



**United States Department of State**

*Washington, D.C. 20520*

March 17, 2026

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 February 3, 2026, 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 two responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that both records 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 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 United States Attorney Stephanie Johnson at [stephanie.johnson5@usdoj.gov](mailto:stephanie.johnson5@usdoj.gov) or (202) 252-7874. Please refer to the case number, FL-2022-00062, and the civil action number, 22-cv-01130, in all correspondence about this case.

Sincerely,

*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

<b>From:</b>	(b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>To:</b>	Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>CC:</b>	(b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	Reputable sources re Chinese banned from discussing origin of Coronavirus
<b>Date:</b>	Mon, 2 Nov 2020 14:51:18 -0500

Andrea,

You asked me about reputable reports about China tightening discussions about the origin of the Coronavirus. I did see articles and videos back in the spring. But now with Google's self-imposed censorship, the dictating articles returned from Google search would seem to be saying one voice only: *no evidence of synthetic virus*. Nevertheless, there are YouTube videos from Taiwan posted back in the spring that "talked about it" in Taiwan. For instance, of the first 41 (or so) in Wuhan that got affected, 11 never exposed themselves to the Huanan Wild Food Market, so the origin of the virus cannot be the market. There were other reasons that made scientists in Taiwan did not believe CCP's statement. But regardless, if you want something more official, I trust you have seen AIT's cables about Taiwanese assessments of the origin of the virus...

(b)(6)

Declassified By: Geoffrey Chapman, Senior  
Reviewer, A/GIS/IPS  
Declassified Date: 2/11/2026

AVC/OAS S&T Advisor

U (b)(6)@state.gov

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

This document is ~~SECRET//NOFORN~~ when separated from ~~SECRET//NOFORN~~ attachment(s).

**Sensitivity:** Sensitive  
**Classification:** ~~SECRET//NOFORN~~  
**Classified By:** Thomas DiNanno, Senior Bureau Official, AVC, DOS  
**Derived From:** DSCG 11-01  
**Declassify On:** 2045/11/02

<b>Sender:</b>	(b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>; (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>

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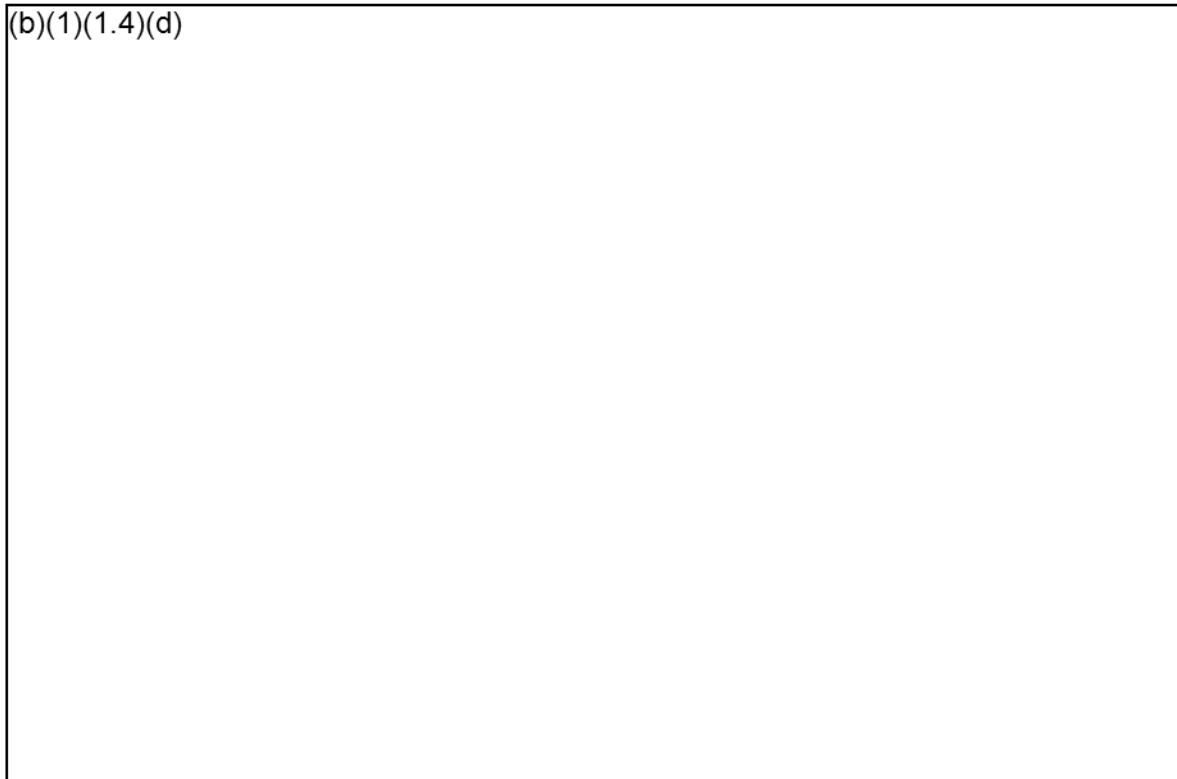
~~Sensitive~~




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**MRN:** 20 TAIPEI 351  
**Date/DTG:** Aug 05, 2020 / 050416Z AUG 20  
**From:** AIT TAIPEI  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** 13526  
**TAGS:** PREL, PGOV, CN, TW, KNCV, TBIO, NIH, SHLH  
**Captions:** NOFORN, SENSITIVE  
**Reference:** A) 20 BEIJING 33  
 B) 20 BEIJING 77  
 C) 20 TAIPEI 317  
 D) 20 TAIPEI 319  
**Pass Line:** AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PASS TO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND  
**Subject:** Taiwan Analysts Assess Theories of the Origin of the Novel Coronavirus  
 (Part One of Two)

(b)(1)(1.4)(d)



Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(1)(1.4)(d)

~~SECRET//NOFORN~~**Signature:** CHRISTENSEN

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**Classified By:** Name: Christensen, W. Brent, Title: Director  
 Office: EXEC  
 Agency: AIT
**Reason:** 1.4 (b), (d), (e)**Declassify On:** 2045/08/05**Drafted By:** TAIPEI: (b)(6)**Cleared By:** POL (b)(6)

ECON (b)(6)

EXEC:Greene, Raymond F

**Approved By:** EXEC:Christensen, W. Brent**Released By:** TAIPEI: (b)(6)
**Info:** SECDEF WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; OSD WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI *ROUTINE*; COMSOPAC HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; USARPAC INTEL FT SHAFTER HI *ROUTINE*; PACAF HICKAM AFB HI *ROUTINE*; COMMARFORPAC *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; ZEN/AUCKLAND, AMCONSUL  
**XMT:** CHENGDU, AMCONSUL

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**Dissemination Rule:** Archive Copy
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**MRN:** 20 TAIPEI 353  
**Date/DTG:** Aug 05, 2020 / 050634Z AUG 20  
**From:** AIT TAIPEI  
**Action:** WASHDC, SECSTATE *ROUTINE*  
**E.O.:** 13526  
**TAGS:** PREL, PGOV, CN, TW, KNCV, TBIO, NIH, SHLH  
**Captions:** SENSITIVE  
**Reference:** A) 20 TAIPEI 351  
B) 20 TAIPEI 299  
C) 20 TAIPEI 349  
D) 20 FTR 1109  
E) 20 TAIPEI 319  
F) 20 TAIPEI 317  
**Pass Line:** AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PASS TO AMCONSUL AUCKLAND  
**Subject:** Taiwan Analysts Assess Theories of the Origin of the Novel Coronavirus  
(Part Two of Two)

(b)(1)(1.4)(d)

~~SECRET~~

Withheld pursuant to exemption

(b)(1)(1.4)(d)

~~SECRET~~**Signature:** CHRISTENSEN**Classified By:** Name: Christensen, W. Brent, Title: Director  
Office: EXEC  
Agency: AIT**Reason:** 1.4 (b), (d), (e)**Declassify On:** 2045/08/05**Drafted By:** TAIPEI (b)(6)**Cleared By:** POL (b)(6)  
ECON (b)(6)

EXEC:Greene, Raymond F

**Approved By:** EXEC:Christensen, W. Brent**Released By:** TAIPEI (b)(6)**Info:** SECDEF WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; OSD WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; DIA WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC *ROUTINE*; CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; COMPACFLT PEARL HARBOR HI *ROUTINE*; COMSOPAC HONOLULU HI *ROUTINE*; USARPAC INTEL FT SHAFTER HI *ROUTINE*; PACAF HICKAM AFB HI *ROUTINE*; COMMARFORPAC *ROUTINE*; CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE *ROUTINE*; ZEN/AUCKLAND, AMCONSUL  
**XMT:** CHENGDU, AMCONSUL**Dissemination Rule:** Archive Copy~~SECRET~~~~Sensitive~~

<b>From:</b>	"Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>To:</b>	INR File Transfers <FileTransfers@state.sgov.gov>
<b>Subject:</b>	FW: Please transferFW: Draft China Demarche
<b>Date:</b>	Wed, 27 Jan 2021 11:18:30 -0500

Please transfer to my JWICS account.

Thanks,  
Andreea

**Official**  
**UNCLASSIFIED**

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**From:** Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2021 4:30 PM  
**To:** IT Service Center <ITServiceCenter@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Please transferFW: Draft China Demarche

Please transfer to my classnet.

Thanks,  
Andreea

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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**From:** Paulopol, Andreea I  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:57 AM  
**To:** Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Draft China Demarche

Hi Laura, (b)(6) - I got these in my personal emails, see attached.

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**From:** Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 21, 2021 9:48 AM  
**To:** (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Draft China Demarche

Hi (b)(6) Andreea has copies of the documents and said she could email them to us. Best - Laura

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**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 21, 2021 8:50 AM  
**To:** Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Subject:** RE: Draft China Demarche

Laura,

Did you save copies of these documents? They're now archived and I can't find them. I'd like to save them for our records.

Ref A. Press Statement by Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, Ensuring a Transparent, Thorough Investigation of COVID-19's Origin, January 15, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/ensuring-a-transparent-thorough-investigation-of-covid-19s-origin/>  
Ref B: Fact Sheet by Michael R. Pompeo, Secretary of State, Activity at the Wuhan Institute of Virology, January 15, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/fact-sheet-activity-at-the-wuhan-institute-of-virology/>

(b)(6)

Director, Office of Verification, Planning, and Outreach  
Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance  
U.S. Department of State

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

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**From:** Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 7:11 PM  
**To:** Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)@state.gov; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Subject:** Re: Draft China Demarche

Thanks (b)(6) perhaps we can regroup with Bruce in the morning. Best - Laura

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Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On January 20, 2021 at 6:59:58 PM EST, Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)@state.gov wrote:  
Thanks (b)(6) I suspected as much.

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**From:** (b)(6)@state.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 20, 2021 6:44 PM

To: Turner, Bruce I (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: Draft China Demarche

Bruce and Laura,

I want to close the loop on the China COVID demarche that we drafted. For the last two days, (b)(6) and I worked with (b)(6) to get 7<sup>th</sup> floor clearance and approval to send the cable. I finalized the text and built the shell for the cable. I waited until noon today in case we received a last minute OK from Marshall Billingslea to send it. That approval never came, so I did not send the cable. I've attached the last version of the text for our records.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Director, AVC/VPO

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

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<b>Sender:</b>	"Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6)@state.sgov.gov>
<b>Recipient:</b>	INR File Transfers <FileTransfers@state.sgov.gov>