



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

September 1, 2026

Request 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 July 20, 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 four responsive records subject to the FOIA. Upon review, we have determined that all four 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 Michael Yohannan at Michael.Yohannan@usdoj.gov. Please refer to the request 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

From:	"Paulopol, Andreea I" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@hhs.gov>
Subject:	FW: Draft cable to China on consultations under Article V of the BWC
Date:	Wed, 30 Dec 2020 14:41:56 +0000

Hi (b)(6)

I hope you note that (b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP

Cheers,
Andreea

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2020 9:37 AM
To: AVC-CBW-DL <AVC-CBW-DL2@state.gov>
Subject: FW: Draft cable to China on consultations under Article V of the BWC

FYSA

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 30, 2020 9:33 AM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Draft cable to China on consultations under Article V of the BWC

Laura,

This is what went out yesterday. Again, I apologize for the omission.

(b)(6)

Director, AVC/VPO

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@state.gov

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020 2:25 PM
To: (b)(6) (b)(6)
(b)(6) ISN-BPS-DL; (b)(6)@state.gov; (b)(6)

Park, Christopher J (T); Chafin, Kelly B. EOP/NSC; (b)(6) Wood,
Robert A (Geneva); (b)(6)

(b)(6); (b)(7)(C); (b)(7)(E) (b)(6)

(b)(6)

(b)(6); Feith, David

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

(b)(6)

Subject: Draft cable to China on consultations under Article V of the BWC

Good Afternoon and Happy New Year,

Clearance Request: The United States has a number of questions and concerns

(b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP we request your comments and clearance on the attached cable by
COB Wednesday, December 30, 2020.

Background: Attached is a draft cable that raises U.S. concerns (b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP

Thanks in advance,

(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

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Recipient: (b)(6)@hhs.gov>

From:	"Gross, Laura J" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	Fw: Re: China's BWC CBM Declarations
Date:	Mon, 23 Nov 2020 14:36:58 +0000

From: (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Monday, November 23, 2020 9:34 AM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: China's BWC CBM Declarations

Laura,

Per our phone conversation, we need someone to review all of China's past BWC CBM declarations, with an eye toward:

- BSL4 labs (dates research commenced and when this was reported);
- Research into SARS coronaviruses (both civilian and military);
- Research areas involving military funding (timeframes and areas of military bio research);
- Viral "gain of function" or "reverse genetics" research (civilian or military); and
- All declarations regarding the Wuhan Institute of Virology, its activities, and any military funding or operations at the WIV.

I also have a printed copy of the draft timeline I can show you – although it is constantly being updated.

Thank you!!

(b)(6)



(b)(6)

Chief of Staff

Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance
U.S. Department of State
HST Room 5950

Office: (b)(6)
Cell: (b)(6)

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

Sender:	"Gross, Laura J" (b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>

From:	"Gross, Laura J" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To:	(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject:	FW: Updated draft cable to China regarding BWC questions
Date:	Wed, 30 Dec 2020 14:23:52 +0000

Hi (b)(6). Could you forward me a copy of whatever final version was sent out for clearance? (Below is the last email I received on the topic yesterday.) Many thanks - Laura

From: Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020 12:06 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Updated draft cable to China regarding BWC questions

(b)(5) DPP

Jeff Gibbs
Senior Adviser AVC
SSD/AVC

c: (b)(6)

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020 11:15 AM
To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: Updated draft cable to China regarding BWC questions

(b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP

Comments attached. Best - Laura

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

Sent: Tuesday, December 29, 2020 10:31 AM

To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: Updated draft cable to China regarding BWC questions

Good Morning,

Attached is a revised version of the China Demarche. I took almost all of Laura's edits and added back in the additional specific questions that we need China to answer. I highlighted a few tweaks I made to Laura's text. I also need the date that the PRC publicly admitted that COVID-19 could be spread from human-to-human. If anyone has that date, please add it to the text. I added a clearance page at the end.

Please review ASAP so that we can get this out for clearance.

Thanks,

(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

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Monday, December 28, 2020 1:36 PM

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

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

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

Subject: Updated draft cable to China regarding BWC questions

Dear (b)(6) - See attached updated cable in the proper format. Please try to insert your examples into this format.

Tom, (b)(6) - I think I've been able to capture what Tom wanted about the genetic piece by using our Russia cable. Please take a look.

Best - Laura

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Sent: Saturday, December 26, 2020 12:18 PM

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

Subject: Draft cable to China on consultations under Article V of the BWC

Attached is a clean copy of the BWC cable to China that reflects edits and comments received as of now. Please review this and let me know ASAP if you have other edits. Per Tom's direction, I plan to circulate this today.

Thanks,

(b)(6)

Director, Verification, Planning, and Outreach
Currently Teleworking

Sender:	"Gross, Laura J" (b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	(b)(6)@state.gov>

From: "DiNanno, Thomas G" (b)(6)@state.gov>
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>;
Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
CC: (b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>;
(b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: BWC 21
Date: Thu, 10 Dec 2020 18:14:24 +0000

Already in process – Im not convinced the VCAWG should be the place to have a discussion on the science.

From: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:53 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

(b)(5) DPP

From: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:47 PM
To: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

(b)(5) DPP

We can present the unclassified draft finding (Jeff), the AVC Intel slides and detailed timeline and then use them to generate feedback—I'm a Ph.D. honey badger so if they want to trash our analysis of the reporting they will need to be precise.

I would not want to this before next Thursday since we will want to augment the slides and wait for Dr. Quay's paper to come in and be circulated for comment/retort among USG and major syn-bio experts (Quay may be right or wrong but is the only well know American scientist to have a detailed explanation of where COV 19 came from and how and why he concludes with precision it was created). FYI he does not believe it was designed and deployed as a "weapon" exactly but notes that gain of function R&D gone awry at the extent non-natural synthetic combination inherently can be a weapon even if not by intention. That is precisely Andy and Christine's point.

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:32 PM
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

Yes

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On December 10, 2020 at 12:31:33 PM EST, Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
I fully support your idea. Is this the VCOG?

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:27 PM
To: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

Yes - this is why I thought it would be useful to have an interagency meeting - to discuss and raise questions, with USAMRID, HHS, etc. Best - Laura

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On December 10, 2020 at 12:24:40 PM EST, Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:
I agree but I see very poor IC tradecraft involved. They need to PROVE assertions and assessments. When I handled the NK HEU question years ago we held a bureau of inquiry with

AVC/NP/INR and a team of independent scientists from JAIC—who with precision to proved that NK HEU program existed—something that the NIC denied. The implications of the origins of COV 19 and Chinese domestic actions/inaction internationally remain inexplicable. We still do not a single detailed scientific report that explains the natural zoonotic origins but we do now have numerous peer reviewed papers that suggest it could have been synthetically engineered. So right now the syn-bio explanation is the only plausible one based on evidence.

From: Gross, Laura J <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 12:17 PM
To: Asher, David <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I <(b)(6)@state.gov>; DiNanno, Thomas G <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

We are on the same team.

Sent from Workspace ONE Boxer

On December 10, 2020 at 12:16:30 PM EST, Asher, David <(b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

(b)(5) DPP

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdfdirect/10.1002/bies.202000240?download=true>

From: Paulopol, Andreea I <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 6:59 PM
To: DiNanno, Thomas G <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Asher, David <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Gross, Laura J <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Cc: Pease, Michael <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>
Subject: RE: BWC 21

Right, but I don't believe we are dealing with a "suspicious disease outbreak" here. Based on genomic evidence, it's been assessed by experts inside and outside government that the virus emerged naturally and improbable that the virus was genetically engineered.

As the article points out: "An outbreak event inside one country is potentially a problem for others, especially if the disease in question is contagious."

Xi Jinping admitted that the outbreak had exposed "shortcomings" and "leaking holes" in China's biological material management and biological security system.

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

From: DiNanno, Thomas G (b)(6) @state.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 6:06 PM
To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gross, Laura J (b)(6) @state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: RE: BWC 21

All

Please find attached a well reasoned article from 2010 that postulates that suspicious disease outbreak *is within the purview of the BWC.*

<https://academic.oup.com/heapol/article/25/6/486/583576#9429172>

Thanks

TD

From: DiNanno, Thomas G
Sent: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 8:24 AM
To: Asher, David (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gross, Laura J (b)(6) @state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J (b)(6) @state.gov>
Cc: (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>; (b)(6) @state.gov>
Subject: Re: BWC 21

All

Thanks for the feedback. (b)(5) DPP

And yes we need supporting documentation to show why we have concerns. But the authority to make this decision lies solely with the AVC Assistant Secretary and with concurrence of the DNI. Not with an interagency not with a bureaucratic "vcawg" process and not with an acting T and not by some made up L construct. The de facto process referenced by some are self imposed constraints by years of bureaucratic assault and leadership missteps. AVC is one of only two bureaus authorized by law and at the heart of that law is this function.

The C in AVC is for compliance not concurrence or consensus. I'm not sure what will come up of this effort but this is a function and authority that belongs to all you.

(b)(5) DPP

Thanks again

TD

On December 8, 2020 at 7:02:21 PM EST, Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov> wrote:

(b)(5) DPP

Why on earth hasn't State quoted the front page from the PLA Daily in 2017 before in its compliance report? This is the official doctrinal source for the People's Liberation Army. These articles don't just appear as someone's personal opinion—even if attributed that way. The Chinese have hardly been hiding a biotech/genetic warfare program for at least the last decade. The Jamestown article is better written than any of the IC analytical junk. I think relying on the Chi-Comms own statements plus scientific analysis in peer reviewed journals is more powerful than relying on the unsubstantiated assessments that totally ignore the findings of the National Academy of Science as well as statements and articles from the CCP and PLA.

<https://jamestown.org/program/chinas-military-biotech-frontier-crispr-military-civil-fusion-and-the-new-revolution-in-military-affairs/>

From: Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>

Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 5:52 PM

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

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

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

Subject: Re: BWC 21

Dear Tom (b)(5) DPP; (b)(6)

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

(b)(5) DPP

My understanding was that (b)(6) and David (b)(5) DPP

(b)(5) DPP

Best - Laura

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

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

Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 5:35 PM

To: (b)(6) DiNanno, Thomas G; Gibbs, Jeffrey J; Gross, Laura J

Cc: Asher, David; (b)(6)

Subject: RE: BWC 21

AA/S DiNanno—

(b)(5) DPP

Just my thoughts.

Thanks,

Andreea

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

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

Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 5:10 PM

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

(b)(6) @state.gov>

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

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

Subject: RE: BWC 21

Tom,

My suggestions and one comment.

Thanks

(b)(6)

Acting 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

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

Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 4:55 PM

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

Cc: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: RE: BWC 21

Adding (b)(6)

From: DiNanno, Thomas G

Sent: Tuesday, December 8, 2020 4:48 PM

To: (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gross, Laura J (b)(6)@state.gov>

Cc: Asher, David (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>

Subject: BWC 21

All

Im starting a new string here with all the different work streams. I edited the prior and crafted some new language for the CR. Welcome edits and thoughts asap please. Lets meet virtually if necessary to discuss. I would like written opinions from everyone on this string as to concurrence, non-concurrence, additional information required etc. No no shows on this.

Thanks

TD

Thomas DiNanno

Acting Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Arms Control, Verification & Compliance

U.S. Department of State

Washington D.C.

(b)(6)

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

~~SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED~~

<The genetic structure of SARS-CoV-2 does not rule out a laboratory origin.pdf>

Sender:	"DiNanno, Thomas G" <(b)(6)@state.gov>
Recipient:	(b)(6)@state.gov>; Gross, Laura J <(b)(6)@state.gov>; Paulopol, Andreea I <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; Gibbs, Jeffrey J <(b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>; (b)(6)@state.gov>