

It is good they welcomed your visit and will be good to keep in touch so we are aware of what they are doing in the future.

I am surprised and concerned to hear their idea on reverse engineering Ebola. I would have thought that the samples [REDACTED] collected could be made available to them. I had the impression that he likely brought home some samples related to the West Africa outbreak.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Chen, Ping (NIH/NIAID) [E]

**Sent:** Thursday, October 26, 2017 5:01 AM

**To:** [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]; [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]

[REDACTED]; [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]; [REDACTED]

**Subject:** trip report

Hi,

This week I went to Wuhan to visit the Bio safety lab 4 in Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), an institute under the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). My contact who helped arrange the visit is [REDACTED] who is a Chinese collaborator on a NIAID grant to EcoHealth for SARS like corona virus project.

The P4 lab is located in a new developing zone about one hour car ride from the current institute location in central Wuhan city. The location will be the new campus for the entire institute in the near future (a lot of construction is going on right now). Since we are not allowed to take photos so only the photo from the outside is attached.

Although the labs are not hot yet we were not allowed to enter the laboratories. The facility is larger than I thought it would be. It has three laboratories inside, two of them can have 4 people work inside at the same time, quite spacious (can look into it through a window, not open to the outside). Another smaller one is connected to the animal housing area for conducting animal experiments. There are two animal housing and operating areas, one for the small animals and one for the mid size animals such as ferrets and non-human primates.

Several teams are involved in the management of the facility. There is a team of technicians who are trained to conduct experiments inside the P4 lab. Others include the facility people, the management personnel, biosafety team, and security.

I learned from the conversation and find interesting is that the institute has to apply for permission for the types of pathogens they can work with in the P4 lab. So far they only have three permissions: Ebola, Nipah virus, and Xinjiang hemorrhagic fever (a strain of Crimean Congo hemorrhagic fever found in Xinjiang Province in China). The permission is given by the National Health and Family Planning Commission. Interestingly Chinese government does not allow the import of Ebola viruses. So what is the point to give the permission for working on Ebola viruses when there is no pathogen available. The technician who gave us the tour said that they are considering doing the reverse genetic engineering to generate the virus (will need to get permission too). On the other hand, they did not get the permission to work on SARS as [REDACTED] is working on SARS and MERS. So the facility won't get much of use at this point. They also don't know what were the criteria or considerations that NHFPC had when they made the decision on what viruses can or can't be worked in the P4 lab.

It is clear to me by talking to the technician that certainly there is the need for training support as he said being the first one in China, they have to learn from others. I don't think the French does much now after the facility has been turned to China. Right now they rely on Chinese who had worked in P4 labs before and now returned to China. A couple of researchers in WIV returned from UTMB in Galveston. I learned that UTMB will come to WIV soon to conduct a training. I think the institute would welcome any help and technical support that NIAID can provide when there is need.

I asked about whether the institute would welcome and host high level of US visitors. The response is yes. The institute can be a back up for our Henan TB project to cope with request for site visits by US officials. I obtained contact info and forwarded to the consulate in Wuhan as they had shown interest to visit the lab.

I also learned from the conversation that another P4 lab is either under the construction or planning, which will be for veterinary use. Will be located in Harbin Veterinary Research Institute, another CAS institute. This P4 lab would have the capacity to work on large animals.

I am getting a lot of detailed questions from [REDACTED] on the EID planning. We are getting good responses from our contacts.

I am working with CAMS for a couple of follow ups following the AMR meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks

Ping

Ping Chen, PhD

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**From:** [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Sent:** Fri, 12 Jan 2018 11:00:10 +0000  
**To:** Chen, Ping (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Subject:** RE: P4 cable

As we discussed. Delete that comment but include info on future BSL-4 labs we were told would be constructed.

Thanks. [REDACTED]

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**From:** Chen, Ping (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 10, 2018 10:04 AM  
**To:** [REDACTED] (NIH/NIAID) [E]  
**Subject:** P4 cable

Thanks [REDACTED]

Regarding the comment on using the reverse genetics to create the virus. It was said by the technician who showed me the facility. He is one of the trained technicians at WIV. I remember he said that since they don't have the Ebola virus, they had "considered using reverse genetics to create the virus". I was shocked to hear what he said that. I also worry the reaction of people in Washington when they read this. The technician is only a worker, not a decision maker nor a PI. So how much we should believe what he said? If further question is raised on this sentence, I won't be able to provide further information as there is no further information there.

I included it in my report because that was just for OGR. I reported what I heard and saw. But I don't feel comfortable for broader audience within the government circle. It could be very sensitive. Should we not include it?