



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

March 31, 2025

Case No. FL-2022-00076

Dr. Sainath Suryanarayanan
U.S. Right to Know
4096 Piedmont Ave. #963
Oakland, CA 94611

Dear Dr. Suryanarayanan:

As we noted in our letter dated February 28, 2025, we are processing your request for material under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552. The Department of State (“Department”) has identified an additional one responsive record subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that the one record may be released in part.

An enclosure explains the FOIA exemptions and other grounds for withholding material. Where we have made redactions, the applicable FOIA exemption are marked on the record. Where applicable, the Department has considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing this record 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 Savith Iyengar, Assistant U.S. Attorney, at savith.iyengar@usdoj.gov. Please refer to the case number, FL-2022-00076, and the civil action number, 22-cv-04359, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Avery Bullard".

Avery Bullard
Supervisory Government Information Specialist
Litigation and Appeals Office

Enclosures: As stated.

The Freedom of Information Act (5 USC 552)

FOIA Exemptions

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

Other Grounds for Withholding

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

From:	Nancy Connell <(b)(6)>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Re: Herd immunity
Date:	Sat, 19 Jun 2021 11:15:15 -0400

hahahahahahahaha

On Jun 19, 2021, at 11:09 AM, Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

Oh, that's right. Filippa is on there, isnt she? I'm at least as qualified as her.

From: Nancy Connell <(b)(6)>
Sent: Saturday, June 19, 2021 10:58:51 AM
To: Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Herd immunity

Not at all. Social scientists abound. Surprisingly little actual science is discussed. It's all policy stuff.

It would be great to have you -

On Jun 19, 2021, at 07:40, Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

I'm still very interested, but I just realized that i'd probably be the only person in that group that's not an actual scientist. Maybe that would be inappropriate?

From: Nancy Connell <(b)(6)>
Sent: Friday, June 18, 2021 9:42:12 AM
To: Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Herd immunity

Easy peasy. Not that exclusive. I will invite you - but you might want to engage in a short segment. Once you speak about something, you're in for life. The group is absolutely ENTROPIC and the list gets longer every year.

It would be really great to have you there. There are some dominators (Palmer, Weiss, Estvelt etc ... and the Upstart) but generally a warm group. I do look forward to it each week.

Let me know if any of the topics coming up are of interest and I will invite you.

Alternatively, now that I think about it, I can just call ken and ask him to start inviting you.

He'd be happy to, I predict.

On Jun 18, 2021, at 09:35, Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

This is a very interesting chain. Who do you have to kill to get looped into this group?

From: Nancy Connell <(b)(6)>
Sent: Thursday, June 17, 2021 10:26:03 PM
To: Park, Christopher J <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)
Subject: Fwd: Herd immunity

Begin forwarded message:

From: Dylan Morris <(b)(6)>

Date: June 17, 2021 at 18:20:21 EDT

To: Kevin Esvelt <(b)(6)>

Cc: <(b)(6)>, Kenneth A Oye
<(b)(6)>, Larisa Rudenko <(b)(6)> Sam Weiss EVANS
<(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> "Woll, Jr., Edward"
<(b)(6)> "Moss, Steven" <(b)(6)> Katherine von Stackelberg
<(b)(6)>, "Michael M. J. Fischer" <(b)(6)>, Shlomiya Lightfoot
<(b)(6)>, "Peter A. Carr" <(b)(6)>, Joel Brenner <(b)(6)>, Jeantine Lunshof <(b)(6)>, Megan Joan Palmer
<(b)(6)> Piers Millett <(b)(6)> "Appleton, Evan Michael"
<(b)(6)>, Ben Gordon <(b)(6)> Todd Kuiken
<(b)(6)>, David Gillum <(b)(6)>, Douglas Friedman
<(b)(6)> Lewis Won <(b)(6)> Clem Fortman <(b)(6)>
"Husbands, Jo" <(b)(6)> "Bowman, Katherine" <(b)(6)>, Gigi Gronvall <(b)(6)>, Nancy Connell <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6)>
<(b)(6)>, "Greene, Daniel" <(b)(6)> "Walsh, Matthew"
<(b)(6)> Allison M Macfarlane <(b)(6)>, "Hoffmann, Connor Patrick" <(b)(6)> "Hodgson, Andrea" <(b)(6)>
"Lumpkin, Murray" <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)>
<(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)> Arti Rai <(b)(6)>, "DeWaal, Alex" <(b)(6)>, Françoise Baylis <(b)(6)>, "Ganguly, Sumit" <(b)(6)>, "Sean M. Dean" <(b)(6)>, Amanda Kobokovich <(b)(6)>, Rachel West <(b)(6)>, Caitlin Rivers <(b)(6)>, Peter Dykstra <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6); (b)(7)(C)>, Bea Taylor <(b)(6)> Amalia Teglas <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6)> Rebecca Moritz <(b)(6)>, John Ferguson <(b)(6)>, "Davis, Kourtney [JRDUS]" <(b)(6)>, "Kristian G. Andersen" <(b)(6)>, Steph Guerra <(b)(6)> Gigi Hirsch <(b)(6)>, "Jain, Manoj" <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6)> Allen Lin <(b)(6)>, Chelsea Loughran <(b)(6)>, <(b)(6)> Lois Privor-Dumm <(b)(6)>, Tim Trevan <(b)(6)> Meicen Sun <(b)(6)> Benjamin Trump <(b)(6)> @umich.edu>, Lane Warmbrod <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> Kourtney Davis <(b)(6)>, "Dylan H. Morris" <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> "Kofler, Natalie Maria" <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> Matthew Herder <(b)(6)> <(b)(6)> Jamie Metzl <(b)(6)>

Subject: Re: Herd immunity

External Email - Use Caution

To be clear, the 5 to 6 I put in the Zoom chat was a *rough* guess for the no-mitigation R_0 in a developed country (but of course R_0 is never fixed in space or time).

Naïve extrapolation from Alpha per the Brits' secondary attack rate estimates would be $R_0 > 6.75$ (assuming we put Alpha at about 4.5).

I agree that at least some of the observed high fitness relative to Alpha for Delta in the UK is partial escape from antibodies induced by natural infection or one dose of AZ**. But even accounting for that $R_0 > 5$ looks plausible.

**Or two! Boost AZ recipients with a prefusion vaccine!

On Jun 17, 2021, at 4:13 PM, Kevin Esvelt (b)(6) (b)(6) wrote:

I completely agree that everyone will get the virus or an effective vaccine, which may be a big problem for the immunocompromised unless they live in areas with $>90\%$ vaccination.

This would probably happen even with a somewhat lower R_0 given any degree of waning immunity or antigenic escape as is seen for the other human coronaviruses.

That said, we should be a bit cautious in extrapolating R from ancestral to Alpha to Delta, as some of the latter's advantage may be due to overcoming resistance from exposure to an earlier strain or weak vaccine dose. (Sorry if Dylan's figures covered this; I wasn't there)

If R_0 is in fact ~ 6 , then Delta may be closing in on 1918 H1N1 in the competition for fastest-spreading virus through a naïve human population (tie given $R_0=2.2$ and generation time=2.2 days for 1918 and generation time=5 days for Delta, although 1918 has been estimated at $R_0=2.5$, which would require the coronavirus to reach an R_0 of 8 to compete).

On Thu, Jun 17, 2021, 14:17 Dylan Morris (b)(6) (b)(6) wrote:

I think that's it at this point. Everyone's going to see the virus. The only question is whether they're going to see the vaccine first. If they do, I'm optimistic. If they don't, I'm pessimistic. It's depressingly simple.

On Jun 17, 2021, at 12:13 PM, (b)(6) US NDU (b)(6) (b)(6) wrote:

Just realized the implications of the scary figures Dylan put in the chat during our last meeting about the R_0 value for the Delta variant likely ranging between 5 and 6.

It means that the herd immunity threshold is now 80% or higher. Right when it seemed like we weren't even going to hit a national vaccination rate of 70%.

Seems like the choice now facing those refusing vaccination is "you get vaccinated or you get Delta" (unless of course you live in a pocket of vaccine compliance, which I suspect many of us probably do).

Jerry

From: Kenneth A Oye (b)(6)
Sent: Monday, June 14, 2021 9:00 AM
To: Larisa Rudenko (b)(6); Sam Weiss EVANS (b)(6); Voll, Jr., Edward (b)(6); Moss, Steven (b)(6); Katherine von Stackelberg (b)(6); Michael M. J. Fischer (b)(6); Shlomiya Lightfoot (b)(6); Peter A. Carr (b)(6); Joel Brenner (b)(6); Megan Joan Palmer (b)(6); Todd Kuiken (b)(6); David Gillum (b)(6); Douglas Friedman (b)(6); Clem Fortman (b)(6); Husbands, Jo (b)(6); Bowman, Katherine (b)(6); Gigi Gronvall (b)(6); Greene, Daniel (b)(6); Walsh, Matthew (b)(6); Allison M Macfarlane (b)(6); Hoffmann, Connor Patrick (b)(6); Moss, Steven (b)(6); Hodgson, Andrea (b)(6); Lumpkin, Murray (b)(6); Arti Rai (b)(6); DeWaal, Alex (b)(6); Francoise Baylis (b)(6); Ganguly, Sumit (b)(6); Sean M. Dean (b)(6); Kobokovich, Amanda (b)(6); Rachel West (b)(6); Caitlin Rivers (b)(6); Peter Dykstra (b)(6); Teglas (b)(6); John Ferguson (b)(6); Davis, Kourtney (b)(6); [JRDUS] (b)(6); Kevin Esvelt (b)(6); Steph Guerra (b)(6); Gigi Hirsch (b)(6); Hodgson, Andrea (b)(6); Jain, Manoj (b)(6); Allen Lin (b)(6); Chelsea Loughran (b)(6); Kenneth A Oye (b)(6); Lois Privor-Dumm (b)(6); Tim Trevan (b)(6); Meicen Sun (b)(6); Benjamin Trump (b)(6); Lane Warmbrod (b)(6); Kourtney Davis (b)(6); Kenneth A Oye (b)(6); Kofler, Natalie Maria (b)(6); Matthew Herder (b)(6); amie Metzl (b)(6)

Subject: Tuesday Group - COVID origins / eradication 6/15 2 PM EDT <https://mit.zoom.us/j/823736372>

Dear Colleagues,

This week we will continue our discussion of COVID origins and implications, with a turn to eradication. I recommend that we consider the points below that we did not develop last week because we ran out of time, as well as other issues/

1. Scientific issues associated with origins – Gigi offered alternative interpretations of evidence that Jaime had referenced (see Annex I). Let's take the time to focus on associated scientific and technical more thoroughly.
2. Implications for biosafety risk management– David and Rebecca raised biosafety implications from an ABSA perspective, including safety protocols and risk classifications. I am interested in implications for the risk assessments associated with the siting of BSL 3 and 4 facilities.

3. Prospecting – Tim’s longstanding view that the benefit-risk ratio does not justify prospecting merits further discussion. Counterarguments on benefits from prospecting and gathering? Are there ways to mitigate risks of harvesting?
4. GOF – our group has divided over the benefits and risks of GOF research, going back to the H5N1 research supported by NIH. Updates on that controversy in light of what we have learned from COVID?
5. Eradication - Manoj raised the topic of eradication in his op-ed at <https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2021/06/03/fully-eradicate-covid-19-pfizer-vaccine/7535797002/>
What steps should be taken to that end? Is eradication possible given what we are learning on variants and on origins?
6. Megan’s Big Question -- Megan asked: “What have we learned that we should use to handle better future controversies over origins of future global pandemics?” Megan cannot join this week, so we may want to hold this.

As always, we will operate under Chatham House Rule. Shlomiya’s notes from last week are out for vetting and will be circulated when cleared.

With warmest regards,

Ken

Annex I: Some points in arguments on lab origin

In 2012, six miners working in a bat-infested copper mine in southern China (Yunnan province) were infected with a bat coronavirus. All of them developed symptoms exactly like COVID-19 symptoms. Three of them died.

Viral samples taken from the Yunnan miner were taken to the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the only level 4 biosecurity lab in China that was also studying bat coronaviruses.

The WIV carried out gain of function research, almost certainly on these and a range of related and other samples (which is different than genetically engineering the viruses). Chimeric viruses were likely developed in this process. There has never been a full and public accounting for what viruses are in the WIV sample set and database, and key elements of the database have been taken off line or deleted.

Given the close relationship of the Chinese Peoples’ Liberation Army (PLA) in the development and construction of the Wuhan Institute of Virology, it is fair to assume a connection between the PLA and the WIV.

In late 2019 the SARS-CoV-2 virus appeared in Wuhan. The closest known relative of this virus is the RaTG13 virus sampled from the Yunnan mine where the miners had been infected. (RaTG13 is almost certainly not the backbone virus for SARS-CoV-2.)

The genetic similarity between the RaTG13 virus and SARS-CoV-2 suggest that SARS-CoV-2 or a closely related backbone virus could have been sampled from the Mojiang mine and brought to the WIV (which is why the disappeared WIV databases and lab records are so critical).

It is also plausible that SARS-CoV-2 could have been among the viruses held in or derived from a different virus in the WIV repository.

In the earliest known stage of the outbreak, the virus was already very well-adapted to human cells.

In the critical first weeks after the outbreak, Wuhan authorities worked aggressively to silence the whistleblowers and destroy evidence that could prove incriminating.

When Beijing authorities got involved a bit later, they likely faced a choice of implicating the Wuhan authorities, and, in effect, taking blame for what was quickly emerging as a major global problem, or turning into the curve and going all in for the coverup. I believe they likely chose the second option.

The Chinese government then massively lobbied the WHO to prevent the WHO from declaring COVID-19 as an international emergency and prevented WHO investigators from entering China for nearly a month.

In late January 2020, PLA Major General Chen Wei was put in charge of containment efforts in Wuhan. This role included supervision of the WIV, which had previously been considered a civilian institution. General Chen is China's top biological weapons expert. Allegations that the PLA was conducting covert dual civilian-military research on bat coronaviruses at WIV have not been proven.

The Chinese authorities have gone to great lengths to destroy evidence and silence anyone in China who might be in a position to provide evidence on the origins of COVID-19.

Although nothing can be fully conclusive in light of Chinese obfuscation, the continued absence of any meaningful evidence of a zoonotic chain of transmission and mutation in the wild and the accretion of other evidence is pointing increasingly, in my view, toward an accidental lab leak as the most likely origin of COVID-19. Given the extent to which China would benefit from discovering evidence of a transmission in the wild, we can assume Chinese authorities are doing all they can to find this kind of evidence without success. This failure would explain why Chinese officials have recently begun, with little credible evidence, asserting that the outbreak started outside of China.

In light of all of this, only a full and unrestricted international forensic investigation into the origins of the pandemic, with complete access to all samples, lab records, scientists, health officials, etc. will suffice.

Ensuring the most thorough and highest quality investigation exploring all possible hypothesis is and should be in all of our interest, including that of the Chinese government and people.

Annex II: COVID Eradication

As a prompt to discussion, Manoj's short piece is linked below.

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/opinion/2021/06/03/fully-eradicate-covid-19-pfizer-vaccine/7535797002/>

Manoj Jain, MD MPH is an infectious disease physician who treats COVID patients and advises on COVID policies in the US and India. . He is an Infectious disease consultant at Baptist Memorial Hospital and Methodist Hospitals in Memphis, a Clinical Associate Professor at University of Tennessee and at Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. He has served as a consultant to the World Health Organization, government of India and state and local governments in the US>

Annex III: Some thoughts on future topics . . .

Manoj, Brandi and others – post vax revised COVID policies at Federal, state, local and organizational levels

Francoise, NAS colleagues, Jaime – WHO Human Genome modification report (schedule for week after release).

Doug, Andrea, Ed, Jerry - Biomedical industrial policy Part II..... with Rocco Casagrande and others?

Ken – Testing and evaluation of gene drive localization mechanisms / malaria vaccine?

Megan and Pete – iGEM future

Doug and associates – EBRC projects

Katy, Andrea, Steven – NAS projects

Gigi G, Nancy, Rachel, Lane – JHU projects

Gigi H – MIT Center for Biomedical Innovation projects

Lane – Nature Protocols authors

Annex IV: Logistics

Please link at: <https://mit.zoom.us/j/823736372> We will continue to limit the formal part of our calls to 60 minutes with one or two main topics, with time before (10 minutes) and after (30 minutes) for chatter.

One tap mobile +16465588656,,823736372# US (New York)

+16699006833,,823736372# US (San Jose) Meeting ID: (b)(7)(F)

646 558 8656 or +1 669 900 6833 International Numbers:

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<https://mit.zoom.us/skype/823736372>

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