, on 7 February, researchers from the South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou reported pangolin would be the potential candidate host of 2019-nCoV for isolating a virus 99% similar to 2019-nCoV in genome (Data unpublished). Our discovered Pangolin-CoV genome showed 91.02% nt identity with 2019-nCoV, implying Pangolin-CoV could be different from that unpublished. Whether pangolin species is a good candidate for 2019-nCoV still need to be further investigated. Considering the wide spread of SARSr-CoV in their natural reservoirs, our findings would be meaningful to find novel intermediate hosts of 2019-nCoV for blocking interspecies transmission."</p>	U	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory BioRxiv	https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.02.19.950253v1.full
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<p>2/21/2020</p>	<p>(U) Experts Perplexed by Case Definition Changes and the Perfectness of Recent Trends: Experts responded to the multiple changes in NHC case definitions over the past week with a mixture of confusion and suspicion. Every time you change the case definition, that then means you have a reset in terms of what you're actually looking at, noted Michael Osterholm, director of Minnesota's Center for Infection Diseases Research and Policy in an interview with STAT, a health news site (link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.statnews.com%2F2020%2F02%2F20%2Fexperts-say-confusion-over-coronavirus-case-count-in-china-is-muddying-picture-of-spread%2F&data=02%7C01%7CHendonAJ%40state.gov%7Cd1c543a9ffad4cbd423608d7b698aa91%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637178639116096736&sdata=%2F5NsvnrOtNCaM0sB3UXB2ATilftilwWyrubMUz3H4jE%3D&reserved=0>). I think between the inability to determine the actual number of people infected and how cases are now being called a case means at best you can get trend data, possibly, but not more than that. A coronavirus expert from the University of North Carolina said he was very suspicious and that a lot more cases probably existed than have been reported. Others have raised questions about the perfectness of recent trends in the number of reported deaths and case mortality rates. A working paper published by an astrophysicist at the Nordic Institute for Theoretical Physics in Stockholm on February 10 found that the data on fatalities and case mortality rate in China since January 20 fit a mathematical formula nearly perfectly (link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Farxiv.org%2Fabs%2F2002.03638v2&data=02%7C01%7CHendonAJ%40state.gov%7Cd1c543a9ffad4cbd423608d7b698aa91%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637178639116106691&sdata=68sTufllL6cJLgmLXLkWt2YzfrNn5MtXcUCLpbgb4k%3D&reserved=0>). The author called the findings surprising and noted that they did not fit any of the epidemiological models to date for how COVID-19 would progress.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 360</p>
<p>2/21/2020</p>	<p>President Xi chaired a leadership meeting on the prevention and control of the novel coronavirus disease and the coordination between the epidemic control and economic and social development.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>

2/23/2020	<p>(SBU) U.S. WHO Mission Members Impressed by Level of Access to Information: The two U.S. members of the WHO-led expert mission told Embassy Beijing HHS February 23 that they felt the overall mission was a success and remarked that they were impressed by the level of access to information during their visits. The mission traveled to Beijing, Sichuan, Guangdong, and Wuhan [Note: the U.S. experts did not participate in the Wuhan visit. End note.]. The mission will conclude February 25. It is expected a report will be issued quickly after the experts return to their home countries, and that it will highlight PRC accomplishments in combatting the virus. WHO and the National Health Commission (NHC) will hold a joint press conference late February 24.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 366
2/23/2020	<p>Xi Jinping delivers speech to PRC officials calling virus "a crisis for us and also a major test." He stresses "social stability" and states that "the effectiveness of the prevention and control work has once again demonstrated the significant advantages of the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics."</p>	U	South China Morning Post	William Zheng, "Coronavirus is China's fastest- spreading public health crisis, President Xi Jinping says," South China Morning Post,
2/24/2020	<p>(SBU) The WHO team's report is expected soon after the experts return to their home countries. The report will likely address gaps and recommend areas for improved coordination, including prioritization of the PRC's research agenda to focus on clinical trials with the most potential international coordination on clinical trials, and identification of animal-to-human transmission (Note: the WHO mission did not focus in depth on the animal source. End note.)</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380
2/24/2020	<p>(SBU) As the domestic epidemic situation in China improved, PRC public health officials continued to downplay the risk of transmission from asymptomatic cases and focused their attention on reducing foreign imported cases. During a March 24 press conference, Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (China CDC) Chief Epidemiologist Wu Zunyou flatly rejected a possible resurgence of COVID-19, elaborating that PRC contact tracing already identified all asymptomatic patients.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 614

2/24/2020	<p>(U) Acknowledging concerns over changes in case-definitions and "changing numbers" Aylward nevertheless said the WHO-led team is confident that the number of new cases is dropping, based on other observations, such as increased hospital bed availability and fewer fever clinic attendees. Aylward noted that more people in Wuhan are being discharged from than admitted to hospitals, allowing the health system capacity to admit and care for all patients - a first since the outbreak began. The team attributed the drop in cases to the aggressive use of non-pharmaceutical interventions and China's "whole of country" approach.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380
2/24/2020	<p>(U) During a two-hour joint press conference February 24, WHO team leader, Dr. Bruce Aylward, and China NHC team leader, Liang Wannian, discussed the joint mission's findings after visiting Beijing, Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Wuhan. The experts' visit to Wuhan included Tongji Hospital's Guanggu branch, Wuhan's temporary hospital at the city's sports center, and Hubei province's CDC.</p> <p>3. (U) The mission's findings show that the epidemic peaked in China between January 23 and February 2 and has since declined. The case-fatality rate is 2-4 percent in Wuhan and 0.7 percent outside of Wuhan. Mild cases recover in approximately two weeks, while severe or critical cases require up to three to six weeks to recover. The team's findings in Guangdong and Sichuan show 78-85 percent of cases occurred in families.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380

2/24/2020	(U) Liang said that there are no scientific findings that the virus has mutated. However, he noted that its transmission capability has increased and caused sustained human-to-human infection. Liang said the virus primarily transmits via respiratory droplets, and that fecal-oral transmission needs further study. He noted that while possible, COVID-19 airborne transmission is not the primary mode of transmission in China (respiratory droplets are too heavy to remain suspended in air). As COVID-19 is a new pathogen, Liang noted, people of all ages lack immunity to it and are generally susceptible to the virus. Liang said more than 3,000 health care workers (HCW) had been infected in China with 10 deaths. Liang attributed the HCW infections due to the lack of protective equipment and fatigue. Liang also noted that the animal host had not been confirmed, stating "a bat could be the host, but also a pangolin."	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380
2/24/2020	(U) Nationwide Cases: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 508 new lab-confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 24 as of 24:00, with only nine new confirmed cases outside Hubei, as the total number of confirmed cases to date rose to 77,658 (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdtd/202002/67e6c59a84bd4f07b6ca4a4c5ffabb79.shtm >). Another 71 deaths were reported on February 24, bringing total deaths to date in Mainland China to 2,663. A total of 27,323 patients have been treated and discharged from the hospital, with 47,672 cases still presently being treated. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 2,824, a decline of nearly 60 percent compared to the previous week, as the number of close contacts under medical observation fell to 87,902.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380
2/24/2020	(U) PRC Advises Chinese Tourists Against U.S. Travel: PRC Ministry of Culture and Tourism on February 24 advised Chinese tourists that they may face "unfair treatment" in the United States and "excessive epidemic prevention measures," in addition to standing notices on the U.S. "security situation."	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 380
2/24/2020	China's top legislature adopted a decision on thoroughly banning the illegal trading of wildlife and eliminating the consumption of wild animals to safeguard people's lives and health.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

2/26/2020	<p>(U) Nationwide Cases: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 433 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on February 26 as of 24:00, with 24 new confirmed cases outside Hubei (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdt/202002/369fb309eded45abaf10645a9c8ceb40.shtml>). The total number of confirmed cases to date rose to 78,497. Another 29 deaths were reported on February 26-the lowest number of new deaths since January 28-bringing total reported deaths in Mainland China to 2,744. A total of 32,495 patients have been treated and discharged from the hospital, with 43,258 cases currently under treatment. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 2,019, with 508 new suspected cases reported on February 26. The number of close contacts under medical observation fell to 71,572.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 398
2/26/2020	<p>(U) WHO Mission Brief: The WHO China Office provided a tele-briefing February 26 on COVID-19, including an overview of the recent WHO-China Technical Team field visit, to approximately 15 participants from the international community in China. The high-level report on the field visit offered first-hand reporting by two WHO staff who participated in the visit, but little new data beyond the reports given by team leader Bruce Aylward February 25. Questions were fielded about research on vaccines and treatments, epidemiologic questions, and data reporting. No update was provided about the timing of release of the final report.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 390
2/26/2020	<p>Citizen journalist Li Zehua, who quit his job at state broadcaster CCTV to report independently from Wuhan, is detained and disappears. With security officers at his door, Li records a video testament to free speech, truth, and the memory of the Tiananmen movement.</p>	U	The Guardian	"Opening the Door," China Media Project, February 28, 2020. See also Lily Kuo, "'They're chasing me:' The journalist who wouldn't stay

2/26/2020	President Xi chaired a leadership meeting on COVID-19 control and made donation.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/27/2020	<p>(SBU) Beijing CDC Says Imported COVID-19 Cases Won't Count Toward Capital's Numbers: The Beijing municipal CDC said February 27 that confirmed COVID-19 patients who develop fevers before arriving to the city will be considered a confirmed case at the patient's residential address, and not in Beijing. [Comment: This calculation could result in underreporting of the true case numbers in Beijing, given the significant numbers of those transiting the city and workers arriving back after delayed returns following Lunar New Year. The policy could create doubt that case numbers are free of political influence, particularly given President Xi's "spare no effort" order to ensure the "security and stability of the capital city". It will be important to monitor how and if those cases are reported by the patients' home provincial health authorities. End Comment.]</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 398
2/27/2020	<p>(U) Open Letter from Nurses in Wuhan Calling for International Medical Assistance Retracted: The prominent medical journal The Lancet published and later retracted for unknown reasons an open letter by two nurses in Wuhan describing the "difficult and extreme" conditions in the city. The nurses noted the "severe shortage of protective equipment" as well as the physical exhaustion and psychological suffering faced by healthcare workers in Wuhan. They ended their letter with a plea to the international medical community: "We are asking nurses and medical staff from countries around the world to come to China now, to help us in this battle"</p> <p>(link<https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(20)30065-6/fulltext#%20>).</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 398

2/27/2020	<p>(U) Medical Expert "Unsure" that SARS-CoV-2 Virus Originated in China: Prominent medical expert Zhong Nanshan expressed doubts as to the origin of the virus at a February 27 press briefing, saying, "While the epidemic began in China, the source was not necessarily from China" (link<http://www.bjnews.com.cn/feature/2020/02/27/695781.html>). Dr. Zhong's remarks fed an emerging narrative in the Chinese press that the SARS-CoV-2 virus may have originated from overseas and was imported into Wuhan, as evidenced in recent reporting by Global Times (link<https://tech.huanqiu.com/article/3xAkjSDXodF>) and STCN (link<http://news.stcn.com/2020/0223/15655718.shtml>).</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 398
2/27/2020	<p>President Xi held talks with Mongolian President Khaltmaa Battulga at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. The Mongolian president said it will send additional 30,000 sheep apart from the previous donations.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) However, Post has identified shortcomings in the Joint Mission report which hinder its effectiveness as an intended guide for global COVID-19 responses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Failure to Acknowledge Limitations: The report does not meaningfully acknowledge limitations in the interpretation of their findings resulting from the short duration and scope of the joint mission. Such information would help a reader to be aware of issues to consider when interpreting the report's findings. * Given the mission had only one week to thoroughly assess an epidemic situation throughout a country the size of China, greater detail on why the Joint Mission believed the information it obtained warranted such conclusive statements would be useful. * No Follow-on Plan: The report does not describe a path forward for how to address lingering knowledge gaps. * Limited Data Quality and Case Definition Assessment: The report does not include a critical assessment of the data provided, such as an analysis of the unexplained February 1 peak on the epicurve. These gaps could have been addressed in a more thorough methods section that described what data were collected and how the data were assessed. * The report lacks discussion of the PRC's rationale for case definitions, which changed throughout the outbreak. There was also no discussion of how China was finding cases and whether it was applying different case definitions in different locations. * The report does not include an assessment of laboratory data. Despite WHO guidelines for COVID-19 asking for weekly aggregate "Total number of lab tests conducted" and "Total number of tests that are positive for COVID-19," the report did not include this information. Additionally, the report lacks a description of the laboratory testing used and the clinical performance of the test kits. * Missing Lessons Learned on Control Measures, Preparedness: There is a lack of detail on why the PRC chose and implemented specific control measures and how authorities decided to apply the control strategy that they used. This misses an opportunity to provide lessons learned to help guide other countries in their outbreak preparations and response. The report does not mention whether authorities undertook any actions that failed. * The report makes sweeping statements about the preparedness situation of other countries without having adequately assessed those. * Limited Surveillance, Contact Tracing, and Case Fatality Info: Greater details on differences in surveillance methods in different regions if any, as well as a detailed explanation of how the PRC chose methods for and conducted contact tracing would be beneficial for other countries as they address growing case counts. * The report misses an opportunity to provide information on how China conducted contact tracing so effectively. Data on how many people were involved in contact tracing, how they were trained, what tools were used for the task, what changes occurred over time, and how data sharing and patient privacy were handled were not described. * The report does not explain or attempt to explain differences in case fatality by geography. It is unclear if the different fatality rates that have been reported are a result of differences in how cases were defined, standards for reporting deaths, or a result of different standards of care in an overburdened health system. * Short on HCW Infection Specifics: More information on infected HCW, particularly in Hubei would have been helpful. The report states that there were 2,055 COVID-19 cases among HCWs from 476 hospitals across China and that 88 percent of the infected HCW were from Hubei. Although the report notes that most infections among HCW occurred early in the outbreak in 	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>
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<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Report Becomes Part of Propaganda Machine (SBU) The report praises the PRC response and state-run media cited the report as WHO experts hailed China's unprecedented responses to COVID-19 and acknowledged China's role in protecting the international community and buying time for other countries to prepare for the outbreak (Ref C) (SBU) PRC propaganda authorities widely amplified the report and its glowing assessment of PRC response - with many media outlets claiming the report also demonstrated the effectiveness of the PRC response and the "significant advantages of the CPC's leadership and the socialist system with Chinese characteristics."</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>
<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The Report of the WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) released February 28 presented a highly positive assessment of the actions taken by the PRC in its COVID-19 response. The report concluded that the PRC's containment measures changed the course of the outbreak while "buying the world time." Although the report provided the most comprehensive collection of information and data to-date on the PRC's COVID-19 response, Post assesses the report lacked a description of the way the review was conducted, had several omissions, failed to acknowledge key limitations of the eight-day mission, and did not provide critical evaluation of the PRC's actions. The lack of a follow-on plan for addressing knowledge gaps, analysis of the PRC's evolving case definitions, discussion of the unique circumstances in China that allowed implementation of the most severe measures, along with no assessment of the suppression of whistleblowers or the "human costs" of the response, limits the report's ability to provide a complete assessment of China's response and lessons learned to inform efforts for responding to COVID-19 domestically and internationally. PRC authorities and state-run media have used the report to widely characterize WHO praise and support of the Chinese response. Embassy Beijing will continue to seek information from the WHO China Office, the National Health Commission (NHC), the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), and other health contacts to address these topics, and Post will report substantive information in subsequent cables. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>

<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The report does not address limitations placed on the Joint Mission by the PRC during terms of reference negotiation. The report also does not address the nearly one-month delay between the first discussion of the joint mission on January 23-between PRC National Health Commission (NHC) Minister Ma and WHO Director General Tedros-and the February 16 arrival of the WHO team as the PRC negotiated the terms of reference and composition of the mission members. [Note: It would not be expected for this information to be included in the report. End note.]</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>
<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The report notably fails to critically address PRC efforts to control information and silence whistleblowers during the outbreak, particularly in the early stages when public awareness was crucial. The deaths of frontline medical responders, including whistleblower Dr. Li Wenliang, and the reaction to hospital management and local official efforts to silence a group of doctors who first noticed and discussed the outbreak in December has captured online discussion.</p> <p>(SBU) As reported in the Mission's January 7 and 10 cables, local medical contacts in Wuhan reported PRC authorities had prohibited them from providing information about the outbreak (Refs A-B). The health contacts said the limits on sharing information went beyond the "normal" government controls. They expressed frustration at the lack of internal communication permitted among the medical community and said they had to rely on international media for information. Separate media reports have confirmed such restrictions.</p> <p>8. (SBU) Embassy Beijing health and aid organization contacts have also expressed strong concerns over PRC authorities' lack of transparency about the "human costs" of the PRC response, including the number of Chinese citizens requiring urgent medical, food, and financial assistance after the Wuhan lockdown.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>

<p>2/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The report provided an enhanced understanding of the PRC's COVID-19 response in the largest and most comprehensive collection of information and data to-date. The major findings described in the report included information about the virus, the outbreak, transmission dynamics, disease progression and severity, China's response, and knowledge gaps. Notable findings from the report included information on whole-genome sequencing analysis of 104 strains the COVID-19 virus isolated from patients in different localities between the end of December 2019 and mid-February 2020, results from post-mortem samples from a patient, a description of the outbreak including epidemic curves with symptom onset dates, demographic characteristics of patients and descriptions of household transmission, contact transmission, and community surveillance in fever clinics and ILI/SARI (influenza like illness and severe acute respiratory infections) surveillance. The report also highlighted transmission dynamics in Wuhan and outside of Wuhan, described special populations such as children and health care workers (HCW), and provided information about illness severity and China's response, which are divided into three stages. The report concluded that "China has rolled out perhaps the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history." [Note: U.S. experts assigned to the mission told Embassy Beijing CDC after the mission concluded, but prior to the publication of the report, that they were impressed by the amount of data that was presented to them and felt that the overall Joint Mission had achieved its stated objectives. End Note]. The report appropriately mentioned the high economic cost of the control measures and noted the costs will not be sustainable indefinitely. The report also appropriately acknowledged the risk that there may be a rise in cases as the control measures are relaxed and the population is able to return to work and engage in social interaction.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 494</p>
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2/28/2020	<p>(U) The February 16 to 24 WHO-China Joint Mission traveled to Beijing, Shenzhen, Chengdu, Guangzhou, and Wuhan. The team was comprised of 12 Chinese experts and 13 international experts, including two from the United States. The stated goal of the Joint Mission "was to rapidly inform national (China) and international planning on next steps in the response to the ongoing outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and on next steps in readiness and preparedness for geographic areas not yet affected. The major objectives of the Joint Mission were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * To enhance understanding of the evolving COVID-19 outbreak in China and the nature and impact of ongoing containment measures; * To share knowledge on COVID-19 response and preparedness measures being implemented in countries affected by or at risk of importations of COVID-19; * To generate recommendations for adjusting COVID-19 containment and response measures in China and internationally; and * To establish priorities for a collaborative programme of work, research and development to address critical gaps in knowledge and response and readiness tools and activities." 	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 494
2/28/2020	<p>The WHO-China Joint Mission on Coronavirus Disease 2019 publishes its report after a "huge back and forth" between PRC and non-PRC officials over wording. PRC officials refused to call the virus "dangerous" or include reference to a possible "second wave" of infections (preferring "resurgence" instead).</p>	U	Financial Times	<p>"Taiwan says WHO failed to act on coronavirus transmission warning," Financial Times, March 19, 2020.</p>
2/29/2020	<p>Chinese pathologists concluded autopsies on 11 patients who died from the disease, which have shown various degrees of pulmonary mutations.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>

2/29/2020	The WHO-China Joint Mission released a report about its recent nine-day field study trip on COVID-19 in Beijing and provinces of Guangdong, Sichuan, and Hubei, saying China provides vital lessons of COVID-19 containment for a global response.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
2/29/2020	WHO announces that it "continues to advise against the application of travel or trade restrictions to countries experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks."	U	WHO	"Updated WHO recommendations for international traffic in relation to COVID-19 outbreak," WHO, February 29, 2020.
3/1/2020	(U) Customs Announces Measures to Prevent Imported COVID-19: All passengers arriving in China must file a personal health report and have their body temperature taken at customs, officials said Sunday at a press conference by the General Administration of Customs. All confirmed cases, suspected cases, people with symptoms or having close contact with COVID-19 patients would be transferred, quarantined, or undergo medical observation. Before international flights arrive in China, National Immigration Administration officials will have already screened travelers from certain countries and regions via big data analysis, the immigration authority said on Sunday (Global Times< https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.globaltimes.cn%2Fcontent%2F1181238.shtml&data=02%7C01%7CSallCJ%40state.gov%7Cbaec6b8c45114e09cd4508d7be6a17ce%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637187235180392846&sdata=3c7Y3h69x8eP88NydHyLJuAyoLTRVh4EIPbiFRys2U%3D&reserved=0 >).	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 416

<p>3/1/2020</p>	<p>(U) Lowest Daily Rise in Nationwide Cases Since Wuhan Went on Lockdown: Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) reported 202 new confirmed cases and 141 new suspected cases in Mainland China on March 1 as of 24:00, with six new confirmed cases outside Hubei Province and nine new cases outside Wuhan City (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdt/202003/5819f3e13ff6413ba05fdb45b55b66ba.shtm>). [Note: This is the smallest daily increase in confirmed cases reported by NHC since January 22, a day before officials in Wuhan began sealing off the city. End note.] The total number of confirmed cases rose to 80,026. Another 42 deaths reported on March 1 (all in Hubei), bringing total reported deaths to 2,912. With an additional 2,837 patients discharged from the hospital, about 56 percent of patients confirmed with COVID-19 have now recovered and been released. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 527, with 141 new suspected cases reported on March 1. The number of close contacts under medical observation, meanwhile, fell to 46,219. Chen Yixin, Deputy Director of the central government outbreak team dispatched to Hubei, said March 1 that the epidemic in Wuhan is effectively contained as the city enters a decisive stage (link<https://gcc01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2F3w.huanqiu.com%2Fa%2F42639d%2F9CaKrnKpFWX%3Fagt%3D20&data=02%7C01%7CHendonAJ%40state.gov%7Ca59666732ced44c5dbf808d7be69082f%7C66cf50745afe48d1a691a12b2121f44b%7C0%7C0%7C637187230621741095&sdata=NoLDIzpKRF4KdyV3ql3tpLDKuiovnqVB6xEoroY7J6U%3D&reserved=0>). [Comment: While the overall reported case numbers continue to fall, the PRCs decision to not include lab-confirmed asymptomatic cases in confirmed case counts continues to raise concerns that the true case numbers are potentially being underreported, particularly given that studies have shown asymptomatic patients can be contagious. Provincial health authorities have not reported asymptomatic cases as a separate tally in their daily case counts. It is unclear how such cases are being reported. End Comment.]</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 416</p>
<p>3/1/2020</p>	<p>Chinese doctors completed a double-lung transplant surgery on a COVID-19 patient.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>PRC National Health Commission</p>	<p>http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm</p>

3/1/2020	Wuhan closed a gymnasium-turned temporary hospital, for the first time in the city, as the number of patients dropped.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/2/2020	China's daily output of face masks reached 116 million, 12 times the figure on Feb 1, as production expansion moved into top gear.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/3/2020	(U) Nationwide Cases: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 119 new confirmed cases and 143 new suspected cases in Mainland China on March 3 as of 24:00. Twenty-eight of China's 31 provincial-level territories reported zero new cases on March 3, with only four new confirmed cases and 91 new suspected cases outside Hubei Province (link<http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkd/202003/c588ee20113b4136b27f2a07faa7075b.shtml>). [Note: According to reports by the provincial health commissions, two of the four new confirmed cases on March 3 were among travelers returning to China from Italy and Iran. End note.] The total number of confirmed cases reported to date stood at 80,270. Another 38 deaths reported on March 3 (37 of which occurred in Hubei), bringing total reported deaths to 2,981. With an additional 2,652 patients discharged from the hospital, about 62 percent of patients confirmed with COVID-19 have now recovered and been released. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 520 (of which 340 were in Hubei), while the number of close contacts under medical observation fell to 36,432.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 438
3/3/2020	WHO chief Tedros plays down the risk of asymptomatic silent carriers, citing official PRC data: "COVID-19 does not transmit as efficiently as influenza, from the data we have so far. With influenza, people who are infected but not yet sick are major drivers of transmission, which does not appear to be the case for COVID-19. Evidence from China is that only 1% of reported cases do not have symptoms, and most of those cases develop symptoms within two days." Later reports cited classified PRC data showing up to 33% of cases were asymptomatic (see March 22).	U	WHO, March 3	"WHO Director General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 3 March 2020," WHO, March 3, 2020.

3/4/2020	(U) More than Half of Reported Wuhan Cases-and Nearly Two-Thirds of Cases Nationwide-Treated and Discharged: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 139 new confirmed cases and 143 new suspected cases in Mainland China on March 4 as of 24:00, with only five new confirmed cases and 72 new suspected cases outside Hubei Province (link< http://www.nhc.gov.cn/xcs/yqfkdtd/202003/6e02433f7786402d8ea162fb5b80b5a0.shtml >). The total number of confirmed cases reported to date stood at 80,409. Another 31 deaths were reported on March 4 (all in Hubei), and total reported deaths reached 3,012. With an additional 2,189 patients discharged from the hospital, about 65 percent of patients confirmed with COVID-19 have now recovered and been released, including about 53 percent of patients in Wuhan. The number of current suspected cases dropped to 522 (with 315 in Hubei). The number of close contacts under medical observation, meanwhile, fell to 32,870.	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 448
3/4/2020	China has added the antibody diagnosis method for COVID-19 and its relevant criteria in the country's latest diagnosis and treatment scheme, which also includes warning against transmission via aerosol or contact due to environmental pollution caused by the excrement and urine of patients.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/4/2020	Chinese health authority unveiled the latest version of the national diagnosis and treatment plan for COVID-19 which includes the results of autopsies of two victims and pathological observation based on needle biopsies.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/5/2020	A team of Chinese doctors successfully 3D-printed the model of the nidus of a patient infected with the coronavirus.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/5/2020	Chinese doctors proved for the first time that the novel coronavirus can cause damage to patients' central nervous system.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/5/2020	The daily count of newly cured and discharged cases in Hubei exceeded the number of newly confirmed cases for 15 consecutive days since Feb 19.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

3/5/2020	The People's Bank of China said that more than 7 million payment transactions related to the prevention and control of the epidemic had been handled through its payment and clearing system, involving an aggregate amount of 6 trillion yuan as of March 2.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/6/2020	(U) New Cases Outside Wuhan Almost All from Overseas: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 183 new confirmed cases in Mainland China between 0:00 on March 6 and 23:59 on March 8, of which 151 were in Wuhan (link< http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/news/TrackingtheEpidemic.htm#NHCMar09 >). "Imported cases" of persons traveling to China from other countries accounted for another 31 cases (22 of which were reported in Gansu Province). In other words, NHC reported only one new confirmed case in Mainland China outside Wuhan over the weekend of a person who PRC health authorities said was infected in China; all others were believed to have been infected overseas before traveling to China. By 23:59 on March 8, the share of COVID-19 patients in Mainland China who had been treated and discharged from the hospital increased to about 73 percent of total lab-confirmed cases reported to date. Reported deaths, meanwhile, rose to 3,119, with 77 new deaths reported between March 6 and March 8 (of which 76 occurred in Hubei Province).	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 448
3/6/2020	China has continued to optimize the utilization of drugs and therapies in the treatment of the disease to block the conversion of mild cases to severe cases and save critically ill patients.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/6/2020	The number of newly COVID-19 cases in China dropped to double digits for the first time since Jan 20.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

3/6/2020	Wuhan residents shout from windows "It's all lies!" as senior official Sun Chunlan visits. After this goes viral on Chinese social media, PRC state media doctor and re-distribute the footage to claim that only one person had yelled this.	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-socialmedia/with-cries-of-its-fake-wuhan-citizens-voice-discontent-idUSKBN20T21S
3/7/2020	A rapid testing kit for the COVID-19 antibody with results available in 29 minutes was approved by the National Medical Products Administration.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/7/2020	Wuhan has renovated and built 48 designated hospitals and 16 temporary hospitals, with more than 60,000 beds. No one has contracted the virus among over 40,000 medical workers who were sent to aid Hubei from across China.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/8/2020	China has sent 415 psychological counselors to Central China's Hubei province, the epicenter of the epidemic in China, to offer mental counseling services to patients and medical workers.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/9/2020	China pledged \$20 million donation to the World Health Organization (WHO) to support the global fight, and the construction of public health systems in developing countries.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/9/2020	Most of the more than 50,000 COVID-19 patients in China who have recovered and been discharged from hospital received traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) treatment. TCM has been involved in the treatment of 74,603 confirmed COVID-19 cases nationwide, accounting for 92.5 percent of the total.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

3/10/2020	<p>(SBU) President Xi Jinping paid a much-anticipated visit to Wuhan on March 10, meeting with local officials and first responders. He praised the resilience of citizens in Wuhan and Hubei province and was especially complimentary of "white-cloaked soldiers" - doctors and nurses who had worked to treat the coronavirus outbreak. While urging continued vigilance, Xi also predicted that China would be stronger in the long run, promising to restart economic development as soon as possible. President Xi's visit came just days after Vice Premier Sun Chunlan had generated negative online buzz when Wuhan citizens shouted "it's all fake" from their apartment windows as she passed by. PRC media organs assured that the criticism was leveled at some incompetent local officials, not the central government, and vowed that the people are and will be well-cared for while also promising to hold accountable any officials who did not live up to the PRC high standards of care.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 484
3/10/2020	<p>(U) "Imported" Cases Account for Most New Cases Outside Wuhan: China's National Health Commission (NHC) reported 24 new confirmed cases in Mainland China on March 10, with 13 new cases in Wuhan, 10 "imported" cases of persons infected in other countries, and one local case in Heilongjiang (link<http://weekly.chinacdc.cn/news/TrackingtheEpidemic.htm#NHCMar09>). By 23:59 on March 10, the share of COVID-19 patients in Mainland China who had been treated and discharged from the hospital increased to about 76 percent of total lab-confirmed cases reported to date. Five provincial-level territories plus Macao now claim to be clear of COVID-19 cases, according to China Daily (link<http://www.ecns.cn/news/2020-03-10/detail-ifzuhesu4125547.shtml>), including Anhui, Fujian, Qinghai, Tibet, and Xinjiang. Reported deaths in Mainland China stood at 3,158 by the end of March 10, with 22 new deaths in Hubei. Outside of Wuhan, there are only six current suspected COVID-19 cases in the entire country.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 484
3/10/2020	<p>Over 74 million members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) voluntarily made donations totaling 7.68 billion yuan (about \$1.1 billion) for the COVID-19 prevention and control.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

3/10/2020	President Xi Jinping inspected Wuhan, pledging a continuous fight toward victory as prevention and control efforts have "turned the tide".	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/10/2020	Wuhan closed all of its 16 public facility-turned temporary hospitals amid a continuous drop of patients in the city.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/11/2020	Researchers at the University of Southampton (UK) estimate that had Beijing owned up to the coronavirus outbreak and responded with significant measures just one week before it did, 66% of cases could have been avoided, and had Beijing responded three weeks sooner, 95% could have been avoided.	U	University of Southampton	Shengjie Lai, "Early and Combined Interventions Crucial in Talking Covid-19 Spread in China," University of Southampton, March 11, 2020.
3/11/2020	WHO declares the novel coronavirus a "pandemic," after the official worldwide case count is 118,000 people in 114 countries.	U	WSJ	Lanhee Chen, "Lost in Beijing: The Story of the WHO," The Wall Street Journal, April 8, 2020.

<p>3/12/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) During a two-hour briefing on March 12, officials from Chinas National Health Commission and the World Health Organization asserted China is entering a new phase in its battle against the COVID-19 outbreak. Chinese authorities are turning their attention to risk management in order to avoid a second wave of infections, including by introducing more stringent arrival procedures and quarantine requirements for travelers from overseas to prevent imported cases of the coronavirus. As the government attempts to get the economy back on track, local cadres continue to attempt to balance their conflicting mandates of controlling the spread of the virus while also simultaneously reopening businesses. Supply chain challenges add a further obstacle to returning to business as usual. The Chinese public is anxious for a return to normalcy after an extended lockdown period, with growing numbers taking advantage of warmer weather to head outdoors for weekend recreation in many places. That said, in major cities, foot traffic at most restaurants and malls remains well below capacity and customers are still required to wear masks and have their temperatures taken on entry.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 510</p>
<p>3/12/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The attention to overseas passengers also supports PRC propaganda shifting any blame on a possible second wave outbreak to foreigners (Ref G). PRC authorities continue to use a spectrum of narrative approaches to craft news coverage, commentary, and descriptions of Chinas response to COVID-19. Moreover, Chinese state media has published a series of articles in recent days regarding the countrys responsible leadership in donating masks and other protective equipment to Italy, Korea, and other countries. Recently, negative stories aimed at shifting blame outside of China, including claims that the virus was introduced into China by the US, comprises a new strategy as China seeks to rebrand itself as a global leader in the fight against COVID-19, rather the outbreaks epicenter (Ref H).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 510</p>

<p>3/12/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The rate of new reported cases in Mainland China has slowed to a trickle, as 80 percent of prefectures and cities representing about 81 percent of the countrys population have gone at least 14 consecutive days without reporting a new case (Ref A). By March 12, the current prevalence of COVID-19 in China (outside Hubei) had dropped to less than one case per million residents, down from about seven on February 9, as about 74 percent of cities and prefectures were reportedly COVID-19 free, with zero still confirmed cases under treatment. The bulk of new confirmed cases reported outside Hubei during March 7-14 were repatriated so-called imported cases of infected people arriving from other countries, according to Chinas National Health Commission (NHC) (Refs A, B).</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 510</p>
<p>3/12/2020</p>	<p>(U) MFA Spokesperson Suggests U.S. Army May Have Brought Coronavirus to Wuhan: Spokesperson & Deputy Director General, Information Department, Foreign Ministry Zhao Lijian tweeted on March 12 that CDC Director Robert Redfield admitted some Americans who seemingly died from influenza were tested positive for novel in the posthumous diagnosis, during the House Oversight Committee Wednesday. CDC was caught on the spot. When did patient zero begin in US? How many people are infected? What are the names of the hospitals? It might be US army who brought the epidemic to Wuhan. Be transparent! Make public your data! US owe us an explanation!</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 498</p>

3/12/2020	<p>(U) Rapidly Declining Prevalence of Reported COVID-19 Cases...: The rate of new reported cases in Mainland China has slowed to a trickle, as 80 percent of prefectures and cities representing about 81 percent of the countrys population have gone at least 14 consecutive days without reporting a new case (Figure 1). By March 12, the current prevalence of COVID-19 in prefectures and cities outside Hubei had dropped to less than one case per million residents, down from about seven on February 9 (Figure 2), as about 74 percent of cities and prefectures were reportedly COVID-19 free, with zero confirmed cases under treatment. [Note: The number of current cases is total lab-confirmed cases net of deaths and discharged patients. Prevalence is estimated per the 2010 census population. End note.] Although the prevalence of current COVID-19 cases of Hubei Province stood at 252 per million residents as of March 12, it was down by nearly 182 cases per million from February 9, as the rate at which patients in Hubei have been treated and discharged from the hospital has far outpaced the rate of new reported infections.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 498
3/12/2020	<p>Eight newly confirmed cases were reported on the Chinese mainland, the first time for the figure to drop to a single digit.</p>	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/12/2020	<p>ZHAO Lijian tweets article titled: "COVID-19: Further Evidence that the Virus Originated in the U.S." Which was then retweeted by Chinese ambassadors in 12 countries.</p>	U	German Marshall Fund of the United States	https://securingdemocracy.gmfus.org/analyzing-chinas-coronavirus-propaganda-messaging-in-europe/

3/14/2020	Entrepreneur and activist Ren Zhiqiang disappears in Beijing after criticizing Xi Jinping's coronavirus response.109 PRC officials announce a corruption investigation into Ren on April 7.	U	NYT	Javier C. Hernandez, "Chinese Tycoon Who Criticized Xi's Response to Coronavirus Has Vanished," New York Times, March 14, 2020. Javier C. Hernandez, "China Investigates Critic of Xi's Coronavirus Response," New York Times, April 7, 2020.
3/16/2020	Chinese companies have mobilized to aid the anti-coronavirus battle in numerous countries including Italy, the Republic of Korea, Laos, Pakistan and Iran by donating medical supplies.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/17/2020	Experts in a Wuhan hospital held a video conference with their peers in 14 hospitals in the Netherlands, sharing experience of COVID-19 prevention and treatment.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/17/2020	The first batch of medical assistance teams started leaving Hubei province as the epidemic outbreak in the hard-hit province has been subdued. Over 42,000 medical workers from across the country were dispatched to aid Hubei in fighting the epidemic since the virus outbreak.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm

<p>3/17/2020</p>	<p>The Proximal Origin of SARS-CoV-2: "Our comparison of alpha- and betacoronaviruses identifies two notable genomic features of SARS-CoV-2: (i) on the basis of structural studies^{7,8,9} and biochemical experiments^{1,9,10}, SARS-CoV-2 appears to be optimized for binding to the human receptor ACE2; and (ii) the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 has a functional polybasic (furin) cleavage site at the S1–S2 boundary through the insertion of 12 nucleotides⁸, which additionally led to the predicted acquisition of three O-linked glycans around the site." "While the analyses above suggest that SARS-CoV-2 may bind human ACE2 with high affinity, computational analyses predict that the interaction is not ideal⁷ and that the RBD sequence is different from those shown in SARS-CoV to be optimal for receptor binding^{7,11}. Thus, the high-affinity binding of the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein to human ACE2 is most likely the result of natural selection on a human or human-like ACE2 that permits another optimal binding solution to arise. This is strong evidence that SARS-CoV-2 is not the product of purposeful manipulation.".... "It is improbable that SARS-CoV-2 emerged through laboratory manipulation of a related SARS-CoV-like coronavirus. As noted above, the RBD of SARS-CoV-2 is optimized for binding to human ACE2 with an efficient solution different from those previously predicted^{7,11}. Furthermore, if genetic manipulation had been performed, one of the several reverse-genetic systems available for betacoronaviruses would probably have been used¹⁹. However, the genetic data irrefutably show that SARS-CoV-2 is not derived from any previously used virus backbone²⁰. Instead, we propose two scenarios that can plausibly explain the origin of SARS-CoV-2: (i) natural selection in an animal host before zoonotic transfer; and (ii) natural selection in humans following zoonotic transfer. We also discuss whether selection during passage could have given rise to SARS-CoV-2." "Malayan pangolins (<i>Manis javanica</i>) illegally imported into Guangdong province contain coronaviruses similar to SARS-CoV-221. Although the RaTG13 bat virus remains the closest to SARS-CoV-2 across the genome¹, some pangolin coronaviruses exhibit strong similarity to SARS-CoV-2 in the RBD, including all six key RBD residues²¹ (Fig. 1). This clearly shows that the SARS-CoV-2 spike protein optimized for binding to human-like ACE2 is the result of natural selection." "Although the evidence shows that SARS-CoV-2 is not a purposefully manipulated virus, it is currently impossible to prove or disprove the other theories of its origin described here. However, since we observed all notable SARS-CoV-2 features, including the optimized RBD and polybasic cleavage site, in related coronaviruses in nature, we do not believe that any type of laboratory-based scenario is plausible. More scientific data could swing the balance of evidence to favor one hypothesis over another. Obtaining related viral sequences from animal sources would be the most definitive way of revealing viral origins. For example, a future observation of an intermediate or fully formed polybasic cleavage site in a SARS-CoV-2-like virus from animals would lend even further support to the natural-selection hypotheses. It would also be helpful to obtain more genetic and functional data about SARS-CoV-2, including animal studies. The identification of a potential intermediate host of SARS-CoV-2, as well as sequencing of the virus from very early cases, would similarly be highly informative. Irrespective of the exact mechanisms by which SARS-CoV-2 originated via natural selection, the ongoing surveillance of pneumonia in humans and other animals is clearly of utmost importance.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Nature Medicine</p>	<p>https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0820-9</p>
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3/19/2020	CCTV publishes findings from State Supervision Commission investigation into Dr LI Wenliang	U	CCTV	http://m.news.cctv.com/2020/03/19/ARTIreO6nz5wKzeVnNlyBgTM200319.shtml https://archive.vn/EY0eS
3/19/2020	Chinese mainland reported zero increase in domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases for March 18. Wuhan, which was once worst hit by the coronavirus outbreak, reported no newly confirmed cases for the same day.	U	PRC National Health Commission	http://en.nhc.gov.cn/2020-03/20/c_78021.htm
3/22/2020	Experts worldwide call for expanded testing and greater transparency regarding asymptomatic "silent carriers," as evidence mounts from countries such as Iceland that as many as 50% of positive cases may be asymptomatic.	U	Bloomberg	Jason Gale, "Coronavirus Cases Without Symptoms Spur Call for Wider Tests," Bloomberg, March 22, 2020.
3/22/2020	Reports emerge of classified PRC government data showing a far higher rate of asymptomatic illness in China than previously disclosed. Per South China Morning Post, the classified data show some 43,000 people in China tested positive without symptoms by the end of February, representing one-third of cases. But PRC officials excluded these cases from their public count. When epidemiologists from the Chinese CDC published a paper on Feb. 24, they cited only 889 asymptomatic patients out of 44,672 confirmed cases as of Feb. 11, a rate of only 2%.	U	SCMP	Josephine Ma et al., "A third of coronavirus cases may be 'silent carriers,' classified Chinese data suggests," South China Morning Post, March 22, 2020.

3/23/2020	(SBU) Recent studies and case data from other countries have revealed that asymptomatic infections may represent a much higher percentage of total infections than originally thought. PRC officials did not include asymptomatic cases in publicly available reports as they did not meet the case definition designated for confirmed cases. Citing unpublished official documents , however, South China Morning Post reported on March 23 that the PRC had identified more than 40,000 asymptomatic cases in China . Researchers at Huazhong University of Science and Technology estimated that asymptomatic cases could represent 30-60 percent of all COVID-19 infections in China.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 614
3/24/2020	WIV publishes RaTG13 complete genome	U	NCBI	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nucleotide/MN996532.1
3/25/2020	(SBU) The ability of the PRC to properly adhere to international biosafety and biosecurity standards has even greater implications globally as China constructs biosafety facilities for other countries. During the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa, the PRC government provided Sierra Leone a mobile BSL-3 laboratory and subsequently established the BSL-3 Sierra Leone-China Friendship Biological Safety Laboratory (SLE-CHN Biosafety Lab) in 2015. [Note: Chinese media claimed the SLE-CHN Biosafety Lab met WHO biosafety standards, which Post Beijing was unable to verify. End Note]. On March 25, Iraq opened a new PRC-built laboratory in Baghdad as part of China's assistance to Iraq for combatting COVID-19. With the new laboratory, Iraqi Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Health Asaad Mahdi said Iraq could conduct 1,000 COVID-19 tests per day. Africa CDC also welcomed PRC public health assistance in enhancing its laboratory system capacity as COVID-19 struck African countries.	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 365
3/26/2020	China bars entry of all foreigners in attempt to limit virus spread. This measure is harsher than the travel restrictions of other countries that Beijing had criticized just weeks before.	U	Politico	Doug Palmer, "China closes border to foreign travelers," Politico, March 26, 2020.

<p>3/27/2020</p>	<p>Photographs and reports surface of many thousands of urns at Wuhan funeral homes, raising doubts about government claims that the virus caused only about 2,500 deaths in Wuhan and 3,200 in China. Local Wuhan social media users estimate, based on the daily capacity of incinerators, that more than 40,000 may have died there.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Radio Free Asia</p>	<p>"Urns in Wuhan Prompt New Questions of Virus's Toll," Bloomberg News, March 27, 2020. "Estimates Show Wuhan Death Toll Far Higher Than Official Figure," Radio Free Asia, March 27, 2020.</p>
<p>3/28/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The lack of public information on asymptomatic cases has exacerbated the difficulty of detecting and preventing the transmission of COVID-19, especially when contact tracing failed. On March 28, NHC reported a new case in Henan province where an asymptomatic case of COVID-19 transmitted the virus to a friend who unknowingly transmitted the disease to two people. Public health authorities eventually tracked the asymptomatic cases down, but the three individuals already had close contact with 68 other individuals before undergoing quarantine for symptom monitoring. Public health experts have worried that these types of cases would become more frequent as restrictions in Hubei province and the rest of the country eased, creating higher risks for a resurgence of COVID-19 to a susceptible population.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 614</p>

<p>3/31/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) Despite the PRC governments multiple lines of effort to transform China into a respected global science leader (refs A-F), recent policies regarding publication of COVID-19 scientific research appear to be incompatible with international scientific principles of transparency and openness. The Science and Technology Department of Hubei Province, in Wuhan, issued in March the Notice on Strengthening the Management and Control of Research on the Prevention and Control of COVID-19" (). The Notice calls for researchers in Hubei to submit COVID-19-related papers to the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism, a group run by the central governments top administrative authority, the State Council, for review prior to publication. The Notice also reminds researchers to conform to national interests and promote ethical behavior, and emphasizes the importance of lab safety.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 894</p>
<p>3/31/2020</p>	<p>Chinese National Health Commission announces for the first time that it excluded from its national tally people who had the virus but without symptoms, and that as of April 1 it would begin including these in the tally "in order to respond to society's concern in a timely manner."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>WSJ</p>	<p>Chong Koh Ping, "China's Coronavirus Count Excluded Infected People With No Symptoms," The Wall Street Journal, March 31, 2020.</p>

4/1/2020	<p>(U) Since January, China's National Health Commission (NHC) has revised its diagnosis and reporting guidelines for COVID-19 several times but, until now, had not included lab-confirmed but asymptomatic persons as reportable cases. Until April 1, NHC reported only confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases. Under NHC guidelines, patients reported as "suspected" and "confirmed" cases of COVID-19 must show some sign of illness, such as fever, cough, or radiographic pneumonia, usually in combination with evidence of possible exposure, whether through contact with an infected person or travel to an affected area. Per the current guidelines, in addition to the epidemiological and clinical criteria for suspected cases, confirmed cases must also be diagnosed through a respiratory or blood specimen test. [Note: On February 12, NHC had re-defined "confirmed" cases to also include "clinically diagnosed" patients in Hubei Province who exhibited pneumonia-like symptoms on chest scans in the absence of a positive lab test. NHC reversed this decision a week later. End note.] Patients who later develop symptoms are shifted to the category of "confirmed" cases. PRC officials have maintained that the rationale for excluding asymptomatic cases from the case definitions was to ensure resources were directed to patients showing illness. [Note: Directing tests towards ill patients is a sensible approach for case finding especially when laboratory resources are limited. A serosurvey, which is often conducted later in an outbreak, is the best approach for identifying the true burden of asymptomatic cases. End Note] In practice, however, the exclusion of asymptomatic cases from the official reports for COVID-19 in China has resulted in a lack of public information on the presence of such cases, as provincial health authorities had not been required to include such cases in their daily reports until now.</p>	U	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 614
4/3/2020	<p>CCP admits Wuhan law enforcement actions against whistleblower doctor Li Wenliang was "irregular" and "improper" and declared Li a "martyr"</p>	U	Business Insider	https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-china-li-wenliang-whistleblower-doctor-martyr-2020-4

4/3/2020	<p>China on Thursday awarded Li Wenliang, the doctor who sounded an early alarm about the novel coronavirus, the title of "martyr." In December, police in Wuhan made Li admit to lying about the existence of a worrying new virus discovered in the city. Li died on February 7 after contracting the virus. An investigation by the Chinese Communist Party found on March 19 that the actions of law enforcement in Wuhan was "irregular" and "improper." "Martyr" is the highest honor the Communist Party of China can bestow on a citizen killed working to serve the country. The country will honor him with three minutes of silence on Saturday.</p>	U	Business Insider	https://www.businessinsider.com/coronavirus-china-li-wenliang-whistleblower-doctor-martyr-2020-4
4/3/2020	<p>China's Ministry of Science and Technology announces that ongoing clinical research on the coronavirus must be reported to authorities within three days or be halted.</p>	U	The Guardian	<p>Stephanie Kirchgaessner et al, "China clamping down on coronavirus research, deleted pages suggest," The Guardian, April 11, 2020.</p>
4/3/2020	<p>The Guardian reports that "[The Chinese] science and technology ministry said on 3 April that ongoing clinical research on the coronavirus must be reported to authorities within three days or be halted.</p>	U	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/china-clamping-down-on-coronavirus-research-deleted-pages-suggest

4/3/2020	While lifting lockdown restrictions in Wuhan, officials limit funerals of those who died from the coronavirus, suppress online discussions of fatalities, scrub images of funeral homes from social media, assign minders to families in mourning, and face questions from families such as why it took the government weeks to inform the public that the virus could spread among humans.	U	NYT	Amy Qin and Cao Li, "China Pushes for Quiet Burials as Coronavirus Death Toll is Questioned," New York Times, April 3, 2020.
4/7/2020	Human rights activists report, citing public records alone, that Chinese police punished nearly 900 people for online speech or information-sharing about the virus over three months.	U	Daily Telegraph	Sophia Yan, "Inside Wuhan as city at heart of coronavirus outbreak tries to return to normal," Daily Telegraph, April 7, 2020.
4/9/2020	The Guardian reports that "Another notice, which appears to have been published on 9 April by the school of information science and technology at Fudan University in Shanghai, called for "strict and serious" management of papers investigating the source of the outbreak." Papers could only be submitted for publication after being approved by a special office. Email, names and phone numbers provided on the notice suggested that office was part of China's ministry of education.	U	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/china-clamping-down-on-coronavirus-research-deleted-pages-suggest

<p>4/11/2020</p>	<p>Chinese universities publish online—and then apparently delete—new guidelines stating that academic papers on the origin of the novel coronavirus can be published only with the approval of the Ministry of Science and Technology.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>The Guardian</p>	<p>Stephanie Kirchgaessner et al, "China clamping down on coronavirus research, deleted pages suggest," The Guardian, April 11, 2020.</p>
<p>4/11/2020</p>	<p>The Guardian publishes article reports that "China is cracking down on publication of academic research about the origins of the novel coronavirus, in what is likely to be part of a wider attempt to control the narrative surrounding the pandemic, documents published online by Chinese universities appear to show." "Two websites for leading Chinese universities appear to have recently published and then removed pages that reference a new policy requiring academic papers dealing with Covid-19 to undergo extravetting before they are submitted for publication." "China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) appears to have published and then deleted new requirements that academic papers dealing with the origins of the virus be approved by China's ministry of science and technology before publication." and "A separate document obtained by the Guardian, which could not be independently verified, appears to be from the Renmin Hospital of Wuhan University and also said publication of research into the origins of Covid-19 would need approval from the science and technology ministry."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>The Guardian</p>	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/11/china-clamping-down-on-coronavirus-research-deleted-pages-suggest</p>
<p>4/13/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) The National People's Congress was also planning to unveil new biosafety laws and regulations for public health institutions and laboratories managing infectious diseases, Peking University Dean of the School of Public Health Zheng told ESTH Officer on April 13. He mentioned that discussions were even underway to elevate the status of public health agencies such as China CDC.</p>	<p>U/SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 365</p>

4/14/2020	<p>On 4/14/2020 the Washington Post publishes article on 2018 US State Department visits to WIV and the resulting cable about safety concerns, noting that "Last week, WIV erased that statement [acknowledging the visit from U.S. Diplomats] from its website, though it remains archived on the Internet." Further, "Sources familiar with the cables said they were meant to sound an alarm about the grave safety concerns at the WIV lab, especially regarding its work with bat coronaviruses. The embassy officials were calling for more U.S. attention to this lab and more support for it, to help it fix its problems."</p>	U	Washington Post (Opinions)	https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/14/state-department-cables-warned-safety-issues-wuhan-lab-studying-bat-coronaviruses/
4/17/2020	<p>US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Friday called on China to grant the United States access to the Wuhan laboratory that has emerged as a flashpoint between the two nations in a clash over the origin and handling of the coronavirus. "We are still asking the Chinese Communist Party to allow experts to get into that virology lab so that we can determine precisely where this virus began," said Pompeo on Fox News.</p>	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3080513/coronavirus-us-secretary-state-mike-pompeo-seeks-access

<p>4/17/2020</p>	<p>Use archive link. SCIMIX removed the afformentioned quote on or before 17 June 2020 at 5:50pm and updated with link to 13 May 2020 Arxiv article awaiting peer-review. Nikolai PETROVSKY, professor in College of Medicine and Public Health at Flinders University and Research Director at Vaxine Pty Ltd stated, ""An extremely important but still unanswered question is what was the source of COVID-19 virus. While COVID-19 has close similarities to SARS and other bat viruses no natural virus matching to COVID-19 has been found in nature despite an intensive search to find its origins. This raises the very legitimate question of whether the COVID-19 virus might be the result of human intervention. Certainly, our and other analyses of the genomic sequence of the virus do not reveal any artificial gene inserts that would be the hallmark of a gene jockey, genetic engineers who manipulate or even create viruses by splicing in artificial inserts into their genome. These are generally easily recognisable and hence clear signatures of human intervention in the creation of a virus. The fact that these artificial inserts are not present has been interpreted by some to mean this virus is not the result of human manipulation. However, this logic is incorrect as there are other ways in which humans can manipulate viruses and that is caused by natural selection. What do I mean? All viruses and bacteria mutate and adapt to their environment over time, with selection of the fittest individuals for survival in that particular environment. Take a bat coronavirus that is not infectious to humans, and force its selection by culturing it with cells that express human ACE2 receptor, such cells having been created many years ago to culture SARS coronaviruses and you can force the bat virus to adapt to infect human cells via mutations in its spike protein, which would have the effect of increasing the strength of its binding to human ACE2, and inevitably reducing the strength of its binding to bat ACE2. Viruses in prolonged culture will also develop other random mutations that do not affect its function. The result of these experiments is a virus that is highly virulent in humans but is sufficiently different that it no longer resembles the original bat virus. Because the mutations are acquired randomly by selection there is no signature of a human gene jockey, but this is clearly a virus still created by human intervention. My group in collaboration with other Australian researchers have been using a modelling approach to study the possible evolutionary origins of COVID-19 by modelling interactions between its spike protein and a broad variety of ACE2 receptors from many animals and humans. This work which we will publish on a prepress server next week shows that the strength of binding of COVID-19 to human ACE2 far exceeds the predicted strength of its binding to the ACE2 of any of the other species. This points to the virus having been selected for its high binding to human ACE2. In the absence of evidence of historic human infections with this virus, which could result in such selection, this either is a remarkable coincidence or a sign of human intervention. This, plus the fact that no corresponding virus has been found to exist in nature, leads to the possibility that COVID-19 is a human-created virus. It is therefore entirely plausible that the virus was created in the biosecurity facility in Wuhan by selection on cells expressing human ACE2, a laboratory that was known to be cultivating exotic bat coronaviruses at the time. Is so the cultured virus could have escaped the facility either through accidental infection of a staff member who then visited the fish market several blocks away and there infected others, or by inappropriate disposal of waste from the facility that either infected humans outside the facility directly or via a susceptible vector such as a stray cat that then frequented the market and resulted in transmission there to humans. Whilst the facts cannot be known at this time, the nature of this event and its proximity to a high-risk biosecurity facility at the epicentre of the outbreak demands a full and independent international enquiry to ascertain whether a virus of this kind of COVID-19 was being cultured in the facility and might have been accidentally released."</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>Scimex</p>	<p>https://www.scimex.org/newsfeed/expert-reaction-did-covid-19-come-from-a-lab-in-wuhan https://archive.is/CM9g3</p>
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4/17/2020	Wuhan raises its official tally of Covid-19 fatalities by 1,290, to nearly 3,900, blaming the initial undercount on cases unrecognized, untreated, or underreported by overstressed hospitals.	U	AP	"Chinese epicenter Wuhan raises number of virus cases by 1,290," Associated Press, April 17, 2020.
4/18/2020	Yuan Zhiming, vice director of the Wuhan Institute of Virology and director of the Wuhan National Biosafety Laboratory, tells state broadcaster CGTN, "There is absolutely no way that the virus originated from our institute. . . . I hope such a conspiracy theory will not affect cooperation among scientists around the world."	U	Bloomberg	"Wuhan Lab Denies Any Link to First Coronavirus Outbreak," Bloomberg News, April 20, 2020.
4/20/2020	WIV Communist Party chief claims "The WIV does not have the intention and the ability to design and construct a new coronavirus," he said in written responses to questions from Reuters. "Moreover, there is no information within the SARS-CoV-2 genome indicating it was manmade." Yuan also rejected theories that the lab had accidentally released a coronavirus it had harvested from bats for research purposes, saying the lab's biosecurity procedures were strictly enforced.... "High-level biosafety labs have sophisticated protective facilities and strict measures to ensure the safety of laboratory staff and protect the environment from contamination," he said.	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-lab/china-lab-rejects-covid-19-conspiracy-claims-but-virus-origins-still-a-mystery-idUSKCN22A0M M

4/21/2020	A study published in the Lancet by researchers from Hong Kong estimates that China might have had tens of thousands more coronavirus cases than officials have disclosed.	U	Lancet	Tim K. Tsang et al., "Effect of changing case definitions for COVID-19 on the epidemic curve and transmission parameters in mainland China: a modelling study," Lancet, April 21, 2020.
4/21/2020	Peer reviewed article titled "Comparative tropism, replication kinetics, and cell damage profiling of SARS-CoV-2 and SARS-CoV with implications for clinical manifestations, transmissibility, and laboratory studies of COVID-19: an observational study" finds that "SARS-CoV-2 infected and replicated to comparable levels in human Caco2 cells and Calu3 cells over a period of 120 h (p=0.52). By contrast, SARS-CoV infected and replicated more efficiently in Caco2 cells than in Calu3 cells under the same multiplicity of infection (p=0.0098). SARS-CoV-2, but not SARS-CoV, replicated modestly in U251 (neuronal) cells (p=0.036). For animal species cell tropism, both SARS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 replicated in non-human primate, cat, rabbit, and pig cells. SARS-CoV, but not SARS-CoV-2, infected and replicated in Rhinolophus sinicus bat kidney cells. SARS-CoV-2 consistently induced significantly delayed and milder levels of cell damage than did SARS-CoV in non-human primate cells (VeroE6, p=0.016; FRhK4, p=0.0004)"	U	ScienceDirect	https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S2666524720300045?token=02154475D4ABC96B589E0101047B488AB69245F1362A428A75C0F4BD1062A3A5492BAF12C943D9FE18A3E1D6438CA4A0

4/22/2020	<p>Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has sought support for an international investigation into the coronavirus pandemic in phone calls with US President Donald Trump, and the German and French leaders overnight, the government said on Wednesday. Australia's push for an independent review of the origins and spread of the pandemic, including the response of the World Health Organisation (WHO), has drawn sharp criticism from China, which has accused Australian lawmakers of taking instructions from the United States.... Senior Australian lawmakers have also called for an inquiry into the origins of the coronavirus, and questioned Beijing's transparency over a pandemic now paralysing the world.</p>	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/australasia/article/3081020/australia-wants-international-probe-coronavirus-origins
4/22/2020	<p>Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison has sought support for an international investigation into the coronavirus pandemic in phone calls with US President Donald Trump, and the German and French leaders overnight, the government said on Wednesday. Australia's push for an independent review of the origins and spread of the pandemic, including the response of the World Health Organisation (WHO), has drawn sharp criticism from China, which has accused Australian lawmakers of taking instructions from the United States.</p>	U	SCMP	https://www.scmp.com/news/asia/australasia/article/3081020/australia-wants-international-probe-coronavirus-origins
4/22/2020	<p>Citizen journalist Li Zehua surfaces for the first time since February, saying that his detention included a quarantine in Wuhan and another in his hometown, after which he was reunited with his family. He says in a video: "During the whole process, the police enforced law in a civilised manner, ensured my rest time and food. They also cared about me very much. . . . I'm grateful to all the people who looked after me and cared about me. I wish all people suffering the epidemic can pull through. God bless China. I wish the world can unite together."</p>	U	BBC	<p>"Li Zehua: Journalist who 'disappeared' after Wuhan chase reappears," BBC, April 23, 2020.</p>

4/22/2020	<p>The Times published an article claiming, "China prevented French experts from overseeing safety at its first high-security virus laboratory, which is now facing claims that it was the origin of the coronavirus pandemic, according to French officials.... French specialists have knowledge in building and running BSL 4 laboratories, which were described by a senior civil servant in Paris as a "bacteriological atomic bomb". But French firms got only minor roles in the building of the laboratory, according to Le Figaro and France Inter, the state broadcaster.... France Inter said that Technip, the French company supposed to certify that the building complied with safety standards, refused to do so after pulling out of the project in 2015."</p>	U	The Times	<p>https://t.co/rvaRQTMwEd https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/coronavirus-china-bars-safety-experts-from-wuhan-lab-brbm9rwtm</p>
4/24/2020	<p>Under pressure from Beijing, the European Union softens a published report on Covid-19 disinformation. The final text removed a draft reference to Beijing's "global disinformation" campaign and struck mention of the diplomatic dispute between China and France over Chinese PPE exports and the aggressive rhetoric of China's ambassador in Paris.</p>	U	NYT	<p>Matt Apuzzo, "Pressured by China, E.U. Softens Report on Covid-19 Disinformation," New York Times, April 24, 2020.</p>
4/25/2020	<p>SCMP reports Chinese police have detained three Beijing residents (Cai Wei, a woman surnamed Tang, and Chen Mei) who helped publish articles about Covid-19 on open-source website Github that were previously censored from mainstream PRC media and social media, including material about Wuhan doctor Ai Fen.</p>	U	SCMP	<p>Phoebe Zhang, "Chinese activists detained after sharing censored coronavirus articles on crowdsourcing site Github," South China Morning Post, April 25, 2020.</p>

4/27/2020	China threatens economic consequences if Australia launches investigation of Beijing's handling of coronavirus	U	The Hill	https://thehill.com/policy/international/494860-china-threatens-economic-consequences-if-australia-launches
4/27/2020	Chinese Ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye said Beijing could encourage Chinese citizens to boycott Australian exports and products if Australia was to initiate the probe, the news outlet reported... Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne called the Chinese threats "economic coercion" and repeated calls for an investigation into the early handling of the outbreak, which is thought to have originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan. "Australia has made a principled call for an independent review of the COVID-19 outbreak, an unprecedented global crisis with severe health, economic and social impacts," she reportedly said. "We reject any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment, when what we need is global co-operation."	U	The Hill	https://thehill.com/policy/international/494860-china-threatens-economic-consequences-if-australia-launches
4/27/2020	PRC ambassador to Australia Cheng Jingye threatens economic harm if Australia continues pushing for an independent investigation into the coronavirus. "Maybe the ordinary [Chinese] people will say 'Why should we drink Australian wine? Eat Australian beef?'," Cheng said, also citing the tourism and higher-education sectors. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne answered: "We reject any suggestion that economic coercion is an appropriate response to a call for such an assessment, when what we need is global cooperation."	U	Reuters	Kirsty Needham, "Australia rejects Chinese 'economic coercion' threat amid planned coronavirus probe," Reuters, April 27, 2020.

4/28/2020	Yuan Zhiming, the Wuhan Institute of Virology's Communist Party chief, lies to the Reuters, "The WIV does not have the intention and the ability to design and construct a new coronavirus."	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-lab/china-lab-rejects-covid-19-conspiracy-claims-but-virus-origins-still-a-mystery-idUSKCN22A0MM
4/29/2020	China "resolutely opposes" any international inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic that presumes its guilt, said Le Yucheng, a vice-foreign minister, in comments published on Thursday. Citing an interview Le gave to NBC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on its website that Beijing firmly opposes a "politicised" international investigation aimed at stigmatising China.	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china/china-opposes-international-covid-19-probe-that-presumes-its-guilt-vice-foreign-minister-idUSKBN22C00J

4/29/2020	China "resolutely opposes" any international inquiry into the coronavirus pandemic that presumes its guilt, said Le Yucheng, a vice-foreign minister	U	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china/china-opposes-international-covid-19-probe-that-presumes-its-guilt-vice-foreign-minister-idUSKBN22C00J
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<p>4/30/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) During the COVID-19 outbreak, PRC authorities have doubled down on promoting TCM [Traditional Chinese Medicine]. The Beijing Municipal Health Commission released a draft regulation for public review on June 3 containing a section that would criminalize the defamation of TCM. Public security officials would punish any individual or organization found making false or exaggerated claims that denigrated and defamed TCM, according to a section of the regulation entitled Protection and Inheritance of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Dr. Yu Xiangdong, a senior Chinese medical professional at the Central Hospital in Hubei province, who posted online comments in April pointing out that TCM treatments for COVID-19 were not science-based, was censored and demoted for his criticism...</p> <p>(SBU) Chinas domestic market for TCM has grown at an average annual rate of more than 10 percent over the past five years, and was valued at \$43.6 billion last year, accounting for the vast majority of the global TCM market (which was estimated at \$50 billion in 2017). After the PRC signed health agreements with Ghana, Tanzania, Malawi, and Ethiopia, TCM exports to Africa had doubled within five years to \$80 million by 2017, demonstrating the success of PRC efforts to promote TCM in other markets...</p> <p>(SBU) Embassy medical contacts, however, remained skeptical about the benefits of TCM treatments for COVID-19 cases, citing a lack of clinical data to determine these treatments effectiveness. Many TCM studies were based on empirical data rather than well-designed and rigorously implemented double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trials, which are considered standard for medical research, stated an Embassy academic contact.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 1272</p>
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4/30/2020	<p>(SBU) In April, the Ministry of Education (MOE) issued the Notice on the Publication of COVID-19 Research Papers (), which requires researchers tracing the origins of COVID-19 to submit articles to the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism for approval prior to publication. In addition, research institutions must vet all of their scientists COVID-19 research and recommend whether to submit it to a domestic or international journal. The Notice further reminds researchers to protect biosecurity, abide by rules governing Chinas human genetic resources, and strive to produce high-quality papers. MOE did not publish the Notice on its official website; rather, elite universities such as Fudan University and the China University of Geosciences in Wuhan published the directive on their websites, noting it came from MOE. The universities quickly removed the Notice from their websites after media reported on the new research restrictions.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 894
5/1/2020	<p>Australia's longest serving foreign minister says not since the Cold War has he seen an ambassador behave as "recklessly" as China's ambassador to Australia did this week. The [Australian] Federal Government has described Ambassador Jingye Cheng's comments in an interview with the Australian Financial Review as "threats of economic coercion".... "Not since the days of the Soviet Union have I seen an ambassador behave in such a reckless, undiplomatic way. And what is the problem? I mean the Prime Minister has just said that there should be an investigation," [former Australian foreign minister Alexander Downer] told ABC RN's Between The Lines.</p>	U	ABC	https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-04-30/china-ambassador-reckless-over-coronavirus-inquiry-downer-says/12200534
5/1/2020	<p>China has refused repeated requests by the World Health Organisation to take part in investigations into the origins of COVID-19, the WHO representative in China has told Sky News.</p>	U	Sky News	https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-who-not-invited-to-join-chinas-covid-19-investigations-11981193

5/1/2020	China has refused repeated requests by the World Health Organisation to take part in investigations into the origins of COVID-19, the WHO representative in China has told Sky News. "We know that some national investigation is happening but at this stage we have not been invited to join," Dr Gauden Galea said.... Asked by Sky News whether there was a good reason not to include the WHO, Dr Galea replied:"From our point of view, no."	U	Sky News	https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-who-not-invited-to-join-chinas-covid-19-investigations-11981193
5/1/2020	The European Union has urged China to cooperate with an investigation into the origin of the coronavirus, increasing diplomatic pressure on Beijing for greater transparency.	U	SCMP	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3082526/european-union-adds-pressure-china-call-cooperate-coronavirus
5/1/2020	The European Union has urged China to cooperate with an investigation into the origin of the coronavirus, increasing diplomatic pressure on Beijing for greater transparency. The call from European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen came a day after her foreign policy aide Josep Borrell confirmed that China attempted to put pressure on the EU ahead of a report detailing the Chinese government's disinformation campaigns. Earlier this week, the Swedish government said it planned to ask the EU to launch an investigation into the origin of the new coronavirus, and into the World Health Organisation's handling of the pandemic. The deadly virus so far has infected more than 1.3 million people in Europe – over a third of cases worldwide.... Other European leaders have also called for more transparency from China, including French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, though their exhortations fell short of von der Leyen's stern message for China to cooperate. Macron's office has dismissed US claims that the virus could have come from a virology lab in Wuhan. Washington floated the possibility after a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman accused the US Army of creating the virus.	U	South China Morning Post	https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3082526/european-union-adds-pressure-china-call-cooperate-coronavirus

5/13/2020	<p>In silico comparison of spike protein-ACE2 binding affinities across species; significance for the possible origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus published on 13 May 2020 and awaiting peer-review. "The fact that SARS-CoV-2 has also not been found in any likely intermediate host raises questions of the origins of the original SARS-CoV-2 virus that infected human case zero in late 2019. Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak, hosts China's only BSL4 facility and is the site of considerable bat coronavirus research. Identification of an intermediate animal host in which SARS-CoV-2 might have adapted to a human ACE2 permissive form would go a long way to alleviating concerns that SARS-CoV-2 is not a natural virus. Lam et al.⁴⁴ made confused public claims of finding SARS-CoV-2 in Malayan pangolins, suggesting that pangolins were an intermediate vector for SARS-CoV-2. However, further sequence analysis of these claims by Zhang et al. established that Pangolin-CoV was a very different coronavirus that had modest at best ~90% sequence similarity to SARS-CoV-2. While Pangolin-CoV spike RBD shared some similarities to SARS-CoV-2, its spike protein did not share the furin cleavage site that was a prominent feature of SARS-CoV-2 spike protein.⁵¹ Hence, any similarity of Pangolin-CoV to SARS-CoV-2 was restricted to the residues in the RBD and RBM. Overall, Pangolin-CoV is only a distant relative of SARS-CoV-2.....</p>	U	Arxiv	<p>https://arxiv.org/abs/2005.06199 https://arxiv.org/pdf/2005.06199.pdf</p>
5/19/2020	WIV publishes amplicon sequences of RaTG13	U	NCBI	<p>https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/sra/SRX8357956</p>
5/21/2020	CGTN publishes mis/dis-information article titled: "U.S. operates over 200 military biological laboratories worldwide"	U	CGTN News	<p>https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-05-21/U-S-deployed-over-200-military-biological-laboratories-worldwide-QFtLkqhuVy/index.html</p>

5/26/2020	"China rules out Animal Market and Lab as Coronavirus Origin" published by the WSJ	U	Wall Street Journal	https://www.wsj.com/articles/china-rules-out-animal-market-and-lab-as-coronavirus-origin-11590517508
5/26/2020	The Huanan seafood market in Wuhan, Hubei Province which has come under the spotlight over suspicions that it was the origin of the novel coronavirus, is more like a victim of COVID-19, said the director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as the search for the origin of the outbreak continues. "At first, we assumed the seafood market might have the virus, but now the market is more like a victim. The novel coronavirus had existed long before," Gao Fu, director of the center and member of the National Committee of the 13th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, said on Monday. Gao said he had gone to Wuhan to collect samples for COVID-19 researchers in early January, but no viruses were detected in the animal samples. Viruses were only found in environmental samples, including sewage.	U	Global Times China	https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1189506.shtml
6/5/2020	(SBU) In accordance with NSDD-38 procedures and in response to Ref A, B, and C post hereby grants approval of the EAP's request for the Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (HHS/CDC) to add the following U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) permanent position, effective May 2020 in Beijing: * Public Health Official, GS-15	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 926

<p>6/19/2020</p>	<p>Preprint study titled "No evience of coronaviruses or other potentially zoonatic viruses in Sunda pangolins (Manis javanica) entering the wildlife trade via Malaysia" published findin that "In light of recent reports of coronaviruses including a SARSCoV-2 related virus in Sunda pangolins in China, the lack of any coronavirus detection in our 'upstream' market chain samples suggests that these detections in 'downstream' animals more plausibly reflect exposure to infected humans, wildlife or other animals within the wildlife trade network" Study conducted by EcoHealth Alliance, National Wildlife Forensic Laboratory (Malaysian Department of Wildlife and National Parks), Sabah Wildlife Department, Universiti Malaysia Sabah Biotechnology Research Institute, and Universiti Malaysia Sabah Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.</p>	<p>U</p>	<p>(Preprint)</p>	<p>https://www.biorxiv.org/content/biorxiv/early/2020/06/19/2020.06.19.158717.full.pdf</p>
<p>6/23/2020</p>	<p>(SBU) An outbreak of new COVID-19 cases stemming from the Xinfadi wholesale food market in Beijing resulted in a return to control measures in China's capital. Between June 11 and 23, the city health commission reported 256 new confirmed cases. Authorities responded quickly by reinstating many of the measures they had imposed in February and March, including largescale testing, rigorous contact tracing, closed management of residential areas, and the closure of schools and large public events. Beijing has also announced new requirements that domestic travelers show a negative nucleic acid test result within seven days of departure and has discouraged non-essential travel. However, testing is currently not required for outbound international travelers from Beijing.</p>	<p>U//SBU</p>	<p>AMEMBASSY BEIJING</p>	<p>20 BEIJING 1022</p>

7/31/2020	<p>WIV Scientist Dr SHI describes how the RaTG13 genome was identified. The following description is inconsistent with the February 2020 Nature paper (according to Dr QUAY): "We detected the virus by pan-coronavirus RT-PCR in a bat fecal sample collected from Tongguan town, Mojiangcounty in Yunnan provincein 2013, and obtained its partial RdRp sequence. Because the low similarity of this virus to SARS-CoV, we did not pay special attention to this sequence. In 2018, as the NGS sequencing technology and capability in our lab was improved, we did further sequencing of the virus using our remaining samples, and obtained the full-length genome sequence of RaTG13 except the 15 nucleotides at the 5' end. As the sample was used many times for the purpose of viral nucleic acid extraction, there was no more sample after we finished genome sequencing, and we did notdo virus isolation and other studies on it. Among all the bat samples we collected, the RaTG13 virus was detected in only one single sample. In 2020, we compared the sequence of SARS-CoV-2 and our unpublished bat coronavirus sequences and found it shared a 96.2%identity with RaTG13. RaTG13 has never been isolated or cultured."</p>	U	Science Magazine	https://www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Shi%20Zhengli%20Q&A.pdf
7/31/2020	<p>WIV scientist Dr SHI, discloses BtCoV/4991 and RaTG13 are the same coronavirus "Some people who suspect a lab accident occurred have suggested that BtCoV/4991, a bat virus you described in 2016, is SARS-CoV-2. When you published, you only had the sequence of one protein, RNA dependent RNA polymerase (RdRp). A blast analysis on GenBank shows that the RdRp of BtCoV/4991 and RaTG13 are 100% homologous. Is BtCoV/4991 actually RaTG13, which would be consistent with your 2020 report that described how you did the full sequence of a virus you only had done the RdRp sequence for earlier? If so, why did you rename the virus? What does "TG" stand for in RaTG13?A:Ra4991 is the ID for a bat sample while RaTG13 is the ID for the coronavirus detected in the sample. We changed the name as we wanted it to reflect the time and location for the sample collection. 13 means it was collected in 2013, and TG is the abbreviation of Tongguan town, the location where the sample was collected."</p>	U	Science Magazine	https://www.sciencemag.org/sites/default/files/Shi%20Zhengli%20Q&A.pdf

8/3/2020	<p>(SBU) "Civil Justice for Victims of China-originated Viral Infection Diseases Act" Demarche: PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs Department of North American and Oceanic Affairs Counselor Qiu Wenxin called POL MC on August 3 to protest the bill which that demands revision of the Foreign Sovereignty Immunity Act, which he said would open "Pandora's Box" on the issue of sovereign immunity. POL MC said the PRC should express its concerns to Congress directly, and pushed back forcefully on the threat of a Pandora's box, noting that such threats only undermined PRC credibility and underscored the lack of rule of law in PRC.</p>	U//SBU	AMEMBASSY BEIJING	20 BEIJING 573
10/13/2020	WIV publishes updated TaTG13 complete genome	U	NCBI	https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/nucleotide/MN996532.2
10/20/2020	<p>Frontiers in Public Health article titled "Lethal Pneumonia Cases in Mojiang Miners (2012) and the Mineshaft Could Provide Important Clues to the Origin of SARS-CoV-2" finds that "A Master's thesis (in the Chinese language) was found on the cnki.net website which described in detail the severe illness in miners. The thesis concluded that a SARS-like CoV originating from Chinese horseshoe bats (Rhinolophus) was the predicted causative agent. The cases were remotely monitored by a prominent pulmonologist in China. Retrospective analysis of the pneumonia cases shows striking similarities with COVID-19. Bilateral pneumonia, vascular complications like pulmonary thromboembolism, and secondary infections are the main similarities. The treatment regimes were similar to the current treatments for COVID-19. We propose that the Mojiang mineshaft miners' illness could provide important clues to the origin of SARS-CoV-2. These cases should be studied by various academicians, researchers, and medical professionals as many important questions are raised in this context."</p>	U	Frontiers in Public Health	https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpubh.2020.581569/full

10/23/2020	<p>Preprint study titled " Single source of pangolin CoVs with a near identical Spike RBD to SARS-CoV-2" that identified "Multiple publications have independently described pangolin CoV genomes from the same batch of smuggled pangolins confiscated in Guangdong province in March, 2019. We analyzed the three metagenomic datasets that sampled this batch of pangolins and found that the two complete pangolin CoV genomes, GD_1 by Xiao et al. Nature and MP789 by Liu et al. PLoS Pathogens, were both built primarily using the 2019 dataset first described by Liu et al. Viruses. Other publications, such as Zhang et al. Current Biology and Lam et al. Nature, have also relied on this same dataset by Liu et al. Viruses for their assembly of the Guangdong pangolin CoV sequences and comparisons to SARS-CoV-2. To our knowledge, all of the published pangolin CoV genome sequences that share a highly similar Spike receptor binding domain with SARS-CoV-2 originate from this singular batch of smuggled pangolins. This raises the question of whether pangolins are truly reservoirs or hosts of SARS-CoV-2-related coronaviruses in the wild, or whether the pangolins may have contracted the CoV from another host species during trafficking. Our observations highlight the importance of requiring authors to publish their complete genome assembly pipeline and all contributing raw sequence data, particularly those supporting epidemiological investigations, in order to empower peer review and independent analysis of the sequence data. This is necessary to ensure both the accuracy of the data and the conclusions presented by each publication."</p>	U	(Preprint)	https://www.biorxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.07.07.184374v2
3/27/3018	<p>U.S. Embassy in Beijing took the unusual step of repeatedly sending U.S. science diplomats to the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), which had in 2015 become China's first laboratory to achieve the highest level of international bioresearch safety (known as BSL-4). WIV issued a news release in English about the last of these visits, which occurred on March 27, 2018. The U.S. delegation was led by Jamison Fouss, the consul general in Wuhan, and Rick Switzer, the embassy's counselor of environment, science, technology and health.</p>	U	Washington Post (Opinions)	https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/04/14/state-department-cables-warned-safety-issues-wuhan-lab-studying-bat-coronaviruses/